'We don't leave our emotions at the nursery door': Lived Experiences of Emotional Labour in Early Years Professional Practice

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

Declaration:

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Highly romanticised images of childhood produce notions of ideal children serenely cared for as they laugh and play all day. However, these conceptualisations do not accurately reflect the multiple realities of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), and the complexity and demands of working with young children and their families. This research focuses on the Key Person Approach, which is a statutory requirement for ECEC practice in the United Kingdom (UK) characterised by close practitioner-child attachment relationships and parent partnerships. This thesis is concerned with gaining deeper understanding of emotional labour in ECEC, and explores the implementation of the related UK statutory duty for all early years practitioners to have regular supervision time for supported professional reflection. An empirical study with a cohort of graduate practitioners presents previously unpublished insights into experiences of emotional labour and supervision within a wide range of early years settings in South East England; thematic analytical processes within a phenomenological approach facilitate the emergence of six analytical themes from focus group and individual interview data. The rationale for the research is such that by exploring this previously under-examined area, a deeper understanding is provided, thus adding to both the literature in this area, while simultaneously contributing to discussion around workforce support and professional education and development needs. The study findings are of direct practical relevance as they inform the authoring of The Emotion Curriculum for The Early Years Workforce; this research output is a briefing document for workforce educators and trainers to support in the design of curricula to foster professional caring dispositions and emotional resilience in preparation to work in the emotionally demanding ECEC sector, and to encourage more consistency in professional supervision practices across the sector.

GLOSSARY

Child Tax Credit – an income tax reduction for working people with children and young people in full time education in England; an income threshold is applied to target support to lower income families.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) - a government department, between 2007 and 2010, responsible for issues affecting children and young people in England up 19 years; it is now called Department for Education.

Department for Education (DfE) - the government department holding current responsibility for children's services and education, including higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) - a government department between 2001 and 2007, responsible for the education system as well as children's services in England.

ECEC - the acronym for Early Childhood Education and Care.

EYITT - the acronym for Early Years Initial Teacher Training.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – the statutory framework in England setting standards for children's learning, development and care up to 5 years old.

EYTS - the acronym for Early Years Teacher Status.

Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) - the ranking of Local Authority Districts (LA) in England which is used as an indication of the economic status of families living in the area.

Income support, income based jobseeker's allowance, and pension credit - State financial support for people with no income or a low income, and little savings in England.

ISI - the acronym for the Independent Schools Inspectorate in England.

Key Person Approach (KPA) - one of the principles in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in England, and now a statutory requirement of the framework; it is a reciprocal relationship between a member of staff, individual child and their family.

Key Stage 1 - the statutory requirement across the first two years of primary education in schools as part of the National Curriculum for England.

National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) - an executive government agency of the Department for Education (DfE), with key aims to improve academic standards in England.

Local Authority - the distribution of local government functions by regional and local arrangements in England.

National Curriculum for England - the statutory requirement for education in schools in England; it sets out the programmes of study and attainment targets for all subjects across all year groups.

Ofsted - the Office for Standards in Education is responsible for the inspection of education and care settings in England.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), along with Communication and Language (CL) and Physical Development (PD), is one of the three prime areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework in England; these areas are called *prime* as they underpin all other aspects of young children's learning and development.

Pedagogy of Care and Wellbeing (PCW) - a model of reflective practice with young children proposed by McMullen, M.B., Buzzelli, C. & Yun, N.R. (2016).

Professional Love in Early Years Settings (PLEYS) - a research project led by Jools Page and funded by the University of Sheffield Innovation, Impact and Knowledge Exchange in collaboration with Fennies Nurseries; this project was set up to examine how those who work in early years settings can safely express the affectionate and caring behaviours which their role demands of them.

PVI - the acronym for private, voluntary and independent education and care settings.

Reception Year - School year preceding entry into Key Stage 1; part of the Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS) framework in England.

Tavistock Observation Method - a reflective observation model devised at the Tavistock Clinic in London, England.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter introduction

This introductory chapter elucidates and justifies the relevance and currency of the area of study. The chapter presents the stimulus for selection of the research area, and positions the study in relation to my own professional experience and background. My research is located against a landscape of national policy reforms, and this chapter clarifies the relationship between these reforms and the focus of my research. Furthermore, the chapter introduces the research questions and methodological approach, and considers the study's potential impact.

