THE REALITY OF PRINT LITERATURE RESOURCES
IN A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF URBAN CHILD CARE CENTRES

by

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Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative study of six full day childcare centres. The purpose of this study was to identify the print literature resources that are present within a representative sample of urban childcare centres. Data were collected using field notes and manager interviews. A further analysis of the resources present allowed to the researcher to evaluate the quality of the resources and to discern whether the early childhood educators sampled have the resources to provide the foundation for a quality literature program. The books were analysed using five elements, including; literary merit, age and accuracy, physical condition, genre and developmental appropriateness, and quantity and accessibility. A total of 2774 resources were present in the six childcare centres. Overall the centres did not satisfy the elements for quality resources. Only 1% of the resources were found to have been judged worthy of recognition through nomination or award. The average age of the resources was 16 years, with an age span of 102 years, causing concern for accuracy, especially for information literature. The physical condition of the print literature resources did conform to quality guidelines, and it was discovered that physical condition was the only reason for discarding a book. There were a variety of genres present within the childcare centres, with the largest genre being information books. The second largest genre was surprising, as TV/Toy books represented 19.5% of the total collections. None of the centres met International Reading Association guidelines for quantity or accessibility for classroom libraries. It was clear that quantity and cost were the most important factors influencing the print literature collections in these childcare centres.

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Chapter 1   Introduction

Excellence is surely our goal in all that we try to achieve in life. Why eliminate children's books? Are children's books and therefore children too *humble*, too insignificant to be taken seriously? (Egoff, 1972, p. 97)

During the years of childhood before formal schooling children spend much of their time either in home environments or childcare. Support programs and studies have recently emphasised the home environment as key in literacy development (Anderson, Fagan & Cronin, 1998; Auerbach, 1989; Crockatt and Smythe, 2000; Edwards, 1995; Gadsen, 1994; Jordan et al., 2000; Neuman and Gallagher, 1994; Nichols, 2002; Paratore, 2001; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Purcell-Gates, 2000; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Tett and Crowther, 1998; Thomas, 1998). Which begs the question: what about the children who spend much of their waking hours in childcare? If exposure to books during these years is important, it seems sensible to suggest that we should look at the resources in the other main environment of the preschool aged child, that is, regulated group childcare. If we consider that the books are important in the home environment, then they should also be considered important in the childcare setting.

This investigation of six full-day childcare facilities, licensed within a large urban municipality, will compare literature resources that are owned by the centres. This would provide insight into whether or not these childcare centres can offer sufficient quality print literature resources to support a foundation for quality programming. Additionally, this research may offer insights into areas of concern and generate guidelines for improvement

around levels and quality of print literature resources available to young children in daycare centres.

Background to the Problem

Figures reported in 2001 identify that "close to 1.4 million of our children" in Canada are in childcare (Stafford, 2002, p. 1) and in B.C. alone 13, 905 children between the ages of 2.5 and 5 attended full-time regulated childcare, with another 15, 407 in Preschool (Campaign 2000, 2003). This means that close to 30,000 children in this province are doing much of their learning outside of their homes. For the children in preschool half-day, their exposure to print resources *may* balance with their home experiences. For full-time group childcare attendees however, more than double that time is spent in the care and environments of others. Some centres also offer Saturday and overnight care as well, increasing the children's time away from home (Friendly, 2002). Given the amount of time many children spend in day care centres, it can be argued that it is the childcare centres that have the potential to affect children's early experiences and foundations for literacy.

As the demand for childcare continues to grow, studies of literacy development have begun to focus on children's language and literacy status in kindergarten, and researchers have begun to call attention to the role of the preschool era in children's long-term literacy success. (Dickinson & Sprague, 2000, p. 263)

While much recent research has focused on the impact of the print environment for children between the ages of three and five, as well as direct literacy intervention during these years (Anderson et al., 1998; Auerbach, 1989; De La Luz Reyes, 1992; Dickinson &

Sprague, 2000; McCormick & Mason, 1986; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1999; McGill-Franzen, Lanford & Adams, 2002; Neuman, Celano, Greco & Shue, 2001; Paratore, 2001; Purcell-Gates, 2000; Roskos & Neuman, 2000; Snow & Ninio, 1986; Stone & Twardosz, 2001; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Wells, 1986), there is little research regarding literature resources in full-day early childhood education settings in Canada.

Childcare centres in British Columbia municipalities are licensed by a number of Community Child Care licensing facilities, governed by the Community Care Facility Act: Child Care Licensing Regulation (2000). The Community Care facilities licensing requirements do not, at this time, regulate access to literacy resources or quality of literature selection (Fraser Valley Health Authority, 2002). The resources available to groups of children, therefore, may vary from centre to centre and result in groups of children having vastly different experiences with literature and literacy activities.

Although early childhood research and studies on print environments have supported the development of a position statement issued by the International Reading Association (IRA) (1999) that recommended that "at the very minimum school library centres have at least 20 books per child, and classroom libraries at least 7 books per child, with 2 additional purchases for each child recommended each year" (Neuman et al., 2001, p. 7), no research could be found that reviews the availability and quality of print literature resources available to children in Canadian daycare centres.

The Purpose and Questions for the Study

Given that the quality and quantity of print literature resources that children are able to access during the preschool years influences their literature experiences, and that they also shape the quality of literature programming available in daycare centres, it is important

to understand what actual print literature resources are present in daycare centres. The purpose of this study was to identify what print literature resources are available to the children in an intense representative sample of seven urban full-day childcare centres. An understanding of the print literature resources offered will allow the researchers to discern whether the early childhood educators in the district sampled have the resources to provide the foundation for a quality literature program. In addition, this study will provide a general overview of the childcare program type and the literature programming beliefs held by the managers of the early childhood centres. Additionally, this research may reveal areas of concern and indicate possible guidelines for improvement around levels and quality of print literature resources available to young children in daycare centres.

Definitions of Terms:

Print literature resources: commercially published books; not including posters, flashcards, or home-made books

Childcare centres: group day care centres for children 30 months to school age, licensed as a Group Day Care Facility under Child Care Licensing Regulations (Community Care Facility Act, 2000)

Research Questions

In the context of a full day licensed Group Daycare Facility in a geographically representative sample of urban childcare:

1. What print literature resources are owned by the childcare centre and are available for the children enrolled in the early childhood program and what is the quality of those resources?

2. Does the quality of print literature resources available satisfy the guidelines for a quality literature program as established in the literature review?

Scope and Limitations of the Study

As this study sample was geographically defined, it does not take into account the varieties of programs that may exist within each region, such as community centres, religiously based programs, Head Start, Montessori, YMCA, Parent Participation and others. As centres must register with the resource and referral program to be included in the study, there may be additional facilities that are present in the region but not included in the sample. The resource and referral program used for this study is the most concise listing of childcare centres available for the chosen geographical area.

It must be acknowledged that print literature resources are only one aspect of the early literacy environment. Environmental print such as classroom signage, words and letters present on objects, and other printed material (homemade books, magazines, letters, receipts and flashcards) also provide a rich foundation for literacy development, as do the interactions between the children, the teachers and the books. For the purposes of this investigation, only books were selected for comparison and analysis. The focus is on the permanent collection of print literature resources owned by the daycare, which forms the foundation of the literature program within the centre. An acknowledgement of programs that do supplement their collection with a revolving selection is contained within the questionnaire and will be included in the final analysis of the data.

The data collected within this sample was chosen specifically to address the five conditions indicated by the literature review. This study is intended to discuss the existing permanent resources only, and does not include library books. It is intended to analyse the

data in the included childcare centres as well as to provide guidelines for quality literature foundation resources for childcare centres. It is not intended to provide a list of quality books for literature programs within childcare centres, but rather an exploration of the print literature resources that are currently owned by the centres.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the background to the problem to be discussed in this thesis, as well as the purpose and questions for the study. Also included were the scope and limitations to the study, acknowledging that this study will only focus on the print literature resources within the group childcare programs, rather than the teacher/child/book interactions. In light of the research supporting early literacy development and exposure to literature resources, as well as the lack of guidelines surrounding print literature resources, an investigation of full-day child care facilities licensed within this region is needed that compares literature resources; including the number of books, types of genre represented, and the quality and condition of the resources. This study will address these questions.

Chapter 2 of this thesis provides a discussion of quality literature programming, and reviews the literature pertaining to the five elements which together form the foundation for the development of print literature resources for quality literature programming: literary merit, age and accuracy, physical condition, developmental appropriateness and variety, and quantity and accessibility. Included in this chapter is an exploration of related studies, as well as recommendations made by literacy experts and the International Reading Association regarding quality literature programming.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology adopted for the present study. The researcher outlines the appropriateness of a qualitative research approach for this study, an

overview of the sites chosen for investigation, the role of the researcher, data collection methods and the process of data analysis undertaken for the study.

Chapter 4 summarizes the findings of the study and is divided into five sections based on the five elements established as the foundation for exploring the quality of print literature resources in the six focal childcare centres.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study in terms of the first research questions which was: What print literature resources are owned by the childcare centre and are available for the children enrolled in the early childhood program and what is the quality of those resources? Each of the five criteria or elements (i.e., literary merit, age and accuracy, physical condition, developmental appropriateness and variety, and quantity and accessibility) used to judge the quality of the print literature, is discussed in terms of what they reveal about what print literature is available to young children in six focal childcare centres.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the study in terms of the second question: Does the quality of print literature resources available satisfy the guidelines for a quality literature program as established in the literature review? This chapter uses the findings of the first question to support the conclusions of the second. It consists of four sections. In the first section a summary of the findings of the study detailed in this report is presented. The second section explains the implications that are indicated by the results of this study. The third section recommends areas for further research. Finally, the conclusions of this study are presented.

Chapter 2   Literature review

Introduction

After a discussion of the definition of quality literature programming, this chapter will review literature pertaining to the five elements which together form the foundation for the development of print literature resources for quality literature programming: literary merit, age and accuracy, physical condition, developmental appropriateness and variety, and quantity and accessibility. Included in this chapter is an exploration of related studies, as well as recommendations made by literacy experts and the International Reading Association.

"We must assume responsibility for the resources we use".

(Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002, p. 24)

The preschool years have been shown to be pivotal in early childhood development, language development, the formation of attitudes, and the growth of reading skills (Adams, 1990; Bettelheim & Zelan, 1981; Chall, 1983 a & b; Clay, 1979; Galda & Cullinan, 2002; Gleason, 1993; Goodman, 1986; Huck, Hepler, Hickman & Keifer, 2001; Snow & Ninio, 1986; Teale and Sulzby, 1986; Wells, 1986). The *quality and quantity* of print literature resources that children are able to access during these years influences their literature experiences. They also shape the quality of literature programming offered, and through that programming affect literacy development in early childhood settings. It is, therefore, of importance that we understand what print literature resources are available to the children to discover if early childhood educators in the district sampled have the print literature resources to provide the foundation for a quality literature program.

The materials and activities used in developing reading skills are, thus, of critical importance. To be maximally effective, they must consistently be selected with sensitivity to the needs and interests of the students with which they will be used... fortunately for the purposes of schooling, little ones will go almost anywhere we lead them - so long as they are neither frustrated or bored. Yet, even as that eases our task as their guides, it greatly increases our responsibility. It is up to us to lead them in the right direction. (Adams, 1990, p. 5)

Experts suggest that '*quality literature programs*' can encompass many definitions and refer to quality of the literature itself, based on four factors: literary merit, age of the resources, accuracy, and physical condition. Quality programming, however, takes into account the developmental appropriateness of the resources and the variety of genre. The quantity and accessibility of print literature resources available may also be considered. These aspects combine to provide a complete and thorough guideline for a 'quality literature program'.

Literary Merit of the Resources

Quality literature based on literary merit is assessed by terms and guidelines established by scholars (Egoff, 1972; Egoff, Stubbs & Ashley, 1980; Galda and Cullinan, 2002; Huck, Hepler, Hickman & Keifer, 2001; Horning, 1997). While it seems there are no quick and easy answers to the question 'what is a quality/good book' (Egoff, 1972; Heins, 1982; Horning, 1997; L'Engle, 2000; Sachs, 1994), book reviews in journals such as *The Horn Book Magazine, The Canadian Children's Book Centre Our Choice, Quill & Quire, and School Library Journal* offer a selection of books reviewed by experts. Recent literature awards, such as *The Newberry Medal, The Caldecott Medal,* and *The Hans*

Christian Anderson Medal are all awards given for literary merit. Additional Canadian awards, such as the *Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrators Award, The Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Children Award, The Governor General's Literary Award* and *The Information Book Award* reflect the literary merit of Canadian authors and illustrators. Other awards are given throughout the world by individual countries and states. (see Appendix A for various book awards) Books chosen for these awards are considered of high literary quality and "provide criteria for what experts consider to be the best in children's literature" and are based on "recognized excellence" (Huck et al., 2001, p. 25). Choosing resources using these book reviews and book awards as guidelines suggests quality literature as selected by experts.

While proponents of the 'any book will do' theory argue that reading is a basic operation and that "a child needs print simply for practice" (Egoff, 1972, p. 94), noted librarian, author and children's literature professor, Sheila Egoff argues for quality in children's literature and the print literature resources to which children are exposed. Egoff (1972) writes that readers who begin with mediocre or poor books tend to continue reading the same quality of books. Her points are as follows:

- whatever mediocre books do, good books can also do - and much better.
- mediocre content and style in a very real sense subvert the essential role of children's books. In effect, they deny the medium itself - the book - the opportunity to work it's own special kind of magic, to make the kind of particular contribution that the book alone can make (Egoff, 1972, p. 95).

While Egoff acknowledges that for literacy learning (i.e., for the fundamental development

of reading) any book will suffice, she stresses the importance of quality books.

The role of books therefore, is not only for literacy progress or for entertainment, but also for "depth of thought and emotion" with "the development of complex ideas and characters, to the building up of the rich texture of life" (Egoff, 1972, p. 95).

The role of literature is to help develop the individual and it takes a good book to do this. A poor book takes a child and puts him back a step or two, a mediocre book takes a child and leaves him where he is. A good book promotes the awareness of the possibilities of life, the universality of life, the awakening of response. (Egoff, 1972, p. 95)

"Good literature provides a strong foundation for building a literacy curriculum in the preschool and primary grades. Students need good literature to feed their minds and to practice their developing reading skills" (Galda and Cullinan, 2002, p. 335). Some scholars feel that books of high literary quality are more cognitively demanding for children (Stone & Twardosz, 2001). Acknowledging that they could find no empirical evidence to demonstrate that "books recommended for their literary merit affected young children and teachers differently than other types of books" (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 55), Stone and Twardosz refer to a number of studies that indicate that the type of book and specific characteristics of a book *do* make a difference. The complex and stimulating topics of these books encourage intellectual growth. Expository genres encourage more teaching strategies. Longer books with more complex storylines inspire discussion and further support language and cognitive growth. Exposure to new artwork and concepts encourage children to look beneath the surface of the story to underlying relevance to themselves and the world around them. Characteristics of the books (such as art, labelling, format and design choices) were found to be important determinants of the types of interactions that

children had with books (Stone & Twardosz, 2001).

Age and Accuracy of the Resources

The age of the print literature resources is an additional consideration for quality. While classic literature, with stories that have appealed to more than one generation, are important to bridge the gap between generations and provide continuity of literary merit, print literature resources that are not current may offer different societal norms, including outdated gender and cultural stereotypes. Age is particularly important for information literature. Advances in science and technology during the past fifty years have been monumental, and if the book is out-of-date, the information may be grossly incorrect. "There can be no excuse for having books which state that one day we may land on the moon, or which contain accounts of non-existing dinosaurs such as the brontosaurus or out-of-date maps, particularly of Africa and Russia" (Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002, p. 23). It is the age of the print literature resources that may suggest to adults selecting and assessing children's literature that a further investigation into the stereotypes and information within might be warranted.

Concern about what is appropriate for children's literature is not a new concept and has existed as long as children's books have been available (Egoff et al., 1980, p. 19). As societal norms change, so do the topics and issues presented in children's books. The acceptance of religious persecution, racial discrimination, slavery and gender bias are all concepts which have been approved by mainstream society in the past, but are not accepted today. In the mid 1960's and early 1970's (during a time of societal change) a number of organizations developed to address the issues of racism and sexism in children's literature (Townsend, 1976). While studies may not have focused on the development of children's

societal attitudes as impacted by literature, "it seems fair however to suppose that if stereotypes of racial characteristics or the roles of the sexes are constantly presented to children, they must to some extent be absorbed" (Townsend, 1976, p. 384). Selection of print literature resources, therefore, must be done with an eye to the age of the book, to promote accurate information. Outdated books can indicate outdated opinions. The Children's Rights Workshop of London stated, "We can no longer base critical assessment solely on literary merit. Content and values, explicit or implicit, deserve critical assessment" (Townsend, 1976, p. 385). The authors caution however, that we must take care not to take censorship to the extreme, which can be counter-productive and only demand a different stereotype (Townsend, 1976). It is up to the adults writing, publishing and selecting the literature to consider all aspects of the book thoroughly, balancing suggestions and complaints, as a responsibility to the children and society (Townsend, 1976, p. 388). The age of print literature resources can be an indicator for further investigation of the content of the book.

Accuracy of information, predominantly dependent on age, is another aspect of literature that must be taken into account when assessing quality print literature resources. "Whatever their motivation for reading nonfiction, children deserve to have books of information that are accurate, engaging and well written" (Horning, 1997, p. 22). With strides in science and technology outdated books can indicate outdated information. "Out of date and inaccurate information in any resource is *dangerous to the mental health of youngsters*" (Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002, p. 23). Jobe and Dayton-Sakari (2002) provide criteria for judging information books. The first two criteria listed are accuracy and whether or not the book is up-to-date. Inaccurate books teach children inaccurate information, and, therefore, do not satisfy the definition of quality programming.

Physical Condition of the Resources

Quality literature is also affected by the actual material condition of the book itself. Books that are tattered and torn may carry the implicit message to the children that the books themselves are not valuable and worthy of respect. For multiple use in child care centres hard cover books may be a more practical choice than soft cover books, allowing the books to remain in good condition longer. "Along with the yearly purchase of new titles, a concentrated effort must be made to replace worn books and materials. Children are attracted by books that are colourful and in good repair" (Moore, 2003, p. 12). Neuman also reiterates that to capture children's' enthusiasm and imaginations, only high quality books will do, in this case referring to books that "look physically attractive, with fresh covers and interesting, bright illustrations", rather than "some old tattered books from garage sales" (Neuman, 2001, p. 13).

Developmental Appropriateness and Variety of Resources

It is important to realize that a 'quality literature program' does not only consist of 'quality literature', but contains literature that is developmentally appropriate (Burke, 1990; Galda & Cullinan, 2002; Huck et al., 2001; Morrow, 1993). Children develop at very different rates and "the careful selection of quality picture storybooks can play an important role in young children's development" (Vukelich, Christie & Enz, 2002, p. 93). Burke divides the genres into nine categories according to the developmental characteristics of the young child to take into account the interests, developmental ages and the frequency and quality of story (Burke, 1990, p. 17). Bettelheim adds that "children's stories should reflect the inner struggles of the child" and that the stories should have meaning and

emotional relevance for the child (Bettelheim & Zelan, 1981, p. 109). For preschool children a variety of books should be selected, including concept books such as alphabet books, number books, nursery rhymes, picture storybooks, traditional literature, easy-to-read books, predictable stories, books about realistic issues, wordless storybooks, poetry, information books, biographies and magazines (Morrow, 1993, Appendix A; Vukelich et al., 2002, Appendix A). "A concept book is really a young child's first information book." (Huck et al., 2001, p. 140) Familiarity and predictability have been shown to be important in early literature choices. Martinez and Teale found that children in Kindergarten chose these books twice as often while Katims found similar results in preschool children (Stone & Twardosz, 2001).

Literacy growth is also very individual, thus, it is important to include a variety of challenge levels in a quality literature program. Subject matter should also be relevant for the developmental age of the child, or slightly advanced to provide an acceptable level of challenge. In a study of first graders' self selections during recreational reading, Donovan, Smolkin and Lomax found that even children with low reading levels (as with preschool children) "can and do engage meaningfully with interesting, light-level-readability books, when given appropriately supported opportunities to do so" (Donovan, Smolkin & Lomax , 2000, p. 330). Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda and Brody found that expository materials (both familiar and traditional) elicited more teaching strategies than narratives, and "they suggest varying the type and challenge level of books read aloud to children" (Stone & Twardosz, 2001, p. 55). A selection including wordless books, easy readers, storybooks, early information books and more advanced information books would provide a balanced collection of readability and challenge levels.

Current International Reading Association (IRA) guidelines suggest that school or

classroom libraries include print literature resources in their collections as follows:

- Traditional stories: familiar stories that are found in every culture, including fables, myths and legends that reflect the diverse, multicultural nature of our society. These are books where children can learn about themselves as well as others.

- Picture Books: colourful illustrations, drawings and real photography in books with or without text allow children to make up and narrate their own stories. Picture books can also be created in the school with photos of school events and classroom routines.

- Fantasy: stories that contain characters that may have superhuman powers that spark children's imaginations and build self-esteem.

- Realistic Fiction: stories with characters, settings and events that might happen in a child's life.

- Historical Fiction: stories set in the past, accurately reflecting the time period in which they occur.

- Biographies and autobiographies: books about the lives of everyday famous people. Include community and political leaders, national and everyday heroes, and celebrities.

- Information: books that provide realistic, accurate and authentic information, including simple reference materials for various ages. (Moore, 2003, p. 13)

Neuman adds that for children for whom English is a second language, there should also be included: "books in children's home language, including English, picture dictionaries in both languages, characters that reflect home culture and racial heritage, concept picture books (objects and environments), folktales and myths from children's

home cultures, and repetitive rhyming books" (Neuman, 2001, p. 14).

Quantity and Accessibility of the Resources

Research in the United Sates has shown that literature environments and access to literature resources can vary between centres (Dickinson & Sprague, 2001; Duke, 2000a; Duke, 2000b; Neuman, 1999; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Neuman et al., 2001; Smith & Constantino, 1997). While the studies have emphasised the variety between centres that may be considered economically disadvantaged, even those in the same urban areas classified as 'quality centres' have shown differences (McGill-Franzen et al., 2002).

In a comparison of print environments, Smith and Constantino (1997) found that there were extremely wide differences between the centres in their study, depending on the affluence of the community. For communities with lower socio-economic status, there were significantly fewer books in the school and classroom libraries. The preschool numbers mirror the results obtained for home resources as well. Even the books accessible through libraries and bookstores were dramatically lower. Therefore, the lower the income, the lower the number of books accessible for the children. The authors maintain that "it is no wonder that lower SES children do so poorly on measures of literacy development. They have been denied the most important ingredient for literacy development: reading material" (Smith & Constantino, 1997, p. 81).

Further comparisons of five urban childhood centres by McGill-Franzen, Lanford and Adams (2002) assessed the opportunities available for literacy activities for four-year-olds, finding similar results in variety of program and resources based on income. They pose that for programs already isolated by class there is already an unequal availability of resources, experiences and learning opportunities. In addition to an investigation of the

complete literature programs offered, the researchers documented the number of books on display in classroom libraries, centres and office libraries, classifying them according to topic, genre (narrative or expository) and difficulty, the number of titles of display for the use of the children during one time and over the course of the year. Findings show vast differences between these centres, even though each of these early childhood education programs had been classified as 'quality centres' by university experts in the early childhood field (McGill-Franzen et al., 2002). While one class had only eleven books available for the children throughout an entire year, another had 35 displayed at any one time along with access to a preschool library of 1500 literature resources. Staffing, training and understanding of literacy development also fluctuated, impacting the selection and use of the resources available, with one teacher keeping paperback resources "out or reach and out of sight to preserve them" (McGill-Franzen et al., 2002, p. 448). Other programs made teachers pay for missing or damaged books, while still others regarded books chosen through book clubs the personal property of the teachers and therefore off limits to the children (McGill-Franzen et al., 2002, p. 448). Book budgets were shown to vary, as did the selection process, with one programs' resources chosen by the administration rather than the trained early childhood educators.

Dickinson and Sprague (2001) acknowledge the variability of childcare arrangements in the United States. They state that three out of four children not yet attending kindergarten are regularly in childcare and that childcare program quality also fluctuates. This research identifies the teachers and the print environment (books, posters and writing activities), as integral to both programming and child language development. The researchers admit that data tends to focus on the teacher-child interaction with the literature resources (i.e., with conversation and storytelling) rather than the curriculum and

resource quality. The foundation of literature resources, though, provides a base for interactions between the staff and the children. "Whereas studies have found associations between program quality and language, the linkage to more print-related aspects of literacy has been less evident" (Dickinson & Sprague, 2001, p. 267). This evidence however, may be present through a further investigation into literature resources available.

In their study, Stone and Twardosz (2001) investigated the childcare teachers' role in the selection, use and accessibility of high-quality literature resources. Results indicated that while a high number of the books read aloud were chosen for literary merit, a smaller proportion of the books that were accessible for individual children's use were of high quality. Teachers also mentioned limited genres and the wide variability of reading opportunities across classrooms.

Neuman contends that "there is overwhelming evidence that stimulating experiences with books have facilitative consequences for literacy development" (Neuman et al., 2001, p. 1) and that "a rich selection of reading materials in early childhood education classrooms could provide an important safety net for those children who do not have such access in their homes" (Neuman et al., 2001, p. 7). In a national study encompassing pre-kindergarten classrooms, Neuman, et al. (2001) explored whether existing book collections were adequate and how they would compare with IRA recommendations. Also examined were the numbers of books within the classrooms, budgets and sources for books, and the condition and quality of the books in the pre-kindergarten classrooms. Results showed that in two thirds of the classrooms in this study, the average number of books was fewer than 50 children's books; with directors reporting that over 28% of the classrooms had less than one book per child (Neuman et al., 2001, p. 29). An investigation of the genres represented in the collections reported that only 18%

appeared to include informational books and 13% included multicultural books (Neuman et al., 2001, p. 31). Clearly, these results indicate that in many childcare centres across the United States literature collections fall short of IRA guidelines.

The extreme differences highlighted in print resource studies, combined with the impact of literature during the preschool years, show the importance of the literature resources in the early childhood environment. Early childhood research and studies on print environments have supported the development of a position statement issued by the International Reading Association (1999) that recommended that "at the very minimum school library centres have at least 20 books per child, and classroom libraries at least 7 books per child, with 2 additional purchases for each child recommended each year" (Neuman et al., 2001, p. 7). The American Library Association suggests, "early childhood settings should include about 300 book titles for young children in every classroom, single and multiple copies, with supplements available from a well-stocked neighbourhood or school library" (Neuman, 2001, p. 8). Other research has suggested, "that at least five to eight books per child is necessary to support choice and motivation to read" (Neuman, 2001, p. 8).

Summary

This chapter has included a review of literature detailing the five elements that provide a foundation for quality literature programming in Early Childhood settings. Each element was defined and discussed in detail as it pertains to print literature resources for young children. Similar studies were included to further illustrate the issues surrounding this topic. IRA guidelines were outlined and expanded to include recommendations by other researchers.

Chapter 3   Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the qualitative research methodology and procedures used in this thesis. It will give a detailed description of the research, including the sites, the participants, data collection and data analysis.

Sites and Participants Selected

The study in this thesis was a geographically representative sample within a large city as defined by a government sponsored resource and referral program. For the on-going purposes of the resource and referral program, the municipality is divided into seven regions based on geography. These regions represent a large physical area and include a variety of socio-economic and ethnic neighbourhoods. This study sought to include one group childcare centre within each region to represent the variety of regions within the municipality.

The participants in each region were chosen through purposive sampling. In this type of sampling, the participants are chosen intentionally as they meet the criterion for inclusion in the study. To qualify for this study the group childcare centres must provide care for children aged three to five years of age and be managed by a qualified Early Childhood Educator, as licensed by the Province of British Columbia. They must be classified as group day care centres for children 30 months to school age, licensed as a Group Day Care Facility under Child Care Licensing Regulations (Community Care Facility Act, 2000). Each centre included in this study was identified as a 'top quality program' by qualified Early Childhood Educators at the referral agency. This aspect of the study is similar to the purposeful sampling in the study completed by McGill-Franzen,

Lanford and Adams (2002). This sample allowed the researcher to explore the centres that are currently considered to offer quality programming based on the expert opinion of experienced early childhood educators. Sampling within the centres identified the managers of the centres as 'experts', by virtue of their Early Childhood Education training and experience. For this reason they were selected for the interview.

As a result of these sampling techniques, one quality centre in each region was chosen for this research. Seven centres were chosen and contacted through an initial letter. In the case that there was no response from the identified centre within a region, that region was not represented. As the purpose of the study was to include only the top quality centres, there were no alternatives chosen for the centres which did not want to participate. To adequately address the questions of this thesis (see page 4), a complete overview of each childcare program within the study was indicated. While group childcare centres within this municipality are all licensed through the Community Child Care Licensing Facilities Act, the centres that are licensed vary greatly, and encompass a variety of structures, affiliations and philosophies. While all fit within the defined criteria, every centre had a unique approach to programming. Each aspect contained within the overview was required to compare the findings in Chapter 4 with the guidelines for quality foundational literature resources as outlined in Chapter 2.

All the childcare centres within this sample were private programs, owned and operated by individuals, rather than non-profit or government programs. The affiliations of the centres within this sample can be defined as the following three types:

1. Private In-home – This facility exists within a designated area within a private home. The owner of this program is also the manager and lives on-

site. This program is operated as a home-based business. The educational philosophy of this centre is play-based with a family environment.

2. Private Centre – This facility exists in a separate facility dedicated to the childcare program. This program is operated as an independent business. The educational philosophy of this program is play-based with a large group environment resembling an early elementary classroom.

3. Private Montessori Centre – This facility exists in a separate facility dedicated to the childcare program. This program is operated as an independent business. The educational philosophy is based on Montessori Educational principals (not play based) with a focus on early learning in a classroom environment.