1.2 Focus of the research

Leave your emotions at the door, is a direction given where emotion is considered likely to get in the way of sound judgement in the workplace (Grandey, 2000). This view expresses a modernist bureaucratic attitude to work, where emotions are seen as disruptive, unreliable and a distraction to efficiency, as first articulated by Max Weber (1922/1978). However, the nature of work in postmodern society has seen the decline of heavy industry and the rise of human services: greater importance is given to soft skills in advanced consumer capitalism. It is this collection of socio-economic developments which have led to the covert, and not so covert, organisational

management of emotion in the workplace (Hochschild, 2003). Organisations may seek to manage the emotions performed by employees, such as their smiles, good humour and patience; these workers are selected and waged for their ability to offer emotional performances which promote the desired state of mind in the consumer (Ward & McMurray, 2016). However, this commercialisation of emotion is not without consequences for the worker (Hochschild, 2003). The focus of this research is on 'emotional labour', a term given by the sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild in 1983 to describe the management or modification of workers' emotions for a wage, and as a requirement of their work role. The caring professions provide the context of my study, with emotional labour in early childhood education and care (ECEC) explored through empirical research conducted in England in the United Kingdom (UK). My study is concerned with uncovering how emotional labour is experienced in early years settings, and evaluating the effectiveness of current models of supervision and training. Although these themes may be of relevance to therapeutic domains, my research is wholly reflectively critical: the study aims to generate recommendations relating to workforce education and training as preparation for entry into the ECEC sector and professional development, and to signpost directions for further inquiry.

1.3 Stimulus for the research

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1.3.1 My professional experience and background

My early years professional experience is grounded in working in settings in the South East of England; their intake reflecting local communities subject to deprivation. In my early teaching career I worked in the counties of Essex and Suffolk in state

funded mainstream schools located in materially disadvantaged urban areas; I taught as a qualified teacher in the Reception Year and Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum for England. After the birth of my fourth child I worked in a 'pack-away' pre-school located in a prefabricated community hall in rural Suffolk on five mornings a week; I also supported a breakfast and lunch club run for the benefit of the children attending the pre-school. The pre-school was managed as a registered charity by a voluntary committee to serve the needs of families dispersed across a sparsely populated rural area; the majority of the families reside at permanent addresses and some families are settled Travellers. The community experiences limited employment opportunities, public transport, access to library and health services, and some are at risk of social isolation. I mostly enjoyed my role, however, I found that creating strong parent partnerships with carers was not always easy.

Highly romanticised images of childhood produce notions of ideal children (Sumsion, 2003) who are serenely cared for as they laugh and play all day. However, these romantic notions do not accurately reflect the multiple realities of ECEC practice and the complexity and demands of working with young children and their families (Sumsion, 2003). Young children communicate and express their needs and emotions in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways: a relative lack of verbal language and emotion regulation skills may result in frustration, anxiety and unhappiness being expressed through periods of crying and physical action. Even when a child's communication of their feelings is understood by an empathetic practitioner, the desires of the child may not be something which can be satisfied by the staff. When working with children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties the child's feeling may be so intense and painful that they are projected onto the staff and other children

(Elfer, 2013), while practitioners may have feelings of being inadequate or de-skilled by the experience (Sumsion, 2003). I have subsequently reflected upon the emotional demands that my early years professional work placed upon me, and the personal consequences of supporting families who were having difficulty providing care and support for their children. I have concluded that I unconsciously adopted the attitudes and emotions of those around me; feelings of sadness, frustration and anxiety were, at least in part, experienced as a result of the process of introjection. These reflections deepened my awareness of the need for more research and debate around how emotional labour is experienced and supported in early years settings.

More recently I have taught on a wide range of further and higher education early years programmes. At the beginning of my evening classes for a work-based leadership diploma, I often welcomed my class of experienced early years practitioners with the *leitwort*: 'Have you all had a good week?' On one occasion a senior nursery practitioner responded by describing how her team had been left feeling 'emotionally exhausted' from long day shifts of providing 'loving care' for a large number of new children who had been experiencing varying degrees of separation anxiety. This senior practitioner described how she viewed the preparation of meals and snacks as 'emotional breaks', supporting her ability to manage and cope with the 'emotional demands' of the key person role. This disclosure of personal experiences by the senior practitioner initiated a class discussion regarding the 'romance and reality' of caring for young children in early years settings (Noble & McFarlane, 2005). The leadership diploma class discussed their emotional experiences of working in ECEC; they mainly shared accounts of working with children who experienced difficult transitions, trauma, deprivation, threat or stress. Contributions to the discussion confirmed that protracted