These program styles and affiliations were significant in light of their educational philosophies and environments. Different centres seemed to be seeking print literature resources based on different guidelines depending on the educational philosophy of their program. The Montessori centre preferred Realistic Fiction and Information books to conform with their philosophy of limited exposure to traditional fantasy and fairy tales. The philosophy, as applied in this centre, limited the choice of print literature resources purchased. One daycare indicated through the interview and conversation that print literature resources were for teacher use or limited use with teacher supervision. This also limited the choice of print literature resources, as resources were chosen with teacher interest and interpretation skills in mind.

Out of the seven regions, six centres chose to participate in this study. To maintain confidentiality, the centres participating in the research were assigned a letter designation rather than a name.

Centre A: This group childcare centre was located in a private home, with the owner/manager residing in the same building. The neighbourhood was an affluent suburb of the municipality, located next to a forested park with a well maintained playground. This centre has been in operation for 13 years and currently has 21 children enrolled. This centre was the oldest centre in this study. The print literature resources in this program were kept in the manager's office on two bookshelves with the shelves labelled for genre and paper dividers between sections. Books accessible to the children were kept in a cardboard display case on a table in the corner of the main play room. This centre operated from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. for a total of 11 operating hours. There were 718 books within the entire centre, with 30 books out for the children to use. This centre also had an active after-school program, servicing children up to age ten.

Centre B: This group childcare centre was located in an affluent but rural area of the municipality. It was a Montessori centre operating in a storefront location of a small strip mall across from a gas station. The centre was well maintained and clearly renovated to meet the needs of the children. It has been in operation for six years and currently has 36 children enrolled. The centre operates from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.. The print literature resources were kept in the manager's office in a bookshelf with closed doors. Objects stacked in front of the shelf made access to the books difficult. The shelves were clearly not made to support heavy books and one shelf was obviously bowed in the middle. As with Centre A, the shelves were labelled for genre, but there was no clear division between the books on the shelves. Books accessible to the children were kept in a stacking cube bookshelf, with additional books in a large wicker basket on the floor. The total book count for the centre was 409, with 50 books available for the children. It is important to note that a large

number of the books available for the children were in sets of readers kept on the 'language shelves' of the Montessori classroom, rather than in the 'reading corner'.

Centre C: This centre was similar to Centre A as a private centre operating from a private home. It was located in a middle-class neighbourhood, not far from a major thoroughfare. This neighbourhood was clearly a multicultural area in the municipality. The centre had been in operation for 12 years and currently has 40 children enrolled. The print literature resources were stored in a tall bookshelf in a hallway that also served as the manager's office. This was the hallway connecting the centre to the private home. Resources within the large classroom were kept in a small white bookshelf. The manager indicated that she had more books stored in 'theme boxes', but they were stored in the attic and were inaccessible. Due to their inaccessibility they were not included within this study. This is the only centre in this study that operated less than 11 hours a day. It was open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.. There were 231 books in this centre, with 80 accessible to the children.

Centre D: This centre was clearly the most well developed of the group childcare centres in this study, in terms of materials and books, although it has only been in operation for one year. It was located in an affluent neighbourhood and housed in a large private facility. This facility operated from 6:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. and currently has 29 children registered. Books were kept in a variety of places throughout this centre. Books accessible to the children were kept on child-sized bookshelves in three areas, while board books were kept in plastic bins. Books were stored in large theme boxes (large sealable bins) according to subject, as well as on bookshelves in the nap room. Additional resources were kept in two closets with built-in shelving. This centre had a total of 876 books, with 220 available for

the children. It must be noted that the manager had a number of additional theme boxes kept at home, and there were also chapter books available for older children within the centre. These were not appropriate for the target age group of this study and were therefore not included.

Centre E: This centre was located in a lower socio-economic area of the municipality, near a highway and a hospital. This centre was located in a renovated house specifically used for the childcare centre. It was located next to another, affiliated childcare centre which offered 24 hour child care. It was evident through discussions with the manager that this centre served low-income families, with a program focus on safety and nutrition. This centre has been in operation for two years and currently serves 40 children. It operates for 11 hours a day. It is interesting to note that due to a need for childcare and increased registration, this centre is already ready for expansion and the owners are looking for another site, as well as additional staff. The children within this centre were of a variety of ethnic backgrounds. It was the only centre in this study with children and staff who were identified as speaking first languages other than English. This centre had 449 books, with 89 accessible for the children. The books in storage were kept in kitchen cupboards and in boxes in a closet. The accessible books were only partially accessible as they were kept in the nap room. The shelving for the books was a particleboard dining cabinet, with books on high, open shelves as well as on floor level shelves with doors. The books kept on this shelf were too large for the shelf and the doors would not close. Additional books were kept on a fireplace mantle. While 'accessible', most of the books for the children were not reachable.

Centre F: This centre was a private centre in the home of the manager. It was the smallest centre in this study, and served only seven children. It has been in operation for nine years and clearly has a 'family' feel. This centre is located in a lower-middle class neighbourhood bordering a traffic corridor. This was the only centre where the first language of the manager was not English. Books were stored in boxes in a closet, and those accessible to the children were on a kept on a large wooden display case in the main playroom. This centre also operated for 11 hours a day. There were 91 books in this centre, with 21 available for the children.

Five out of the six centres operated 11 hours a day, with one centre open six days a week and affiliated with a 24 hour childcare centre open seven days a week. No childcare centre within this study operated less than eight hours a day. While it must be acknowledged that the children may attend less than the total program hours, it is possible that the children might be in care for the total operating time. Given the amount of time that the children could potentially spend in these childcare centres, it can be argued that these centres will affect the children's early literary experiences and foundations for literacy. For comparison and analysis of program type and resource totals, an overview of the centres can be found in table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Program overview

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Number of children	21	36	40	29	40	7
Years of program	13	6	12	1	2	9
Hours of operation	11	11	8	11.15	11	11
Affiliation	Private In-home	Private Montessori Centre	Private In-home	Private Centre	Private Centre	Private In-home
Who chooses books	Manager Owner	Owner	Manager Owner	Manager Owner	Owner	Manager Owner
Languages spoken	English	English French	English	English	English Punjabi	English Polish

The total number of children impacted by the print literature resources in the sample centres was 173. Of the six centres in this study, only one centre had less than twenty children. This shows that a significant number of children were exposed to the print literature resources within this study. For the centres with more than twenty children, there were between two and eight Early Childhood Educators, assistants and/or parent volunteers working rotating shifts, either supervising independently or working as teams. This team approach indicates that in addition to being exposed to a variety of print literature resources, the children were also involved with a number of views and attitudes toward children's literature, dependant on the adult present. It is important to understand the number of children registered within each program to be able to directly compare the childcare centres in this study with IRA standards and the quality guidelines.

This sample included centres within their first two years of operation, as well as centres that have been in operation for over a decade. This unanticipated cross-section allowed the researcher to examine collections of print literature resources as programs develop differently from inception to experienced childcare programs. It is important to know how many years a centre has been open to be able to compare with IRA guidelines and to the condition of the resources.

In all of the childcare centres in this study the owner was responsible for the purchase of the print literature resources. In four of the centres (A, C, D, F) the owner was also the manager, and in the other two centres (B, E) the owner had early childhood education training. This indicates that all of the adults choosing and purchasing the print literature resources were trained in early childhood development, as well as introductory literature planning. An investigation of the socio-economic status of the families within the centres was beyond the scope of this study, so a detailed analysis could not be made, as those that were completed by Smith and Constantino (1997) and McGill-Franzen, Lanford and Adams (2002). Based on a visual examination by the researcher, the six centres did represent a variety of socio-economic statuses, with centres located in affluent neighbourhoods as well as more economically challenged areas. None of the books available for the children during this study were library books. One centre acknowledged that library books were more apparent in their centre during the school year, rather than during the summer (which was the time of this study).

While the sample included for this study could be considered small compared to the number of childcare centres throughout the entire province, it allowed the researcher access to a wide range of program styles, sizes, ages and affiliations.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher plays a different role in data collection and analysis in quantitative and qualitative methods. In quantitative research, the researcher collects the data through objective measures and analysis is completed through numerical and statistical examination. In qualitative research, however, the researcher collects subjective data while maintaining distance from the subjects. Researchers attempt to maintain objectivity by guarding against their own biases by recording detailed field notes and data. Subjective data is then viewed with a critical perspective.

In this study the researcher maintained a policy of non-participation, recording the print literature information without attempting in any way to influence the resources within the childcare centres. The print literature information was collected during the first visit to the childcare centres. This data was collected prior to the interview to avoid influencing the selection of new resources by the managers in the time between the interview and data collection.

The researcher conducting this study of childcare centres has been an early childhood educator for 13 years and is currently licensed as an Early Childhood Educator in the Province of British Columbia and as an Independent School Teacher (elementary) by the Ministry of Education. An experienced program supervisor and manager, the researcher was able to draw on her own experience, as well as additional training in elementary education, Montessori education, linguistics and psychology to interpret and analyze the information and data collected.

Data Collection

While maintaining a non-participant role, the researcher completed an examination of the permanent collection of print literature resources in the centres. Once inside the centres, the researcher sat near the books, either on the floor or at a desk, without participating in the rest of the activities of the centre or discussing the data with the children or the staff. Data collection took from half a day to three full days, depending on the size of the resource collections. An example of the data collection form can be found in Appendix A. Semi-structured confidential interviews were conducted with the managers (See Appendix B). Interviews were conducted at the convenience of the manager and took from 20 minutes to 40 minutes, as provision was made for managers to include additional information that they felt appropriate.

Print literature data was gathered formally using a framework designed by the researcher to collect information as follows:

- Publication data: book title, publisher, original year of publication

- Cover Style

- Genre

- Condition

- Additional information deemed by the researcher as important for identification of the book, such as award winner, storage style or language, was included (See Appendix C).

Teacher resources such as reference material, lesson and theme unit plans and theoretical books were not included within this study. This was to ensure that the data

reflected the children's print literature resources only, rather than the total books within the centre. In a number of centres, teacher reference materials were found stored with the children's books, but as they were at no time accessible for the children they were discounted for this study.

Data recorded did not include 'felt stories' that represent literature stories without using print literature resources. Felt stories are told orally with the use of felt cut-outs for characters and environments. As these stories were used by teachers only, they were at no time accessible for the children to use independently. While these stories may have literary merit, and often depict traditional and classic stories, as well as poems and rhymes, they do not include print literature material and were discounted from this study.

During data collection, a record was kept of the cover type of the books; hard, soft or board book. As the cover of a book can protect it from damage, it was important to compare the cover type to the age of the resources as well as the age of the centres for a thorough analysis of the condition of the resources over time.

An initial list of genres was designed based on the literature review prior to the data collection, but it was expanded during analysis to include 16 identifiable genres. Full definitions for the genre analysis can be found in chapter four. The needs of the study dictated some of the data categories developed for this study. It was apparent early in the study that additional characteristics of brand and series books should be included as they were easily identifiable and widespread throughout the literature collections.

Once the print literature data were collected, a structured interview with the licensed manager was conducted. This was used to define the demographics of the children within the program, as well as the age of the centre. Additional interview questions designed to explore the literature programming beliefs of the early childhood educators were posed.

Field notes have been kept of all interviews.

Data Collection: Analysis of Print Literature Resource Data

Analysis of the research data was based on the criteria established in the literature review, using a framework of five elements of quality literature programming: literary merit, age of the resources and accuracy, physical condition, variety of genre and developmental appropriateness, quantity and accessibility.

Literary Merit of the Resources

An analysis of recognised literary merit of the print literature resources was based on awards given by literature experts. Book reviews were not used for selection by the staff of the childcare centres and therefore, were not considered for this analysis. While it must be acknowledged that there are many quality books that do not receive awards, for the purposes of this study a thorough content analysis was not completed. All of the titles of the print literature resources found in this study were compared to the lists of award winners and honour books for the awards found in Appendix D.

Age and Accuracy of the Resources

For the purposes of this study, original dates of publication were used for analysis, but it must be acknowledged that 6 % of the print literature resources were republished. A full accounting of the publication dates of the resources within the centres, summarized by decade, can be found in Tables 4.3 and 4.4. Table 4.3 provides the actual numbers within each centre, while Table 4.4 provides a percentage analysis for comparison purposes. As a content analysis was not completed there was no measure of any changes to the content of

the resources that were republished. It is important to note that the original publication date does not indicate that the actual age of the books in the centre, as they could be recent purchases or reprints. It was not possible to record how old the print literature resources were, or how long they had been present in the childcare centres, due to the lack of records in the childcare centres.

While accuracy can depend on a number of factors, including precision of research, author commitment to exactness, and age, age is the only element that can be assessed without a full content analysis of each book. This is especially important for information books. An analysis of the age of the information resources in this study was completed.

Physical condition of the Resources

During the data collection of this study, a visual analysis of each book was completed, based on the rating scale in Appendix E. Guidelines for rating the condition of the resources were established prior to data collection. While the conditions were clearly defined, at times the researcher did need to make a decision based on a subjective analysis of the readability of the book. One factor influencing the rating of the resources was visible marks and mending. While not anticipated, a number of print literature resources were found that had price stickers on the cover, obscuring the title of the book. As these books were otherwise in Excellent or Good condition, these resources were included as Adequate to acknowledge that the cover was not readable. The use of the story itself was not restricted, as the title was present on the title page. The print literature resources which were rated Poor were considered to have a condition which restricted use of the book. During analysis, the condition of the resources was compared to the total number of books within the centres.

Genre and Developmental Appropriateness of the Resources

Prior to the start of this study, a genre list was developed for classification of the books in the childcare centres. This list was then expanded to include 16 categories. During this study, a comparison was made of the genre of the print literature resources, including the percentage of the genres represented within individual centres, as well as in the total study.

Quantity and Accessibility of the Resources

As the total number of resources was accounted for in the data collection process, a comparison of the quantity of print literature resources to International Reading Association guidelines, based on classroom libraries, could be made. An analysis of the total resources and the resources accessible to the children was also completed.

Data Collection: Analysis of Interview Data

An analysis of interview data included the demographics of the childcare centres, as well as the opinions of the managers of the childcare centres regarding children's literature and literature programming. Interview responses can be found in Chapter 5, including a discussion of the responses as compared with the five elements for foundational print literature resources and programming. All interview answers have been included either within a discussion of the program type and style, or within the five literature elements.

Summary

This chapter has included an overview of the study discussed in this thesis. A geographically representative study was conducted using an intensive purposive sample. A

detailed account of the participants involved highlighted the similarities and differences between them. An explanation of data collection techniques was provided. Also included was an accounting of the data analysis methods used to compare the information gathered in this study. The data in this study were continuously compared to the five elements for quality foundational print literature resources and programming including literary merit, age and accuracy, physical condition, developmental appropriateness and variety, and quantity and accessibility.