periods of close emotional interaction with young children places high physical, mental and emotional demands on practitioners. Furthermore, it was suggested that more support is needed to enable practitioners to cope with the emotional demands of their role. This discussion reminded me how only on rare occasions did I informally share open and honest discussion with my former co-workers about how our work was affecting our feelings. The senior practitioners attending the evening class focused on the negative consequences to the self, however, on reflection I maintain that despite also having experienced some difficult emotion, overall I enjoyed working with the children and being part of a team, and feeling that I was helping. This reflection deepened my awareness of the need for more research and debate around the personal consequences of emotional labour in early years settings, including positive outcomes for staff.

1.3.2 My assumption of the similarities across caring professions

At the outset of my doctoral journey I was teaching and assessing for a work-based Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services, which was developed in 2011 by the Sector Skills Council for Health and Social Care and the Children's Workforce in England. This leadership diploma comprised a group of mandatory units, after which the remaining units were decided by selection of an optional professional pathway. Mandatory shared themes included promoting professional development, and professional supervision practice in health and social care or children and young people's work settings. Professionals from both health and social care and early years settings were assessed against the same criteria: these criteria included understanding the purpose, theories and models of

professional supervision; demonstrating knowledge of relevant legislation, codes of practice and agreed ways of working; application of knowledge from research findings, critical reviews and enquiries; and understanding how professional supervision can protect the client, supervisor and supervisee. In 2013, a new ECEC-specific work-based Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for the Children and Young People's Workforce was developed by the Skills for Care and Development Sector Skills Council in England, and this new qualification retained both the professional development and the professional supervision units from the generic diploma as mandatory. The relevance of retaining these units without revision led me to question the extent of the similarity of practitioners' experiences in each sector.

Care is basic to human existence (Tronto, 1993), and fundamental to human development and wellbeing. Caring is both essential on a biological level for infants to survive and for the sustained close relationships which nurture children's holistic development. Similarly, caring is crucial for both meeting physical needs and for providing empathetic support to patients who are dependent due to illness or at the end of life. Regardless of the age or need of the cared-for, caring weaves individuals into a *network of relationships* (Vanlaere & Gastmans, 2011) as caregivers interact with those being cared for, families of the cared-for, and the caregiver's co-workers. Furthermore, caring for another individual of any age requires the caregiver to perform physical, mental, and emotional work (Hochschild, 2003). It is this universality of caring which supports my decision to explore the large volume of published work relating to emotional labour and supervision in other caring professions to inform my understanding of the phenomena in the under explored ECEC context.

1.4 National context

This study is located in England in the UK, and this subsection reviews policy which has framed work in ECEC in England over recent years, and introduces the related concepts of *key person* and *supervision*. Research evidence (Elfer & Selleck, 1999) called for policy and practice to place an emphasis on nurturing attachments between young children and early years practitioners. Elfer, *et al.* (2012, p.18) describes a system with named key persons for each child as:

> A way of working in nurseries in which the whole focus and organisation is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between individual children and individual nursery staff.

However, subsequently, Dahlberg *et al.* (2007) have presented a case for children's attachments in early settings to be more focused on the children's relationships with their peers, and to complement children's attachments with family.

David *et al.* (2003) reviewed the research underpinning the UK Government guidance, *Birth to Three Matters Framework* (DfES, 2002), where the key person approach was included. David *et al.* (2003, p.62) highlight how:

> …a small number of individually designated practitioners relating to particular children, as advised by Elfer *et al.* (2002), enables responsiveness and sensitivity to individual children.

In a home context the caregiver may have sole responsibility for emotional attachment, whereas children form different kinds of relationships with any number of adults and children in the early years setting (Degotardi & Pearson, 2014). The key person system does not intend for *exclusive* relationships between key persons and their key children, as sometimes misunderstood by practitioners (Albon & Rosen, 2014).