Chapter 4   Findings and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings of the study. It is divided into five sections based on the five elements established as the foundation for exploring the quality of print literature resources in the six focal childcare centres. The first section presents the findings for literary merit, using twelve international book awards as the standard for judging excellence. The second section encompasses the age and accuracy of the resources and discusses the finding both of the full collection of print literature (i.e., all titles collected across the six childcare centres) and the print literature collections within the individual centres. The physical condition of the resources is detailed in the third section, as measured using a four point rating scale outlined in chapter 3 and Appendix E. This section also includes the data gathered regarding the cover types of the print literature resources (i.e., soft cover, hard cover, or board books). The fourth section of this chapter identifies the genre and developmental appropriateness of the print literature resources. It includes the delineation of specific genres both across all focal childcare centres and within individual centres. The fifth section outlines the quantity and accessibility of the print literature in the childcare centres, and includes details of the actual numbers of resources in the centres, as well as those available to the children.

As a large number of British Columbian children are in childcare on a daily basis, an investigation into the print literature resources in their childcare programs may provide insight into whether these centres can provide sufficient quality print literature resources to support a foundation for quality literature programming. A total of six Group Daycare centres participated in this study, providing 2774 print literature resources for analysis. Publication years for these books spanned 102 years, beginning with Peter Rabbit (Potter,

1902). Title, brand, series, publisher, original year of publication, cover type, genre and condition of the resources was recorded. Five assessment criteria were identified (see Chapter 2) as a framework for establishing quality foundation print literature resource collections. It must be noted that not one feature is more important than another, but rather that they combine to develop a thorough foundation for the daycare book collection. An analysis of the recorded data based on the assessment framework provides answers for Question 1 of this study and offers insight into the resources available and owned by the childcare centres.

Literary Merit of the Resources

A thorough investigation of quality, based on a content analysis of the books (i.e., to individually rate the literary merit of all 2774 print literature resources within the six centres) was beyond the scope of this study. Instead, to provide an overview of the quality of the print literature identified in the six childcare centres, books which had been identified as *outstanding* by merit of a recognized award were noted. These book awards were as follows:

- The Kate Greenaway Medal (United Kingdom)

- The Caldecott Medal (United States)

- The Hans Christian Anderson Medal (International)

- The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrators Award (Canada)

- The Governor General's Literary Award for Illustration (Canada)

- Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada Information Book Award (Canada)

- Orbis Pictus Award (United States)

- Eve Pownall Award for Information Books (Australia)

- Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award (Canada)

- Norma Fleck Award for Children's Non-Fiction (Canada)

- The IRA Children's Book Award (International)

- The Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards (United States)

Books chosen for these awards are considered literature of quality and excellence, thus, inclusion of award winning literature within the print literature resource collection would indicate quality resources. It is significant that literary merit, book awards and book reviews were not given as a basis for print literature selection by the managers of the childcare centres. This is evident in the number of award winning books present. Table 4.1 offers a summary of the award and honour books present within the centres in this study.

Table 4.1: Awards Within the Total Collection

Award	Winner	Honour
Kate Greenaway Medal	2	
Caldecott Medal	3	13
Hans Christian Anderson Medal	1	
Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrators Award	1	
The Governor General's Literary Award for Illustration or Text	0	
Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada Information Book Award	0	
Orbis Pictus Award	0	
Eve Pownall Award for Information Books	0	
Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award	0	
Norma Fleck Award for Children's Non-Fiction	0	
The IRA Children's Book Award	1	
The Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards	1	3
Total	9	16

With a publication span of 102 years, and approximately 1000 awards (including honour books) given during these years according to the book awards above, the representation of what literary scholars consider the highest quality literature is extremely low. While it must be acknowledged that there may be quality literature present in the print literature resources owned by the centres, the literature judged as quality by literature experts and literary scholars is not well represented. Only 1% of the total print literature

resources within this study would be considered of the highest quality by experts. A complete list of the winners and honour books found in this study is contained in Appendix D.

Age and Accuracy of the Resources

As age is another consideration for quality analysis, a detailed investigation of publishing dates was included during this study. The print literature resources in this sample spanned a total of 102 years, from *Peter Rabbit* originally published in 1902, to books published up to and including 2004. The average age of the print literature resources was 16 years. The two most established childcare centres in this study had the oldest average age of print literature resources, possibly indicating that the highest number of print literature resources is purchased during the first years of operation, and then there is a decline in acquisition as the centre ages. This indication is further supported with the data collected from Daycare D, the most recent establishment containing the most recent literature. Table 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate the ages of the print literature resources found in each childcare centre, while table 4.4 provides a more detailed analysis, including percentages, for comparison.

Table 4.2: Age of the Resources

	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Average Age	1984	1988	1985	1992	1986	1986	1988
Year Span	99	102	59	71	65	62	102

42

Table 4.3: Age of Resources by Decade

Decade	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL BOOKS
1900	1	1	--	--	--	--	2
1910	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1920	3	--	--	--	--	--	3
1930	2	--	--	2	2	--	6
1940	11	--	5	6	3	3	28
1950	26	5	3	6	7	2	49
1960	45	18	14	19	17	1	114
1970	79	67	27	41	53	8	275
1980	188	71	77	140	178	37	691
1990	323	172	83	517	154	27	1276
2000	11	62	3	143	17	8	244
Without date	29	13	19	2	18	5	86
Total	718	409	231	876	449	91	2774

Table 4.4: Age of Resources: Percentage by Decade

Decade	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL BOOKS
1900	0.1	0.2	--	--	--	--	--
1910	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1920	0.4	--	--	--	--	--	0.1
1930	0.3	--	--	0.2	0.5	--	0.2
1940	1.5	--	2.2	0.7	0.7	3.2	1
1950	3.6	1.2	1.3	0.7	1.6	2.2	1.8
1960	6.3	4.4	6.1	2.2	3.8	1.1	4.1
1970	11	16.4	11.7	4.7	11.8	8.8	9.9
1980	26.2	17.4	33.3	16	39.6	40.7	24.9
1990	45	42.1	35.9	59	34.3	29.7	45 ***
2000	1.5	15.2	1.3	16.3	3.8	8.8	8.8
Without date	4	3.2	8.2	0.2	4	5.5	3.1
Total							

Within this sample of print literature resources the number of books published per decade consistently increased, almost doubling every ten years. This mirrors publishing trends, which have shown recent dramatic increases in publication of children's literature (Huck et al., 2001, p.101). As shown in Table 4.5 there was a great increase of books

published in the 1990's. 53% of the books within this study were published within the last 16 years.

Table 4.5: Age of Resources: Books by Decade

1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0

total books

1900   1930   1960   1990
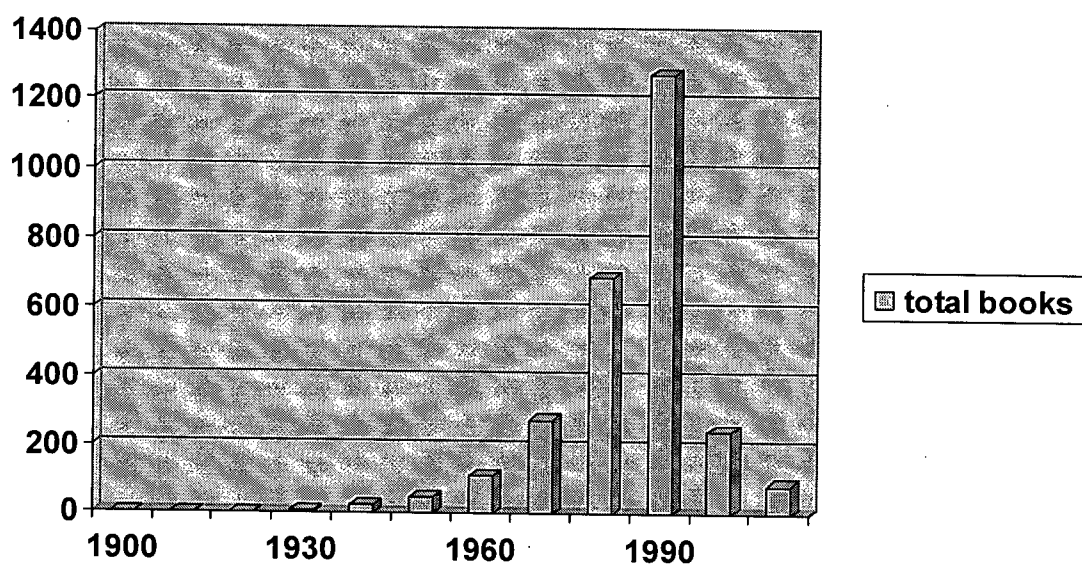
The age of these print literature resources has specific implications for information books, impacting on the accuracy of the information contained within. The average age of information books within this data sample was 16 years, with 24 % over 20 years old. Even without a content analysis, with recent advances in science, technology and world developments, it can be argued that the books that are over 20 years old may be significantly out of date.

Physical Condition of the Resources

During the collection of the print literature resource data within the childcare centres, the condition of each book was rated based on a visual analysis of the physical condition of the book as outlined in Chapter 3: Excellent, Good, Adequate, and Poor. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 provide an overview of the condition of the resources found within the centres. Shaded numerals in Table 4.7 indicate the largest rating of genre within each centre.

Table 4.6: Condition of Resources

Condition	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL BOOKS
Excellent	138	174	130	691	175	16	1324
Good	308	186	66	157	163	27	907
Adequate	168	23	13	19	60	26	309
Poor	104	26	22	9	51	22	234
Total	718	409	231	876	449	91	2774

Table 4.7: Condition of Resources by Percentage

Condition	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL BOOKS
Excellent	19.2	42.5	56.3	78.89	40	17.6	47.7
Good	42.9	45.5	28.6	17.9	36	29.7	32.7
Adequate	23.4	5.6	5.6	2.2	13.4	28.6	11.1
Poor	14.5	6.4	9.5	1	11.4	24.2	8.4
Total							2774

Out of the 2774 print literature resources, 1324 were rated in Excellent condition. If the new childcare centre D is removed from this sample (as it had a great number of brand new books due to its recent inception), then within the more established childcare centres the highest percentage of print literature resources was *Good* at 39%.

The data indicates that one centre had 24% of its books in poor condition, 6% more than those in the same centre in Excellent condition. Of the total books in all six centres, 8.4% were not usable.

Another factor considered was the children's actual access to the print literature resources. Table 4.8 summarizes this analysis. The percentage of print literature resources available for the children, as compared to the total collection within each centre, ranged from only 4% to 35%. As an *average* of only 20% of the print literature resources were available for the children's use, it might be expected that the highest percentage of print literature resources would be in excellent condition in all centres, but in fact, this was only true in half of the childcare centres.

Table 4.8: Total Resources Accessible

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Actual Total books	718	409	231	876	449	91
Actual books out for children	30 4%	50 12%	80 35%	220 25%	89 20%	21 23%

An additional factor influencing the condition of many of the print literature resources within the collections was the cover type, including soft and hard cover, as well as board books (i.e., in the hands of young children, soft cover books can deteriorate quickly while hard-cover books and board books are better able to tolerate rough handling). It is significant that the majority of the print literature resources in Daycare D were soft cover, in excellent condition, and of greater quantity, but the centre was less than two years old. For more established centres there was more of a balance between the cover types and conditions. Tables 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 indicate the cover findings for this study, with 59.4% of resources bound in soft cover. One fabric book was found in Daycare E, but this cover was not represented in any other childcare centre within this study. Daycare A had two print literature resources that had no cover and were listed separately.

Table 4.9: Cover of Resources by Daycare
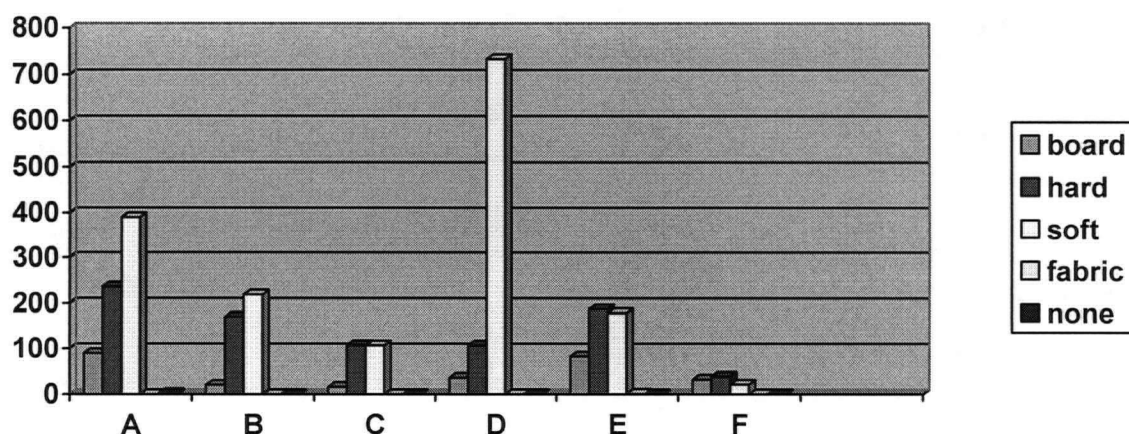
Table 4.10: Cover of Resources

Cover	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
Board	90	20	16	36	83	32	277
Hard	236	170	108	107	187	38	846
Soft	390	219	107	733	178	21	1648
Fabric	--	--	--	--	1	--	1
No cover	2	--	--	--	--	--	2
Total	718	409	231	876	449	91	2774

Table 4.11: Cover of Resources: Percentages

Cover	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
Board	12.5	4.9	6.9	4.1	18.5	35.2	10
Hard	32.9	41.6	46.8	12.2	41.7	41.8	30.5
Soft	54.3	53.6	46.3	83.7	39.6	23.1	59.4
Fabric	--	--	--	--	0.2	--	0
No cover	0.3	--	--	--	--	--	0.1

Genre and Developmental Appropriateness of the Resources

Based on the data collected during this study, the genre list recommended in the literature review has been expanded to 16 categories to accurately represent the print literature resources contained in the six childcare centres.

As outlined in Chapter 2, IRA guidelines recommend that school or classroom libraries include seven genres in their collections of print literature resources (Moore, 2003). Neuman also added the genre of second language books (Neuman, 2001) and Horning included poetry/rhyme/verse/song, readers and transitional books (Horning, 1997). During data collection and analysis, it was found that the IRA genre "picture books" was too broad and could potentially encompass all of the developmentally appropriate print literature resources in the entire study. While categories such as alphabet books, counting books, wordless books, predictable books and concept books (Galda & Cullinan, 2002; Huck et al., 2001) could be also considered separate genres, they were included in the larger genre of "information" books as they both provide information and learning tools for the children. For the purposes of this study, basal readers and transitional books have been combined to form a "reader" genre, defined as print literature resources published as an identifiable reader series, such as *Reading Rainbow, All Aboard Readers* and *Beginning Books for Beginner Readers*. Poetry, rhyme, verse and song resources have been combined to form a "poem/song" genre. The only genre in this selection which would not be considered developmentally appropriate would be Chapter Books. For the centres which owned Chapter books there were also after-school programs for elementary children, indicating that the books were appropriate for the entire range of ages within the centres. It was also found that there were a number of additional identifiable genres which were present in the childcare resource collections.

The resulting list of genres could be easily recognised within the sample data and has been used for the genre analysis for this study. All the print literature references within this list were present in the data collected.