The *Early Years Foundation Stage* (EYFS) (DCSF, 2008) was introduced towards the end of 2007 to replace the *Birth to Three Matters Framework*. From implementation in 2008, the EYFS (DCSF, 2008) asserted that 'children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person' (p.5); promoting the key person role to the level of a statutory requirement from its previous guidance status. Against a background of commitment to de-regulation the Coalition Government commissioned Dame Clare Tickell to lead a review of the EYFS in 2010. Retention of the key person role as a statutory duty was recommended by Dame Tickell and accepted by the Government. The Tickell Review (2011), in addition to recommending retention of the key person duty in the EYFS, recommended inclusion of a further duty for all early years practitioners to have regular supervision time for supported professional reflection. Tickell (2011, p.43) also highlighted how both the term *supervision* and its purpose needed clarification:

> Supervision has different meanings to different practitioners …some practitioners take it to refer to discussions about their continuing professional development. For others it is a way to raise concerns and receive support to deal with difficult or challenging situations. It can also mean the practice of observing staff caring for children.

Elfer (2012), in agreement with Tickell (2011), reported that not all members of early years staff were aware of supervision and its purpose. On Tickell's (2011) recommendation, the status of supervision for the early years workforce was raised to a legal requirement: supervision of staff moved from being a *should* in the 2012 EYFS, to a *must* in the revised 2014 EYFS Statutory Framework. The statutory requirements for a key person system and the supervision duty remain in the most recent version of the EYFS (DfE, 2017a). This study is timely in providing an opportunity to explore whether there has been progress towards a common understanding of what support and

guidance ECEC practitioners can expect from supervision, and whether the reality of their own workplace experiences is a match with these expectations.

In a review of training recommendations for the early years workforce, Nutbrown (2012) reinforced the significance of emotion in performance of all ECEC roles in terms of 'the warmth and love children need to develop' (p.19). In 2013 the Coalition Government (DfE, 2013) responded to the Nutbrown Review (2012) with a commitment to reducing childcare costs for parents whilst raising the *quality* of childcare for all children. However, hegemonic definitions of *quality* have been fiercely debated (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008), and the debate continues with academics such as Osgood *et al.* (2015) and Roberts-Holmes (2015) critically deconstructing and problematising concepts of quality in educational policy. The Coalition Government's (DfE, 2013) proposal for delivering quality at a reduced cost included raising statutory ratios of the number of children per adult carer in early years settings where there are graduate staff; proposing amendment of the adult to child ratios for two-year-olds from four children per adult to six children per adult, and the adult to child ratio for ones-and-under rising from three children per adult to four children per adult. However, the Government's plans for this exercise in cost-efficiency through implementing relaxations of statutory adult to child ratios were challenged by academics, practitioners and sector spokespersons: this 'resistance grounded in human values of care and love' (Taggart, 2015, p.383) saw withdrawal of these proposals for reform. However, the current Conservative Government has pressed ahead with a scheme extending free childcare entitlement from fifteen hours to thirty hours per week for working families, with the aim of increasing childcare provision (DfE, 2017b). Some infants have already been receiving care in an early years setting for up to forty-five hours per week

(Goouch & Powell, 2012), supporting an argument for the relevance of reporting on practitioners' lived experiences of providing long days of care in my study. My research is set against the a landscape where early years settings are already under pressure in terms of recruitment, staffing and funding (Ceeda, 2017); supporting the further argument for my study being timely by reflecting personal and professional implications of implementing the UK Government's intentions.

1.5 Workplace professional development and support

Ferguson (2011), writing from a background in social work, comments on the need for staff to feel that they are themselves 'emotionally held and supported' in order to 'engage with, touch, and be active with the child' (p.205); noting a relationship between the quality of workplace support received by staff and the ability to attend to the needs of a child, Ferguson (2011, p.205) writes:

> …workers' state of mind and the quality of attention they can give to children is directly related to the quality of support, care and attention they themselves receive from supervisors, managers and peers.

In resonance with Ferguson's (2011) acknowledgement of the importance of workplaces provide emotional support for staff, since embarking upon this study I have noted some progress in terms of the development of workplace resources aimed at enhancing practice in emotional work. A number of UK Local Authorities and sector bodies have produced supervision guidance for early years settings in response to the statutory inclusion of the supervision duty in the revised EYFS (DfE, 2014). For example, guidance is provided by: Sheffield Safeguarding Children Service, Out of School Network and Pre-School Learning Alliance (2013); and Leicester Early

Learning and Childcare Service (ELCCS) (2014). Although predominantly focusing on

child safeguarding, these publications also cite the requirement and benefits of

practitioner engagement in supported professional reflection. For example, Leicester

ELCCS (2014, p. 6-8) explain:

> [supervision] can be used to reduce stress and explore staff
> feelings [so as] to support staff to manage work effectively…
> this is the most important part of supervision in the caring
> services. Staff can only fully support the children and their
> families if they are supported themselves.

In addition to local authority and sector body produced workplace resources, a

partnership between Sheffield University and a leading nursery chain has led to the co-

production of an 'Attachment Toolkit' (Page *et al.*, 2015) as an output of the

Professional Love in Early Years Settings (PLEYS) project. The PLEYS project set out

to examine how early years practitioners are able to safely express the affectionate and

caring behaviours required of their role; with the project findings supporting the

creation of a set of case studies, narratives, video materials and models of reflective

practice to support early years practitioners in their close interactions with young

children, and in their work with families. Furthermore, Sturt and Wonnacott (2016),

having previously authored guidance on supervision practice in social care, have

published a practice guide to set out how supervision meetings may be managed and

recorded in UK early years settings. The model adopted in the guidance produced by

Sturt and Wonnacott (2016) proposes providing emotional support concerned with

establishing trust between the supervisor and supervisee to enable discussion of staff's

emotional responses to their work. The resources produced by local authorities, sector

bodies, the PLEYS project (Page *et al.*, 2015), and Sturt and Wonnacott (2016) show

progress in supporting practitioners' professional development in the workplace,

however, production of these workplace resources highlights shortfalls in career preparation and professional development in sector education and training programmes.

1.6 Research questions

My main research question is: How is emotional labour experienced and supported in early years settings? A short series of subsidiary questions were formulated to help *unpack* the component elements of the problem (Gorard, 2013). The first of these questions was of an exploratory nature, while the second and third questions were causal. My three subsidiary questions are as follows:

1. How do early years practitioners deploy and/or regulate their emotions in performance of their role?

2. What are the consequences of their emotional labour?

3. How effective are current models of supervision and professional reflection?

In response to these research questions, I reviewed what has been written about the management of emotion as a requirement of a work role, and the current thinking and research relevant to the emotional labour and supervision of caring professionals (see 'Literature Review' chapter). Furthermore, these research questions were responded to through conducting an empirical study (see 'Methodology' chapter). Furthermore, the purpose of the empirical study was to develop an understanding of the lived experiences of emotional labour and models of supervision in ECEC (see 'Findings' and 'Discussion' chapters). Finally, I engaged in reflection upon the processes and learning; drawing conclusions which respond to the research questions, to

produce recommendations relating to future research and the research impact (see 'Conclusion' chapter).

1.7 Research impact

From the outset of my study I considered the potential impact of my research; three objectives for impact were set alongside formulating my research questions:

1. Contribute to an under-researched area, providing detailed research methodology so that other researchers can replicate the study in other contexts.

2. Raise awareness of how emotional labour is experienced by early years practitioners, and how supervision is enacted in early years provision; highlighting connections between the key persons role, emotional labour, the supervision duty, and support in developing emotional resilience.

3. Develop a briefing paper for educators and trainers of the ECEC workforce to support in the development of curricula to: a) foster professional caring dispositions; b) promote emotional resilience; and c) develop competencies to support the organisation, delivery and monitoring of professional supervision in early years settings.

Emotional labour in ECEC work has been hugely under-researched (Elfer, 2013): in contrast, Riley and Weiss (2016, pp.11-12) acknowledge the breadth of literature published from 1979 to 2014 relating to debate and empirical research on emotional labour conducted within various healthcare environments. My research broadens the literature on emotional labour in ECEC, and makes original contributions

to knowledge in this under-explored and little understood area. Furthermore, my research relates to applied real-world issues, with clear potential for a palpable impact on the wellbeing of the ECEC workforce, staff retention within the sector, and the related benefits for children and their families. The aspects of this research that will be of primary interest and use to others are: how emotional labour is experienced in early years settings; how supervision is enacted in early years provision; connections made between the key person role, emotional labour, the supervision duty, and support for the development of emotional resilience. My research findings would be the most influential on those providing education and training to the ECEC workforce, those involved in leadership and management of early years provision, and academics. There is the potential for my study to prompt further research and debate relating to this under-researched topic, and to generate recommendations for education and training providers to develop curricula to nurture caring dispositions and emotional resilience in students, and to develop the competencies of ECEC leaders and managers in providing supervision to staff.