Genre Definitions have been defined as follows:

- Traditional: familiar stories that are found in every culture, including fables, myths and legends that reflect the diverse, multicultural nature of our society. These are books where children can learn about themselves as well as others (Moore, 2003, p. 13). This would include fairy tales, such as *Little Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *Peter Pan*.

- Fantasy: stories that contain characters that may have superhuman powers that spark children's imaginations and build self-esteem (Moore, 2003, p. 13). In addition this genre was expanded to include animal stories where animals portrayed people or human characteristics, such as *The Very Busy Spider* (Carle, 1984) and *Tops and Bottoms* (Stevens, 1995).

- Realistic Fiction: stories with characters, settings and events that might happen in a child's life (Moore, 2003, p. 13). These stories can be clearly identified as people stories, such as *Big Sarah's Little Boots* (Bourgeois, 1987) and *Guess How Much I Love You* (McBratney, 1994).

- Historical Fiction: stories set in the past, accurately reflecting the time period in which they occur (Moore, 2003, p. 13), such as *Hidden Buffalo* (Wiebe, 2003) and *The Year of the Fire* (Teddy Jam, 1992).

- Biographies: books about the lives of everyday famous people. This includes community and political leaders, national and everyday heroes, and celebrities (Moore, 2003, p. 13), such as *Beethoven Lives Upstairs* (Nichol, 1993). This genre would also include autobiographies.

- Information: books that provide realistic, accurate and authentic information, including simple reference materials for various ages (Moore, 2003, p. 13). This genre would also include alphabet and number books, (Morrow, 1993, Appendix A; Vukelich et al., 2002, Appendix A) as well as concept books that "describe[s] various dimensions of an object, class of objects, or an abstract idea (Huck et al., 2001, p. 140) This would include books such as *Dinosaurs at Your Fingertips* (Nayer, 1993) and *Incredible Everything* (Biesty, 1997).

- Classic: books that "have weathered at least one generation and [are] accepted in the next" (Huck, 2001, p. 24). These would include books such as *Peter Rabbit* (Potter, 1902), *Winnie the Pooh* (Milne, 1926), *The Cat in the Hat* (Seuss, 1957), and *The Foot Book* (Seuss, 1968).

- 2nd Language: books written in a language other than English.

- Chapter Book: books that are written in novel format and that do not contain pictures on every page, as in the *Nancy Drew* series.

- Colouring Book: books specifically for colouring, these books could also be considered disposable. Examples within this sample would include *A Day in the City* (Hello Reader, 1994a) and *Let's Have a Party* (Hello Reader, 1994b).

- Graphic/Comic: books which are in graphic or comic format, such as *The Broken Ear: Adventures of Tin Tin* (Mammoth, 1945).

- Magazine: magazines for young children and adults, such as *OWL, Chickadee* and *National Geographic*.

- Poem/Song: books written in verse, rhyme, or for recognisable songs and chants (Horning, 1997, p. 69), including *Howdi Do* (Guthry, 2000) and *Baby Baluga* (Raffi, 1983).

- Reader: books that are written for children who are learning to read, using simple appropriate vocabulary, large typeface and short sentences. This genre also includes transition books which "feature simple sentences and short chapters and serve as a bridge between easy readers and longer chapter books" (Horning, 1997, p. 121). *Hello Reader* (Scholastic) and *Beginning Books for Beginning Readers* (Random House) are appropriate in this classification.

- Religious: books that portray religious beliefs and teachings specific to a defined denomination, such as Christian or Jehovah's Witness.

- TV/Toy Brand: books based on TV, movie or toy characters as established through popular media, such as *Sesame Street, Disney, Barbie* and *Tonka*. This genre would also include brand books that have merchandise related to them, such as *Franklin* and *The Berenstain Bears*.

In the analisis of the data it was found that four genres represented 78.5 % of the total books, indicating that the 12 other genres, including classic, traditional and reader genres, only contributed 21.5 % of the print literature resources to the childcare centres. The genre most often represented within the entire data collection was Information Books at 24%. This number coincides with the guidelines for developmentally appropriate literature as defined in Chapter 2.

Table 4.12 shows the percentages of the four most prominent genres. The numbers and percentages of genres present in the total collection, as well as within each centre are given in Tables 4.13 and 4.14. The shaded numbers in Table 4.14 indicate the largest genre represented within individual centres.

Table 4.12: Significant Genre Representation

- Information Books   24.4 %

- TV/Toy   19.5 %

- Realistic Fiction   17.8 %

- Fantasy   16.8 %

                                78.5 %

Table 4.13: Number of Books by Genre

Genre	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL BOOKS
2nd language	3	2	--	2	--	1	8
Biography	--	8	--	2	--	--	10
Chapter book	10	1	--	--	--	--	11
Classic	25	14	5	6	10	3	63
Colouring book	6	--	--	--	--	--	6
Fantasy	99	33	28	239	52	15	466
Graphic/Comic	1	--	--	--	--	1	2
Historical	--	--	--	6	1	--	7
Information	135	135	29	192	163	23	677
Magazine	2	2	--	1	4	--	9
Poem/Song	27	9	5	27	9	4	81
Reader	63	84	37	21	30	2	237
Realistic	81	79	41	217	60	17	495
Religious	10	7	1	7	3	3	31
Traditional	51	7	11	18	31	9	127
TV/Toy	204	28	74	138	86	14	544
Total	718	409	231	876	449	91	2774

Table 4.14: Books by Genre: Percentage

Genre	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL BOOKS
2nd language	0.4	0.5	--	0.2	--	1.1	0.3
Biography	--	2	--	0.2	--	--	0.4
Chapter book	1.4	0.2	--	--	--	--	0.4
Classic	3.5	3.4	2.2	0.7	2.2	3.3	2.3
Colouring book	0.8	--	--	--	--	--	0.2
Fantasy	13.8	8.1	12.1	27.3	11.6	16.5	16.8
Graphic/Comic	0.1	--	--	--	--	1.1	0.1
Historical	--	--	--	0.7	0.2	--	0.3
Information	18.8	33	12.6	21.9	36.3	25.3	24.4
Magazine	0.3	0.5	--	0.1	0.9	--	0.3
Poem/Song	3.8	2.2	2.2	3.1	2	4.4	2.9
Reader	8.8	20.5	16	2.4	6.7	2.2	8.5
Realistic	11.3	19.3	17.7	24.8	13.4	18.7	17.8
Religious	1.4	1.7	0.4	0.8	0.7	3.3	1.1
Traditional	7.1	1.7	4.8	2.1	6.9	9.9	4.6
TV/Toy	28.4	6.8	32	15.8	19.2	15.4	19.5
Total							

One genre that was not expected prior to data analysis was the TV/Toy genre. This genre was not included in any assessment or evaluative literature included in the literature review of Chapter 2. The number of print literature resources found which were clearly based on TV and movie characters or toys and brands suggested the addition of this genre. It is significant that media influenced print literature resources were 19.5% of the total resources, and for two of the centres it was the largest genre represented. Tables 4.15 and 4.16 give an accounting of the number and percentage of TV/Toy genre identified in each centre.

Table 4.15: TV/Toy

	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
TV/Toy	204	28	74	138	86	14	544
Total	718	409	231	876	449	91	2774

Table 4.16: TV/Toy by Percentage

	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
TV/Toy	28.4	6.8	32	15.8	19.2	15.4	19.5
Total	718	409	231	876	449	91	2774

Three centres within this sample recognized that they had staff and/or students who regularly spoke another language. The centres with French and Polish speakers owned developmentally appropriate books in French and Polish, although only the Polish books were accessible to the children at the time of this study. For the centre that documented

children for whom Punjabi was the first language, there were no books in that language. One centre owned Cantonese resources but did not have any Cantonese speakers currently enrolled.

Quantity and Accessibility of the Resources

During the data collection of this study, record was made of the total print literature resources owned by the centres, as well as the number of print literature resources available to the children during the day. While the childcare centres all had significant numbers of print literature resources, many of the resources were kept out of reach of the children, either for teacher use only, or in storage. Table 4.17 details the number of resources available for the children during the time of this study.

Table 4.17: Available Resources

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Actual Total books	718	409	231	876	449	91
Actual books out for children	30	50	80	220	89	21
Books available per child	1.4	1.4	2	7.6	2.2	3

Summary

This chapter outlined the findings of the study. The data (2774 print literature resources from six quality childcare centres) were analysed using a framework of five factors (i.e., literary merit; age and accuracy; physical condition; genre; and, quantity) to provide insight into the foundational print literature resources that children in six childcare centres are being exposed to. The findings indicate that literary merit was not a consideration for purchasing print literature resources. Only 1% of the print literature resources had been recognised by literary experts and scholars for their literary merit. The average age of print literature resources within the total data sample was 16 years, with Information, TV/Toy, Realistic fiction and Fantasy books the largest genres represented. The majority of print literature resources were in Excellent condition, ranging from 79% in one centre to 30% in another. Quantity emerged as an interesting factor, with total quantity meeting and exceeding established guidelines, however, the data indicated that considerably fewer resources were actually accessible to the children.

Chapter 5   Discussion

Introduction

This chapter is organized to present the findings of the study in terms of the first

research question that guided it:

1. What print literature resources are owned by the childcare centre and are

   available for the children enrolled in the early childhood program and what is

   the quality of those resources?

First, the discussion focuses on the five elements used to analyze the data. This

discussion is divided into five sections each section representing one of the five elements

(i.e., literary merit, age and accuracy, physical condition, developmental appropriateness

and variety, and quantity and accessibility). Each section also includes an analysis of the

relevant responses from the managers of the individual centres. A section on the

philosophical differences between the centres and managers as expressed during the

interviews follows. Actual interview data is included in this section to provide an

understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of each centre, as well as to explore the

beliefs of the individual managers regarding children's literature and quality literature

programming.

Literary Merit of the Resources

It was consistently stated during the interviews that the choice of books by

managers was made by theme and visual appeal, rather than assessed quality. Book

awards, book reviews and genre variety were not considered as significant factors in

purchasing, but rather themes, illustrations, visual appeal and cost were considered the most

important tools for the selection of the books to be purchased for the centre. Print literature resources were purchased based on need (for theme) or on cost and impulse buying. Centre D clearly stated that the majority of their books came from Scholastic book club specifically because they were affordable and easily accessible (ordered and delivered). Cost and time for book buying were given as the two most consistent constraints to developing quality literature programs in these centres. All centres acknowledged that donations of print literature resources were accepted, regardless of quality or appropriateness. This indicates an interest in increasing quantity, regardless of quality.

As discussed in the literature review of Chapter 2, quality literature as judged by scholars and experts can be recognized through the use of book awards. It is significant that only 1% of the print literature resources in this study had been recognised in this manner.

While it would not be necessary, or practical, for *all* award winners to be represented, the fact that such a low number of exceptional resources were present indicates that what is judged by scholars and experts is not what is considered as worthy for purchase or valuable by the managers of the childcare centres. A number of managers commented that they and the children did not favour book award winners, and that they preferred other print literature resources available. This shows a wide disparity between what experts are judging as quality and what the children are being exposed to. If children's literature is for the children, should there be such a discrepancy between the scholars and the children and managers in the field? If there is such a large discrepancy between the expert opinions and the practical use of literature in common childcare centres perhaps the experts need to explore more of the literature that is appealing for the young children. Additionally,

perhaps Early Childhood Educators need to be made aware of ways to encourage use of award winning literature, and by exploring this quality literature support the growth in the use of these print literature resources.

This discrepancy could also exist as many of the book award winners chosen are developmentally appropriate for elementary children rather than preschool children. There is a wide range of developmental appropriateness that could be included with literature judged as "children's literature", "juvenile" or for "younger readers", but the number of award winning books present in this sample might indicate that a high number of award winners are more developmentally appropriate for children over the age of five. Current contenders for the *2004 Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada Information Book Award* illustrate this clearly (Vancouver Children's Literature Roundtable Newsletter, Fall 2004) (Appendix F). Out of five nominees, none would be considered developmentally appropriate for children below the age of five, or even below grade three. With the preschool years foundational in the development of literacy attitudes and skills more quality print literature resources at this level must be published and recognised as such by scholars and experts as well as professionals in the childcare field. This might promote use of award winning quality literature at the early childhood level.

One large genre represented within the data collection was TV/Toy and brand books which accounted for almost 20% of the total number of books within this sample. In one centre it was the largest genre represented. It is significant that this genre was not considered during the literature review as an assessment for quality literature. TV/Toy and brand books are seldom, if ever, considered quality literature by scholars and experts. These print literature resources are not considered for book awards, and are seldom reviewed by children's literature journals such as *The Horn Book Magazine, The Canadian*

Children's Book Centre Our Choice, Quill & Quire, and School Library Journal. As book awards were used as an assessment tool for the analysis of quality literature resources for this study, the inclusion of TV/Toy and brand books automatically discounted almost 20% of the print literature resources in this study from a rating of quality literature. This indicates that a significant portion of the print literature resources available for the children in these childcare centres would not be considered quality, even before applying other considerations.

Some of these media influenced print literature resources have developed as an offshoot of popular TV series, and within this sample books were based on programs such as *Sesame Street, Barney* and *The Muppets*. While many of these books could be classified as information or fantasy resources, their underlying premise was contingent on media knowledge rather than an understanding of story or literature. Other resources have emerged as written examples of movies, with the most notable as *Disney* movies. Most of these print literature resources could have been identified as traditional or classic stories, but their storyline and illustrations were identical to the movies themselves. These "traditional stories" rely on the interpretation of media and popular culture rather than the traditional literature itself. While it could be argued that at least the children using these resources are being exposed to the stories and the concepts contained within, it is important to investigate the goal of print literature resources.

If the goal of print literature resources is purely entertainment, then the resources within this data collection accomplish that goal. If, as proponents of quality literature argue (Egoff, 1972; Galda and Cullinan, 2002; Stone and Twardosz, 2001), good literature provides strong foundations for literacy development and books recommended for their literary characteristics are important for stimulating growth and encouraging further literary

exploration, then the resources in this study fall short. The high incidences of the TV/Toy and brand books indicates that the children are being exposed to the resources more for entertainment purposes than for quality literary experiences. For two of the daycares (A, C), the genre most represented was TV/Toy, suggesting that in these centres literary experiences are based on the popular culture portrayed through the print literature resources. One manager commented that once children discover books through popular culture and TV/Toy books, then they are more eager to explore other more "quality" print literature resources. The TV/Toy resources were used as an enticement to experience books. This implies that quality literature resources are not engaging enough on their own.

With such a representation of TV/Toy literature, does this mean that with the growth of media and the internet authors should try to connect with TV and media to promote new quality literature to replace the TV/Toy genre? We are already seeing an increase in this phenomenon with Lavar Burton and *Reading Rainbow*, and other TV shows where recognisable popular figures read the quality literature (including award winners). In some cases, the illustrations are displayed, and in others the illustrations are animated. This is not only the case for TV/Toy and brand books, as even the classic children's book *Madeline* (Bemelmans, 1939) can be found in TV and movie format, read by acclaimed actor Christopher Plummer.

Literary merit, the first consideration for a quality print literature resource collection, was not considered for collection development by the managers of the childcare centres in this study. The resulting data confirms that the majority of resources within these centres would not be classified as quality print literature resources based on literary merit as defined in this report.

Age and Accuracy of the Resources

Age is another indicator of quality literature, which affects informational literature was well as traditional and classic literature. Many of these out-of-date print literature resources could potentially encourage cultural and gender stereotypes, as well as incorrect information. It is significant to note that the age range of the print literature resources within this study was 102 years, providing the children with 102 years of information, stereotypes and attitudes. For young children unable to censor or edit the information, this means that they may be exposed to a conflicting array of knowledge. Information books were not separated from the rest of the collection, nor were they monitored for age. While some aged literature resources would be adequate or even excellent books, there was no way for the children to determine which was which.

The two oldest childcare centres in this study also had the oldest average age of print literature resources, indicating that the highest number of print literature resources are purchased during the first years of operation, and then there is a decline in acquisition as the centre ages.. When asked about the age of their resources, managers were not aware of the age of their resources. This suggests that print literature resources are considered an important aspect of program establishment, but are not considered as an ongoing requirement. This lack of continued literature collection development directly relates to IRA quantity guidelines, as they recommend 2 additional books per child per year. It also implies that childcare centres, once established, tend to stagnate, remaining with attitudes and information which are familiar yet increasingly out-dated as the centre ages.

None of the centres within this study assessed their existing collection based on age or accuracy dependant on age. Replacement of resources was never considered based on age alone, but rather on usability of the book. Cost of replacement was an additional factor

that was considered as a constraint. The *National Geographic Young Explorers* series in Daycare E is a good example of this fact. These print literature resources, numbering over 55, were in excellent condition, but as they were published as information resources in the 1970's and 1980's they were clearly out of date and inaccurate. The manager of the childcare centre acknowledged that they had been donated, and since they were in excellent condition they would remain in the centre. No staff recalled who donated them or when. When the researcher inquired about the condition of the resources as compared to their age, the manager of acknowledged that while they were accessible to the children the children did not use them, as they were kept on a floor level shelf behind a door that did not close (the books were too large for the shelf). The manager admitted that a new display bookshelf was needed but the cost was prohibitive.

Publishing trends were reflected in the data collected as the age of the print literature resources in the centres mirrored the growth of children's publishing (Huck, 2001). The most recent significant increase observed was in the last decade, 1990's. As the 1990's also saw the advent of the common use of home computers and the internet for both adults and children, it could be wondered if the increase of published children's literature will persist, and if it will continue to be reflected in childcare centre purchases. As centres have been shown to remain with books closer to their year of establishment, it would be expected that the print literature resources in the centres within this study would remain constant, but new centres would invest in new literature.

While the overall age of the resources in the total collection explored was 16 years, with information books slightly newer at 14 years of age, 46 % of the print literature resources were older. This assessment suggests that a foundation of quality print literature resources for the total collection, based on age, has not been achieved. The Information

literature was marginally better, but still would require more recent information literature to enhance the program.

Physical Condition of the Resources

The physical condition of the print literature resources of the childcare centres within this study indicated a commitment to the print literature resources in most of the centres. As expected, the newest centre has the highest percentage of Excellent resources. Three of the centres had the highest percentage of books rated Excellent, (C, D, E) while the other three had the highest percentage rated as Good (A, B, F). One centre of concern, however, was centre F which had more Poor resources than Excellent, and almost equal to Good and Adequate. It was evident that many of the books within this centre needed to be replaced, but this was a private in-home centre with a small number of children and a limited budget. While many books were mended, the mending caused further restriction of the resource. This concern increased when it was acknowledged that the manager felt that the Poor resources were well mended and the collection was extensive. This manager was clearly unaware of the importance of the physical condition of the resources, focusing instead on the total quantity of print literature resources owned by the centre.

When asked about books that are kept in Poor condition managers made comments as follows:

- We keep them out of reach so that they aren't destroyed.

- I keep it because it is a favourite and a good story.

- I don't want to get rid of it, the kids like it.

- It was from when I was a child.

- It was donated and I hate to get rid of donations.

The managers did not recognise that the print literature resources were unusable, but rather were just "unreadable", a difference between teacher use and child use, as the teacher would be unable to read the words, but the children could still look at the remaining pictures and understand the story. Poor covers did not affect the condition of the resource for some managers. They did not seem to consider replacement of a Poor book as an option. They seemed to feel that if they disposed of a Poor book, then it would be gone forever.

It is important to note that while the condition of the resources would satisfy the guidelines for quality literature programs as established in Chapter 2, the resources in such excellent condition were not available to the children on a regular basis. Most of the print literature resources were kept out of reach of the children. While an Excellent rating does indicate the presence of resources in new condition, it is important to acknowledge that this does not necessarily signify that the children in the childcare centre have access to the books, but rather that the Excellent print literature resources are present in the total collection owned by the centre. Print literature resources rated as Excellent may have been kept out of reach of the children to preserve their condition. With daily use of the resources, it would be expected that ratings of Good and Adequate would be the highest percentage of the conditions found in this sample. It would also be expected that there would be a decrease in condition as the print literature resources age and decline through use over the years. This could be shown through a longitudinal study. As shown in Table 4.8, only 4% to 35% of the resources owned by the centres were accessible to the children at one time. It would be expected that with so few books being handled on a regular basis

that all of the centres would have more Excellent print literature resources, but this was not the case for half of the centres.

One factor not expected to influence the rating of physical condition was cost, but as discount books owned by many of the centres had price stickers obscuring the covers this became a consideration. These books were consistently identified as purchased from discount booksellers, rather than from quality bookstores or book clubs. While these books were otherwise in Excellent or Good condition, they were included as Adequate. These resources would never have been considered as Excellent or Good, even on the day of purchase. It is significant that in the interest of budgeting and the addition of print literature resources managers sacrificed condition for quantity. This indicates that managers would like to provide print literature resources, but must choose from lower quality to increase their quantity, which is what they consider more important.

For young children learning to respect and handle print literature resources, the type of cover of the resources could prove to protect the books from rapid deterioration. For small hands, hard cover and board books prove more enticing and useful, as soft cover books bend and tear more easily. Hard cover books are also more easily stored and identified on shelves, with thicker spines and stronger covers. Soft cover children's books are not identifiable on regular bookshelves, but require front-facing units to display them properly. The data collected in this study does not indicate that hard cover or board books were more desirable for these reasons, but that soft cover books were more sought after, once again based on cost. Hard cover books are significantly more expensive, and for centres so clearly limited by cost, this was an important factor. As shown in Table 4.11, 59% of the total print literature resources investigated were soft cover. The inclusion of so many soft cover resources could potentially have an impact on the condition of the

collection over time, especially for the newest childcare centre which had 79% of its books in soft cover. This, in turn, would impact negatively on the costs for the centre as a higher number of replacement books would be required. A positive aspect of this would be that it would encourage the centre to replace the resources with more recent, and, therefore, more accurate ones, ensuring a continually developing collection of print literature resources.

The total condition of the resources within these centres does satisfy the guidelines as established in Chapter 2, however Daycare F was marginal. With 8.4% of the total collection unusable, it would be suggested that these resources be discarded and replacements purchased. As the condition of resources influences children's attitudes toward print literature resources, it would be preferred that unusable resources be replaced immediately, which would result in no resources in Poor condition.

Genre and Developmental Appropriateness of the Resources

With such an increase in the publication of children's literature (Huck et al., 2001) it might be thought that there would be more literature available that is developmentally appropriate for preschool children. While some book awards through the past decades have expanded to include younger readers, as with the IRA Children's Book Awards, most of the book awards consulted for this study do not differentiate between resources for preschool children or resources for upper elementary children. It was difficult, therefore, to assess the developmental appropriateness of the literature that the children are exposed to through the resources at the childcare centres using book awards and literary recognition as a guide.

The genres found in this data collection did represent all of the genres identified as those required for quality literature programming; however, the representation was very heavy for the top four genres while the rest had only incidental representation. The highest

genre of Information books shows that the childcare centres are providing developmentally appropriate print literature resources for the children, as supported by Burke (1990), Galda and Cullinan, (2002), Huck et al. (2001), and Morrow (1993). They also advocate a wide range of genre, allowing that children of this age are eager and able to explore all genres if the literature is written for their level and slightly above their ability. The concern for this aspect of literature programming in these centres lies in the fact that there were more TV/Toy print literature resources than Realistic fiction, indicating that there is more media influence than development of real life understanding.

Even with these numbers, the genres in the recommended list are adequately represented in the childcare centres. If, as the literature review suggests, literary experiences and literacy development is affected at the preschool level, then more genre variety is needed.

To increase the quality of the genre selection, it could be suggested that the representation of the TV/Toy genre decrease while the genres, other than the top four, increase. This would promote an increase in biographies, classics, graphic/comics, historical, magazine, poem/song, readers and traditional literature. Unless the daycare has a religious affiliation, it would not be suggested that the incidence of religious literature increase unless a concerted effort was made to represent a variety of religions, and specifically those represented in the population of the specific childcare centre.

One concern expressed by managers regarding the inclusion of additional genres in their collection was that they were not able to find many developmentally appropriate print literature resources for preschool children in some genres. Managers found it extremely difficult to access biographies and historical print literature resources at the preschool level. There also seemed to be conflicting information on importance of the inclusion of these

topics in childcare centres, with most managers preferring to limit the topics to traditional themes such as seasons and dinosaurs. It is significant to note that resources within the centres were not identified by author or genre, but rather by theme, which was defined differently by each centre.

Some managers felt that basal readers were appropriate for kindergarten children only, and one centre kept the Readers out of reach on the "teacher shelf" so that their use could be monitored. The Montessori preschool, however, had more Readers accessible than fiction. It was apparent that an understanding of children's learning abilities was not consistent through all centres. For the play-based centres, early literary experiences were meant to entice children but were not used consciously to develop pre-reading or foundational skills.

While the centres within this sample did not have many children or adults who spoke languages other than English, for those that did, there was a very poor representation of 2nd language print literature resources. No centre had more than three books in a language other than English. This does not satisfy the recommendations made by Neuman (2001), who advocates print literature resources not only in every child's first language, but also books that reflect the cultures and racial heritages of the children with in the centre. None of the 2nd language resources in this sample reflected this; rather the French books were *Benjamin* (*Franklin*, a brand book), and the Cantonese books were *Mickey Mouse* (TV/Toy). The only print literature resources that could be considered quality 2nd language resources were the Polish books in centre F. It must be noted however, that in this centre it was the manager who was Polish. This indicates that only where managers actually spoke another language were quality 2nd language print literature resources available, suggesting that the books were chosen more as the preference of staff rather than in consideration of

the children. It could be argued that if the managers did not speak the language of the literature then it was not usable within the centre, as the children rely on the staff to read the books to them. This argument was not applicable for centre E, which did not have Punjabi literature but did have Punjabi speaking staff and children.

One limitation to the addition of 2nd language literature was accessibility. For languages other than common North American languages (English, French, Spanish), managers found it difficult to purchase quality print literature resources. This would indicate that in areas where English is a second language, more first language children's books need to be available. One manager did indicate that parents preferred to have the children exposed to English literature during daycare hours, as that is the language that they would be using in later schooling. They felt that the children should have more exposure to the language of the culture around them rather than their home culture.

Another surprise was the discovery of religious print resources. None of the centres within this study identified an affiliation with a religious denomination. As public schools within British Columbia do not address religious issues within the education system, childcare centres without religious affiliations would also not be expected to address religious issues. While the number of religious print literature resources was only 1%, it is significant that it was present at all.

While the developmental appropriateness of the print literature resources in this study did satisfy the recommendations in this thesis, the variety of genre contained within the collections was not sufficient. Additional representation of all the genres discussed would be needed to support quality in the genre selection.

Quantity and Accessibility of the Resources

As the total quantity of resources within the centres in this study was recorded, it was possible to ascertain whether the resources satisfied the guidelines for a quality foundation print literature resource collection. During this investigation, it was discovered that no centre had a list (complete or partial) of the books owned by or present in the childcare centre. Data collection included the actual quantity of books in the centres, as well as the quantity of print literature resources accessible to the children. During the interviews, managers were asked to estimate the number of books and the number of books accessible. A comparison between the data collected and the estimates of total book amounts (Table 5.1) shows that half of the daycares underestimated the books that they had by over 100 books. The largest discrepancy was in Daycare A, with the estimate under by 518 books. This illustrates that the managers were unaware of the resources that they had. The number of books available for the children compared with the actual number of books in the collection also indicated that many of the centres were not aware of their use of the resources, as four out of six estimated only half of the actual number accessible. It must be acknowledged that the actual number of print literature resources would vary depending on the day and theme currently being studied. The actual number of print literature resources available is not constant.

Table 5.1   Actual vs. Estimated Resources

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Estimate of books	200	250-300	150	1000	300-400	80
Actual Total books	718	409	231	876	449	91
Estimate of books accessible for children	15	10-15	30-40	200	150	20
Actual books accessible for children	30	50	80	220	89	21

During the course of the data collection, the researcher observed and noted the storage of the print literature resources. Print literature resources accessible for the children were displayed in bookshelves, baskets and boxes with no order to their presentation. Storage of the resources was categorized by theme and lesson units, such as Fall, Snow, Christmas, Spring, Dinosaurs and Nutrition and Safety. Often books were kept in theme boxes, with other resources pertaining to the theme to be studied. Fall books were kept with fall displays, felt stories, fall holiday decorations and apple puzzles. Theme books were only made available for the children while the theme was studied and then removed from the shelves to prepare for the next theme. There was no way for staff to ascertain which books were in which box due to a marked lack of record keeping.

With 10.5 hours as the average operating time for the childcare centres, the amount of literature resources accessible to the children, regardless of quality, was poor. While the actual quantity of print literature resources contained within these centres satisfied IRA

guidelines, the number of print literature resources accessible to the children was unsatisfactory.

Philosophies

During the interviews all of the managers of the childcare centres expressed their understanding of the importance of quality literature programs and the importance of print literature resources in the lives and education of children. Managers responded as follows:

- Variety is needed. Educational books and fun books, multicultural, facts and non-fiction, happy and sad and real life experiences.

- I consider a quality literature program to have books that entice young children to have an interest in learning to read. It is important to offer literature that deals with real life issue and stories that the children can relate to. I think that books with useful information about different cultures, nature, science and history are important as well. Simple stories that are creative and fun can be enjoyable for children.

- A quality literature program is a consistent one, everyday, various times during the day. It includes providing books that are age AND interest appropriate. Why? When this is followed, children pick up and enjoy books because you have incorporated them into your lifestyle and it becomes just "what they do". They see reading as valuable, enjoyable and necessary.

- I believe books should be a part of a child's day, morning, noon, and night. Everyday! – no exceptions (at home for bed too!) Children learn through play and by example. Children who are read to learn to expand their minds, their ideas, their

imagination. We know this because we see it through the children's play by role

playing book characters. Children who are read to generally have a longer attention

span too. Books, stories, puppet shows, flannel stories open up children's minds

and soak up everything they possibly can. We use literature at a.m. circle, p.m.

circle, learning time, story-time, rest time, and always free-choice and transition

times.