1.8 Chapter conclusion

This introductory chapter presents the rationale for a study which is timely in reporting early years practitioners' personal and professional experiences of enacting national policy reforms and shifts in practice that place an emphasis on nurturing attachments. A claim for the relevance of the study is supported by the focus being on exploring how the recently introduced supervision duty is being enacted in early years settings, and responding to the dearth of guidance on professional development and support in ECEC workforce supervision practice. Furthermore, the study responds to

the paucity of published research and debate on emotional labour and supervision in ECEC. The following chapter presents and appraises relevant studies, guidance and current thinking relating to this under-researched area.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter introduction

The sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (2003) explores constructs of *emotional labour* within her seminal work, *The Managed Heart*; the early sections of this chapter explore and relate these constructs to the work of others. The chapter then moves on to explore current thinking and research relevant to emotion in early childhood education and care (ECEC). Moreover, it examines what has been written about the management of emotion as a requirement of a caring work role, consequences of emotion work, and strategies for supporting caring professionals in performance of their roles. The review critically examines published and unpublished research and academic literature presented in the English language, and investigating the experiences of caring professionals in Northern Europe, North America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. As there has been limited discourse around emotional work in early years work (Elfer, 2013), this review draws upon both published and unpublished academic writing relating to the phenomenon under investigation as it is enacted in the ECEC context. In contrast, experiences of emotional labour in other caring professions have been widely researched internationally; accordingly, this review examines a small sample of published work which demonstrates the phenomenon.

Later in the chapter the review examines literature relating to the consequences of emotional labour and support received by caring professionals through supervision practices: this investigation draws heavily from published literature relating to supervision in other care sectors due to a dearth of works relating to ECEC. The final sections of the chapter review literature reporting evidence-based strategies for supporting care workers in their emotional labour: published works relating to concepts of emotional resilience, emotional intelligence/literacy, reflective practice, and mindfulness are explored. The chapter concludes with a section summarising the main findings from the literature review, and identifying gaps in debate, empirical research, and guidance relating to emotional labour and supervision in ECEC.

2.2 Gendered roles

This thesis is focused on emotion within a profession that has traditionally been, and still is, numerically dominated by women. This section considers how traditional gender roles are reflected in the employment of men and women (Götz, 2013; Hochschild, 2003); how explanations of nurture and care in terms of biological gender differences perpetuate societal perceptions of the low status of ECEC work (Andrew, 2015; Miller, 1996; Osgood, 2012b); and the importance of caring as work, work that needs to be valued, rewarded and distributed equally between men and women (Barkham, 2008; Hochschild, 1989).

Hochschild first defined emotional labour in her 1983 seminal work, *The Managed Heart*, now in its 20th edition and it is this 2003 edition which I quote here: this work closely examined two groups of public-contact employees in their gendered

roles as flight cabin crew and debt collectors. Hochschild (2003) proposes that women are more likely than men to draw upon emotional resources for employment, such as in caring and customer service roles; she describes how the female cabin crew were expected to create a warm and nurturing atmosphere; their role requiring the fostering of trust and a sense of safety and wellbeing in the passengers. In contrast, the airline's male debt collectors were expected to act aggressively to promote a climate of intimidation in order to pressure defaulting customers to clear their debts. Hochschild (2003) described how the emotional labour of the female cabin crew relied on the young women drawing upon their *emotional memory* of *homelike* private work. Similarly, Götz (2013), in her study of gendered cultures in a bread factory, reports how it was explicitly stated by recruitment staff that *housewives* were their preferred employees because 'a mother has all the necessary *practical* qualifications, such as serving (their children), cleaning (the house), multi-tasking and handling food skilfully' (p.192). Similarly, the young female cabin crew were expected to have the *natural* instincts of a *mother*, and were encouraged to visualise difficult passengers as being like children to promote natural tolerance. A *passenger-as-a-child* analogy supports the notion that the passengers' needs were the priority, with the cabin crew having a diminished right to express anger: the cabin crew were expected to suppress their own feelings of anger or fear, in order to comfort and calm the passengers as a mother would settle a child (Hochschild, 2003). Furthermore, another homelike analogy was employed, a *passenger-as-a-dinner-party-guest* analogy; the cabin crew were trained to view themselves as the dinner party hostess serving friends with wholehearted and unceasing patience and courtesy. Adopting an essentialist view of how 'women are kind, women nurture, and women care' suggests these qualities are innate and universal across races, classes and cultures (Evans, 1995, p.77). Hochschild (2003) comments on

how women belonging to the group which may become mothers means there is more of an expectation for females to labour in caring for psychological needs: she writes of how 'The world turns to women for mothering, and this fact silently attaches itself to many a job description' (Hochschild, 2003, p.170).