- A quality literature program is when children are given every opportunity to see,

  touch, read books. When they can pick out their own books (at the library), when

  they are encouraged to act out, plan and write their own stories, where different

  media are used i.e. films, plays, puppets. When sharing of all reading materials is

  encouraged between home and school, when stories come alive

- Choosing books that are age appropriate, increasing level of difficulty, changing

  books and topics very often is important.

These responses show that the managers felt that the resources and the use of the

resources were important for the children. This understanding was in line with the actual

total number of print literature resources owned by the centres, but not shown in the

accessibility of the resources. The managers understood the importance of variety and

exposure, but did not mention the importance of quality resources.

Included in the interview was the question "What is your belief about children and

books? (Appendix B) The following were responses given by the managers.

- Kids need books in their life…books teach children and help make them who they

  are, including multicultural, life lessons, experiences, companionship and

  friendship, and concept learning. Children don't get enough books and don't get

enough experience to value books, they need them daily, in story time and quiet time (individual and group use)

- As a Montessori program we provide a natural "reality based" environment where children learn at their own pace by manipulating concrete materials that develop the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning. The books we choose for our classroom support the reality based concept instilled in our program. Reality based, easy to read (understand) creative and fun.

- I feel that exposing children to books, beginning when they are infants, is absolutely invaluable!!! Exposing means: being read to, having children see you read, having age appropriate books available to them, within their reach, even babies. This early exposure promotes reading readiness skills, and in turn literacy. Literacy is the foundation of all other "types" of knowledge, so it is mandatory!! (It is interesting to note that this centre had the readers in the 'teacher-only' shelf.)

- I believe that there is so much to be learned from books. Books bring children to another magical world filled with all kinds of fun. I believe that children cannot have TOO many books. You can never read enough. Healthy minds = healthy bodies. Stimulation in the mind can only bring positive outcomes. We use different forms of books too, like flannel stories, and puppets to add variety. Picture books are fabulous, especially ones with magical drawings that draw the children in. I believe tone is important as well, not just the words. It is very rewarding to see children act out a story with dolls or toys that you have just read, using their thoughts and ideas to change the version to meet their needs.

- Our belief is that early literacy for all children is very important. When children are given the written word to view and have books read to every day, it develops a natural curiosity about words and language. Poems and stories told to the children and written down by the teacher is encouraged and then put on the wall, it builds self-esteem self-concept and imagination. It also gives the teacher insight on the child's natural learning schema.

- As an early childhood educator, I believe we have to teach children to read books and love them. In my opinion, children are spending not enough time with books. They are watching too much TV. I always talk to parents and tell them how books are important in their children's development. Many parents buy DVD's, videos and too many toys, but not enough books.

It is apparent through these comments that the managers were eager to express their understanding of the importance of print literature resources. They knew the importance of print literature resources for children and expressed it clearly, but it was not fully implemented in the childcare centres. Pre-reading, and reading skills, as well as attitudes to learning and reading were consistently indicated as important but, as shown through the use of TV/Toy books, as well as an analysis of literary merit and purchasing trends, the print literature resources in these centre, the resources were chosen for their entertainment merit rather than their educational merit. This would indicate that while they had the knowledge, they were not sure how to implement it, or they were not able to implement it. The managers themselves did indicate that there were restraints on their implementation of quality programming and the purchase of quality print literature resources.

When the questions were posed "What do you see as drawbacks or challenges to your literature program? Or to establishing a literature program?" (Appendix B), managers responded with the following:

- Money, organization, lending books out because others can't afford and then they get lost.

- Watching kids bring in inappropriate books, for example, crosswords, magazines. Parents don't know what to look for.

- Lack of time to find quality books.

- Educate families who give us books as gifts to find books that are more appropriate for our program.

- Time to organize our books so we know what we have.

- Funding.

- Parent involvement at home.

- Meeting the needs of ESL children. (It is significant that this centre did not acknowledge the registration any ESL students in the program.)

- Meeting the diverse needs of the children and their backgrounds, meaning exposure or no exposure to books, reading vs. no reading readiness, attention span differences.

- Finding certain theme related books that are child friendly, educational and fun.

- We have a young group at times, whose attention can get distracted quite easily. By splitting our group up we can spend more time with the children who have a natural love of books, and encourage ones who don't with props and teach how to treat a book with care.

- Concentrate children on reading more often than watching TV.

These responses indicate that the managers acknowledge a level of frustration with support, both with funding and parent support. It is significant that none of the centres had dedicated book budgets, even though there were apparent socio-economic differences between the centres. None of the managers indicated an awareness of funding possibilities or a commitment to regular purchasing of print literature resources.

While it must be noted that free supplemental resources are available from the libraries, and all centres indicated that they used library books, they were borrowed only once every month or two. This would be less than 12 times a year. It was clear that the managers used the library as a field trip visit, or allowed the children to borrow books, but the library was not considered for use in order to enhance their own collection. Borrowing and time limits were considered constraints to library use. One manager commented that, "I have a hard time getting them back on time. We do take the children to the library for story time three to four times per year, or have the librarians come in. We also take books out from the Resource and Referral lending library." It is also significant that limits are placed on the number of books borrowed for specific themes during high interest seasons; for example, during the Christmas season only a limited amount of Christmas books may be borrowed. So while supplemental free print literature resources are available, they are not widely used. This further indicates that the managers do not consider print literature resources essential for program development.

Comments also indicated that the managers were aware of the challenges that they faced but were unable to overcome them. When questioned about what they would need to make their literature programs better, they responded as follows:

- Take better care of the books, cover them, start over and collect a few good quality books at a time. A funding program would be fantastic, someone to come in and organize and file sort books would be appreciated.

- I would filter out the books that don't comply with our philosophy. I find that some of our literature is too busy for our 3-6 age group. I would like to have access to a collection of books that are age appropriate and follow our philosophy without having to sift through all of the other literature that is not of value to us.

- Increase my collection.

- Read more myself in front of the children (modeling).

- Field trips to the library and participate in story-time.

- Summer reading programs.

- Home reading programs, which I do but I could do more regularly.

- To have enough theme books so you could have only theme books out and have about 75-100 books easily accessible daily.

- I would like to spend more time with children getting their stories down on paper with their art (illustrations) and have a better writing area. I would also like a different book rack so the children could visually see what books are out better.

- I would introduce children new books, read them every day, ask them to look at the books at our library corner, ask parents to read books to kids and talk about them.

These comments indicate that the managers know how to overcome the challenges they face but were unable to do so.

The managers of the childcare programs consistently estimated that they had less print literature resources than they actually had, with the exception of Daycare D (which

was the only centre to satisfy IRA guidelines.) Estimate differences ranged from 11 to 518 books. This inaccuracy indicates that while the managers express an interest in print literature programs and are classified as 'quality centres' by the referral program, they are not consciously aware of what they actually have to offer.

Summary

The discussion presented in this chapter was organized around the two research questions for the study. Discussion focused on the five assessment criteria; literary merit, age and accuracy, physical condition, genre and developmental appropriateness and quantity and accessibility. The discussion included data gathered during the interviews with the managers of the centres and focused on whether the quality of print literature resources available satisfy the guidelines for a quality literature program as established in the literature review.

Chapter 6 Conclusions and Implications

Introduction

This chapter is organized to present the findings of the study in terms of the second research question that guided it:

2. Does the quality of print literature resources available satisfy the guidelines for a quality literature program as established in the literature review?

This chapter uses the findings of the first question to support the conclusions of the second. It consists of four sections. In the first section a summary of the findings of the study detailed in this report is presented. The second section explains the implications that are indicated by the results of this study. The third section recommends areas for further research. Finally, the conclusions of this study are presented.

Summary of Findings

The investigation of the childcare centres within this study included a total of 2774 print literature resources in six centres. Findings in five areas provided information about the quality, age, condition, type and number of print literature resources, available in a sample of childcare centres.

Based on an assessment of the inclusion of book award winners, **the literary merit** of the print literature resources was very unsatisfactory. Only 1% of the books within the combined resources have been judged as worthy of recognition through nomination or award. If over 1000 print literature resources fit these criteria for the age span of the books in this study, then it is poor representation within these centres. Few awards had developmentally appropriate literature for this age group. This would imply a disparity between scholars and literary experts and the childcare professionals in the field. While it

must be acknowledged that many non-award winning literature resources could be considered quality, a measurement of such resources is difficult due to time constraints and limited assessment tools. An additional concern is that, while award-winners and nominees amount to only 1%, TV/Toy and brand books based on media represent close 20 % of the total print literature resources within these centres, and was found to be the most represented genre for two centres. As these print literature resources are considered of marginal quality, with less focus on literary merit and more on entertainment purposes, the quality of the collections of literature resources within this study is also affected. Literary merit was not considered as a purchasing factor by the managers or owners of the childcare centres. Book awards and book reviews were not aspects included in choice of print literature resources.

The published **age of the print literature resources** found within this study encompassed 102 years, with the average age of the resources 16 years. While traditional literature and classic literature is recognised as quality through generations, aged print literature resources may portray racial, cultural or gender stereotypes. Information resources are specifically at risk for age related concerns, as advancements in science, technology and world geography mean that information books can be quickly out-dated and incorrect. The average age of information resources in this study was 14 years. Age was not a consideration for managers or owners when choosing or purchasing print literature resources. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that age does not play a role in the removal of print literature resources from centres; only physical condition is given as a reason for removal or disposal. Out-dated donations are gladly accepted with an eye to quantity rather than accuracy. This is a concern as there was clearly no monitoring of the age of the resources in the centres. The data in this study clearly indicated that the oldest established

centres had the oldest print literature resources, signifying that print literature resource acquisition is highest during the earlier years of establishment and then declines as the centre ages. This is another concern as more established centres, affecting a continuing number of children, are providing increasingly outdated resources. While the age of the resources within this study was marginal, the highest concern is that age (and therefore accuracy) is never a factor in choosing, retaining or discarding print literature resources.

The **physical condition of print literature resources** impacts on the development of children's attitudes and respect for reading and the resources themselves. While resources in Excellent condition may not always be accessible to the children within the centres, ratings of Good and Adequate would be expected with regular use of the books. The resource data in this study, as well as manager interviews, indicated that physical condition was the only reason for discarding a book, and even then managers were reluctant to part with them for a variety of reasons, not considering replacement resources as an option. While the overall Poor rating only encompassed 8%, in one centre close to 24% of the print literature resources were considered unusable by the researcher and rated as Poor. This finding indicates that managers once again prefer quantity over quality, retaining resources that are clearly inappropriate. It is a concern that even when confronted with materials clearly in Poor condition managers were reluctant to dispose of them. Overall the condition of the books in these centres did conform to quality guidelines.

Developmental appropriateness was one factor that managers were clearly aware of as they chose the print literature resources for their childcare centre. A **variety of genres** support children's development in their understanding of literature and literacy growth. The inclusion of a variety of genres would indicate quality literature programming in the investigated childcare centres. A list of 16 genres was developed to assess the print

literature resources within this study, expanded from the original list to encompass genres which were not expected but evident. The majority of the resources fit into four categories, however, including Information, TV/Toy, Realistic Fiction and Fantasy. All of the print literature resources within this study were developmentally appropriate, with the exception of chapter books, but these were included to satisfy the needs of older children within the same program. While it is admirable to discover that Information resources were most represented in the total collection of resources, it is a concern to discover that TV/Toy books were the second largest genre represented. The unexpected inclusion of a great number of TV/Toy books indicates that this genre is widespread, and this implies that media influenced print literature resources are a large part of the children's early literary experiences, rather than print literature resources written for literary merit alone. Managers were not inclined to consciously include genre variety, preferring instead to develop their print literature resource collections based on thematic considerations.

The IRA claims that **quantity and accessibility** is a consideration when considering print literature resources in schools and childcare centres. The investigation of the childcare centres within this sample indicated that quantity is also a concern for childcare professionals. This record was completed to enable a comparison of the resources within the daycare centres to IRA guidelines. It must be noted that the IRA guidelines have been interpreted for this study. While the school library guidelines suggest 20 books per child, four of the six centres within this study clearly do not satisfy the guidelines. IRA guidelines based on classroom libraries (rather than school libraries) have been used instead, as all the childcare centres had 40 children or less, resembling large classrooms rather than school libraries. With the guidelines of "at least 7 books per child, with 2 additional purchases for each child recommended each year" (Neuman et al., 2001, p.7) the

following comparison can be made, based on the number of children registered in each childcare program within this study.

Comparing the total number of print literature resources with the number of children within the programs and the age of the childcare centres, only half of the childcare centres within this study would satisfy the guidelines based on the IRA criteria for classroom libraries, as illustrated in Table 6.1. If a comparison was done related to the American Library Association (Neuman, 2001, p.8) four of the centres would satisfy the recommendations.

Table 6.1: Quantity of Resources Compared with IRA Guidelines

	A	B	C	D	E	F
IRA classroom guidelines	693	684	1240	217	440	175
Actual	718	409	231	876	449	91
Satisfy the Guidelines?	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

It must be noted that these numbers represent the total books within the centre, *not* the number of books available to the children. While these numbers may meet the suggestions for classroom libraries, the assumed difference between school libraries and classroom libraries would be accessibility, with classroom libraries accessible to the children. Interpreted in this way the total books available and accessible per child was significantly less. When the actual number of books accessible for the children was investigated, it was found that 82% of the print literature resources were regularly kept out of reach of the children. Table 4.19 clearly illustrates the differences between the total resources and the available resources. On average only 20% of the print literature

resources were available for the children. Only one centre, the newest centre, satisfied the IRA guidelines with an interpretation of accessible print literature resources with an assessment of available resources.

The total number of print literature resources within these centres satisfied quantity guidelines but it is significant, and a concern, that the actual number of resources accessible to the children was considerably less. In all centres less than 35% of their total collection was accessible to the children in the program. Only one centre came close to meeting guidelines as applied to accessible print literature resources. This indicates while the print literature resources, regardless of quality, are present in the centres, they are not reaching the children. Although library resources could supplement the existing foundational collections, this was not demonstrated often in the centres within this study. Even though the actual quantity of the resources satisfied guidelines for quality programming, if the resources are not reaching the children, then the quality programming is questionable.

Implications

The findings in this study carry with them a number of implications which can be detailed in three sections: education, funding and identification of quality.

Education

While the managers of the childcare centres were aware of, and could articulate, the importance of literature at the early childhood level, they were not aware of realistic ways to expand and include quality resources within their programs. This implies that further education is needed in early childhood education training programs, both regarding the importance of quality, as well as practical application for inclusion of quality print literature resources. Additional education with an emphasis on literary merit and

assessment would also be beneficial. Further education using the five elements in this thesis as a framework for developing collections of quality print literature resources would support early childhood educators as they begin to develop, or continue to enhance, their programs.

Funding

Funding emerged as the most dominant factor limiting the choice of print literature resources in the childcare programs in this study. This indicates that more funding is needed to support the development of collections of quality print literature resources for group daycare centres. Accessibility to funding, as well as accessibility to quality books, is needed to support the early childhood centres. This would encourage early childhood educators to consider new quality literature resources, as well as allow them to replace old and tattered books, promoting not only quality literature but quality condition as well. The comments and concerns of the managers, as well as the investigation of the resources in this study, demonstrate that cost is a limitation in all five quality assessment guidelines as developed within this thesis. This would indicate that throughout all childcare centres in this study there is a lack of financing for print literature resources, either through a lack of understanding of the importance of the resources or through an actual financial deficiency. None of the centres had applied for, or were even aware of, any possible funding or financial support available for print literature resources at this level. This demonstrates that even if funding is available, the professionals in the field are not aware of it. If, as research in Chapter 2 indicates, print literature resources are important foundational tools for pre-reading and reading skills, as well as literary development, then increased professional support and funding would assist the managers and the centres in providing

print literature resources that satisfy the framework recommendations of this thesis. Money is clearly needed to support the growth of quality print literature resource collections, as is the education of the managers as to the importance of quality resources.

One factor that clearly impacted on all of the print literature resources purchased by the centres was cost, and this was reflected in the data in the publishing information collected. Book-clubs and series were chosen 68.6% of the time to make purchasing more convenient. Seven hundred print literature resources were book-club, while 1204 were series books. The book-clubs and series also provided familiar topics, characters and literary expectations for the children. As has already been discussed, media influence was prevalent in the data in this sample as well. When an investigation of publishers of the total collection was included in this analysis, the largest publishers were *Scholastic*, a school book-club, and *Western Publishing Co. Inc*, which publishes *Golden Books*, a discount book series. *Scholastic* was represented in this total data sample more than twice as often as the second largest publisher. It is significant that the two top publishers provide discount services, one to schools and one to the public.

Table 6.2: Significant Publisher Representation

- Scholastic   25.2 %

- Western Publishing Co. Inc.   11.9 %

- Random House   7.3 %

- Troll   2.8 %

- National Geographic   2.6 %

- Usborne   2.3 %

- Kids Can   2.3 %

All other publishers within this data collection had smaller representations, including recognised publishers such as *Simon and Schuster, Grosset and Dunlap, Penguin* and *Annick*. There were over100 publishers represented within this sample.

The fact that such a large percentage of the resources were purchased from discount book publishers and book-clubs implies that these publishers are controlling a large amount of the resources that are potentially available for this specific market. If managers limit themselves to these methods of purchase then they are also limiting the choice of books, relying on these publishers to meet their needs. More quality literature would not even be considered as it would not be offered through these services. The publishers, not the trained educational professionals or literary scholars, choose which books are available. In this case the publishers are then controlling what the children in these childcare centres are being exposed to, and through that influence have an effect on their literary and literacy foundations.

Identification of Quality

Literary merit, based on recognised literary awards or book reviews, did not appear as a factor in any decisions regarding print literature resources within the childcare centres. This finding implies that childcare professionals are influenced by media print literature resources rather than quality print literature resources and are in need additional support in choosing recognised quality literature and literature for literary merit, and that a measure of excellence of literary merit for quality literature at the early childhood level to encourage the use of quality print literature resources would be beneficial. A visible and accessible book award for literature for this age level would be of benefit and further promote an understanding of, and an awareness of, quality print literature resources for young children.

Recommendations for Further Study

The assessment of the print literature resources in this study indicate that there are a number of areas where further research could be considered. These recommendations can be summarised as follows:

- As cost was revealed as the most prevalent constraint to the development of quality print literature programs, an exploration of funding for early childhood print literature resources would be indicated. Additionally, an investigation into budgeting and purchasing trends in childcare centres would be suggested. These investigations would reveal whether financial concerns are severely limiting literacy development at the preschool level.

- A study into the training and professional development of new early childhood educators would indicate if there is sufficient training in literacy

development, while an investigation into the training of current professionals would discover whether the prevalent understanding of literacy development and the importance of print literature resources is current or out-dated. While early childhood educators must complete professional development every five years to renew their provincial licenses, there is no regulation regarding the type or content of the on-going education. It would be interesting to discover how many early childhood educators choose literacy and literary workshops, or even how much professional upgrading is available in this area. This would indicate whether more training is needed.

Conclusions

As close to 30, 000 preschool aged children in the province of British Columbia are doing much of their learning outside of their home environment in preschools or full-day group daycare centres, it is important to understand the print literature resources they are exposed to through group daycare centres. Early childhood educators are trained in the implementation of programs to support the early development of children, yet research has shown that programs vary in what they offer for children. An investigation of full-day childcare facilities licensed within the a large British Columbian municipality was completed in order to provide insight into whether or not these childcare centres could offer sufficient quality print literature resources to support a foundation for quality programming. Five factors, including literary merit, age and accuracy, physical condition, genre and developmental appropriateness and quantity, were combined to provide an assessment of the quality literature foundational programming available through the print literature

resources. While literature resources are not the only resources within the childcare centres that support literacy development, and print literature resource collections may be supplemented with additional resources, the print literature resources owned by the childcare centres offers the foundation for their literature programs. An analysis of the resources within the centres in this study enabled the researcher to determine whether the print literature resources satisfied the five factors and offered a quality foundation for literature programming. In all of the centres within this study there was much room for improvement. Overall the centres did not satisfy the elements for quality resources. While each centre did partially satisfy the recommendations, only centre D came close to meeting IRA guidelines or the guidelines established in the literature review.

It was clear that quantity and cost were the most important factors influencing quality print literature foundation collections. Quality of the resources was not a consideration. It is important to recall that the centres in this study were chosen as quality centres by a government supported resource and referral program. If these centres, chosen for their 'quality programming' and interest in print literature resources are achieving only a marginal assessment rating then what are the other less quality, centres, and those not registered with the referral program, offering as print literature resources to the children? If these resources are the best that we have to offer the children, what else is out there? As the importance of quality literary experiences at the early childhood level is increasingly understood, and an increasing number of children are spending much of their time in childcare, then a further investigation into the actual resources was essential to be aware of the print literature resources that the children are being exposed to, rather than just the educational understanding of the managers of the childcare centres. This investigation discovered that the understanding of the importance of books is much different than the

actual application of the theory. As the print literature resources actually owned by the childcare centres forms the foundation of their literature program, it is important that the resources are quality. The reality is that collections of quality literature resources are not consistently available for young children in group daycare, as revealed in this thesis.

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Appendix A: Sample Print Literature Data Collection Form

Daycare _____ . Date_____ Page ___of____

Book: _____

Pub: _____ Year: _____Series: _____

Condition: _____ Cover _____ Genre: _____

Other: _____

Book: _____

Pub: _____ Year: _____Series: _____

Condition: _____ Cover _____ Genre: _____

Other: _____

Book: _____

Pub: _____ Year: _____Series: _____

Condition: _____ Cover _____ Genre: _____

Other: _____

Book: _____

Pub: _____ Year: _____Series: _____

Condition: _____ Cover _____ Genre: _____

Other: _____

Book: _____

Pub: _____ Year: _____Series: _____

Condition: _____ Cover _____ Genre: _____

Other: _____

Appendix B: Interview Outline

<u>Overview</u>

- Name of Centre

- Telephone

- Address

- Licensed Manager participating in interview

<u>Program Information</u>

- Centre License Designation: (group daycare must be included within this designation)

- What year was the program established?

- What are the current ages of the children in the centre at the time of this study?

# of 3 year olds:

# of 4 year olds:

# of 5 year olds:

- What are the operating hours of the centre?

- What languages are spoken by the children and the staff within the centre (including first language):

- What affiliation does the program have, if any: i.e. community centre, religiously based, Head Start, Montessori, YMCA, Parent Participation, other?

- Who is responsible for the budgetary allocation for the books purchased for your program?

- Who chooses the books for your program? If it is you, how are the books chosen?

- Do you supplement your childcare centre book collection by using books from outside the centre?

- If Yes - from where:___ the library ___ your own books ___ other

- If from the library - how often: ___ once a week ___ every two weeks ___ every month___ every two months ___ every three months or longer

- If from home - how often:___ once a week ___ every two weeks ___ every month___ every two months ___ every three months or longer

- How often do you change your selection of books in use? ___ once a week ___ every two weeks___ every month___ every two months ___ every three months or longer

- Approximately how many books are in the centre for the children's use? (total including storage)

- Approximately how many books are available for the children on a daily basis?

- You have been identified as a quality early childhood centre, and this is a reflection of your beliefs. What is your belief about children and books?

- What do you consider a quality literature program? Why? Can you give an example?

- If you could, how would you make your literature program better?

- What do you see as drawbacks or challenges to your literature program? Or to establishing a literature program?

TITLE	BRAND	SERIES	PUBLISHER	YEAR	COVER	GENRE	COND	CENTRE	OTHER
1 Fish 2 Fish Red Fish Blue Fish		Beginner Books	RandomHouse	1960	hard	classic	2	B	
1,2,3 Peep			GT Publishing	1997	board	info	1	C	
10- Simple Science		Walt Disney Fun to Learn Library	Bantam	1983	hard	info	2	E	
1000 Facts about Wild Animals			Kingfisher	1992	soft	info	1	B	
1001 Facts About Dinosaurs	DK	DK	DK	2002	soft	info	1	D	Dinosaurs
1001 Things to Spot in Town			Usborne	2000	soft	info	1	B	
1001 Things to Spot of the Farm			Usborne	1998	soft	info	1	B	
1001 Things to Spot on the Farm			Usborne	1998	soft	info	1	E	kept out of reach
101 Dalmatians	Disney	Little Golden Book	Western Publishing Co. In	1991	hard	TV/Toy	2	A	
101 Dalmatians	Disney		Random House	1981	hard	TV/Toy	4	A	
101 Holiday Jokes			Scholastic	1996	soft	info	1	A	Winter/Christmas
101 Holiday Jokes			Scholastic	1996	soft	info	3	D	
11- All About You		Walt Disney Fun to Learn Library	Bantam	1983	hard	info	2	E	
1-10		Golden Sturdy Book	Western Publishing Co. In	1977	board	info	3	A	
1-10	Disney Babies	Golden Board Book	Western Publishing Co. In	1991	board	TV/Toy	3	A	
12 Days of Christmas			Ottenheimer	1991	hard	poem/song	2	A	kept out of reach
12 Days of Christmas			Unicorn	1992	hard	poem/song	1	E	
12- It's a Small World		Walt Disney Fun to Learn Library	Bantam	1983	hard	info	2	E	
15- Ride Float and Fly		Walt Disney Fun to Learn Library	Bantam	1983	hard	info	2	E	
19- A Guide to Fun and Learning		Walt Disney Fun to Learn Library	Bantam	1983	hard	info	2	E	
5- Animals and their Babies		Walt Disney Fun to Learn Library	Bantam	1983	hard	info	2	E	
6- Real Life Monsters		Walt Disney Fun to Learn Library	Bantam	1983	hard	info	2	E	
8- from Whales to Snails		Walt Disney Fun to Learn Library	Bantam	1983	hard	info	2	E	
8 O'Cluck			Scholastic	1995	soft	fantasy	3	A	
9- Our Wonderful Earth		Walt Disney Fun to Learn Library	Bantam	1983	hard	info	2	E	
A Baby Sister for Henry	Sesame Street	Little Golden Book	Western Publishing Co. In	1984	hard	TV/Toy	2	D	
A Bad Week for the Three Bears			HarperCollins	1992	soft	fantasy	1	D	
A Beary Happy Easter	Disney	Golden	Western Publishing Co. In	1999	soft	TV/Toy	2	D	
A Big Year on Sesame Street	Sesame Street	Golden	Western Publishing Co. In	1989	hard	TV/Toy	2	A	
A Bird's Best Friend	Sesame Street	Golden	Western Publishing Co. In	1986	soft	TV/Toy	2	A	
A Bird's Best Friend	Sesame Street	Golden	Western Publishing Co. In	1986	hard	TV/Toy	4	A	
A Birthday Bike for Brimhall			Dell Young Yearling	1985	soft	reader	3	A	
A Bug, a Bear and a Boy			Scholastic	1997	soft	fantasy	1	D	Forest
A Bug, a Bear and a Boy			Scholastic	1997	soft	fantasy	1	D	Forest
A Bug, a Bear and a Boy			Scholastic	1997	soft	fantasy	1	D	Forest
A Bugs Life	A Bug's Life	Disney	Western Publishing Co. In	1998	soft	TV/Toy	2	B	
A Cake for Me			Scholastic	1998	soft	realistic	1	D	Health/Nutrition
A Child's Good Morning Book			HarperCollins	1995	soft	info	2	A	

Appendix D: Book Awards: used for assessment of data collected with resulting winners and honour books identified:

The Kate Greenaway Medal (United Kingdom)

- 1995 The Christmas Miracle of Jonathon Toomey

- 1988: Can't You Sleep Little Bear?

The Caldecott Medal (United States)

- 2001 Honour: Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

- 1999 Honour: No, David!

- 1996 Honour: Tops and Bottoms

- 1994 Honour: Owen

- 1989 Winner: Song and Dance Man

- 1987 Honour: Alphabatics

- 1986 Honour: The Relatives Came

- 1978 Winner: Noah's Ark

- 1977 Honour: Hawk, I'm Your Brother

- 1976 Honour: Strega Nona

- 1968 Honour: Frederick

- 1964 Winner: Where the Wild Things Are

- 1964 Honour: Swimmy

- 1962 Honour: Little Bear's Visit

- 1954 Honour: The Steadfast Tin Soldier

- 1952 Honour: Bear Party

The Hans Christian Anderson Medal (International)

- 1970 Maurice Sendak - Illustration

The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrators Award (Canada) –

- 1989: Amos's Sweater

The Governor General's Literary Award for Illustration (Canada)

- none

Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada Information Book Award (Canada)

- none

Orbis Pictus Award (United States)

- none

Eve Pownall Award for Information Books (Australia)

- none

Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award (Canada)

- none

Norma Fleck Award for Children's Non-Fiction (Canada)

- none

The IRA Children's Book Award (International)

- 2001: Stranger in the Woods

The Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards (United States)

- 1994 Honour: Owen

- 1992 Winner Picture Book: In the Tall, Tall Grass

- 1992 Honour: Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf

- 1990 Honour: Chicka, Chicka, Boom, Boom

Appendix E: Criteria for Assessment of Physical Condition of the Resources:

- Excellent Condition - books appear in new condition

- Good Condition - books show evidence of daily use but are not marked or visibly mended

- Adequate Condition - books show evidence of repeated use with folded pages, visible mending or marks which *do not restrict use of the book*

- Poor Condition - books are visibly torn, visible mended and/or marked in a way which *restricts use of the book*

Appendix F: 2004 Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada Information Book Award nominees

Bogart, J.E. (2003) Emily Carr: At the Edge of the World. Tundra Books.

Galloway, P. (2003) Archers, Alchemists and 98 Other Medieval Jobs You Might have Loved or Loathed. Annick Press.

Graydon, S. (2003) Made You Look: How Advertising Works and Why You Should Know. Annick Press.

MacLeod, E. (2003) Albert Einstein: A Life of a Genius. Kids Can Press.

Ross, V. (2003) The Road to There: Mapmakers and Their Stories. Tundra Books.

(Flick, 2004, p.21)