Mothering has historically been seen to lack value within minority world society (Andrew, 2015); accordingly, a feminised view of work with children contributes to public perception of the low status of ECEC work (Osgood, 2012b, p.11). Miller (1996) describes a view that 'women who work with children do so out of 'natural' inclinations and needs, of a kind men are unlikely to share' (p.99); with their work not 'regarded and rewarded as real work for it is only a step away from what mothers do willingly for nothing, simply because it is in their nature and interests to do so' (pp.101-102). Barkham (2008), in her research with early years practitioners in an English primary school, also observes how ECEC is identified as *women's work* and an extension of being a *mother* and *housewife*. Osgood (2012a) reports that findings from her study conducted in England within three inner London nurseries suggest that the most highly regarded attributes felt by staff to represent professionalism in ECEC were associated with emotion. Osgood (2004, p.19) writes that women bring their experience as 'caring mothers' to early years work; and she observes how these mothers describe good early years practice in terms linked to emotion: 'empathy, support, collaboration and care' (p.19). Furthermore, Uwin (2015) reports on mother practitioners blending their personal mothering experiences with professional knowledge and understanding, and sharing commonalities to build relationships with parents. However, Osgood (2012b, p.11) rejects a 'mother substitute' model for ECEC; arguing that numerical dominance of women within the sector does not necessarily

indicate that the work is feminine in nature. A feminised image of ECEC encourages denigration of early years roles and supports the notion that 'there can be no need for training, nor indeed for any of the paraphernalia of professionalism' in working with young children (Miller, 1996, p.101).

Hochschild continued to explore gendered roles with the publication of *The Second Shift* in 1989; presenting a clear division between the ideology preferences of the genders and the social classes. This later research was concerned with marital roles and found that the working class and men preferred the traditional notion of women as the housewife and mother, whereas the middle class and women were seen to prefer an egalitarian view of women within marriage. *The Second Shift* presents the majority of married women in the 1970s and 1980s still taking care of most of the household and childcare responsibilities despite their entrance into the workforce. Hochschild (1989) writes of increasing numbers of women entering a labour force with career systems that inhibit female employees; the period of greatest career demands coinciding with women's childbearing years. Hochschild (1989) explains that women who work a *first shift* for a wage, and then take all the *second shift* of caring for the home and children, are constantly trying to solve first shift/second shift conflict, leading to fatigue, anxiety and impeded career opportunities. The importance of care relations for equality and social justice in society is central to the work of Hochschild: pursuit of egalitarianism also resonates through my study with female caregivers by the importance placed on organisational systems, workforce education, professionalism and status. The next section of this chapter explores Hochschild's (2003) related constructs of *emotional labour* in the work life and *emotion work* in the private life, defining their different attributes, and considering the interconnectedness of work and private life worlds.

2.3 Emotional Labour Theory

The concept of emotional labour proposed by Hochschild (2003) takes into consideration internal processes of emotion management and resulting consequences. This section aims to 'uncover the heart of emotional labor' (Hochschild, 2003, p.11) by defining terms and formulating understandings of what emotional labour requires of individuals, and what consequences may result. Emotional labour theory is *unpacked* in this section through consideration of four questions posed by Hochschild (2003, p.9): 'What is emotional labour?', 'What do we do when we manage emotion?', 'What are the costs and benefits of managing emotion?' and 'What, in fact, is emotion?'

2.3.1 What is emotional labour?

Hochschild's (2003) seminal work focused on the emotional labour involved in providing in-flight customer service; unpicking the role of the female cabin crew to expose three different types of labouring. She identified elements of *physical labour*, such as manoeuvring service trolleys; *mental labour* was apparent in duties such as preparations and organisation for emergency landings. Furthermore, Hochschild (2003) described a third element to their labouring requiring 'coordination of mind and feeling and it sometimes draws on a source of self' (p.7); she conceptualised this as *emotional labour*. Hochschild did not limit her studies to research within work cultures and strongly argued for the interconnectedness of work and private life worlds: she writes of the daily transfers of gendered hierarchies, practices, emotions, values, beliefs, attitudes, services and commodities to and from private and work life worlds. In the

following excerpt Hochschild (2003, p.7) explains her use of specific terminology, and clarifies how her concepts relate to these two domains:

> I use the term emotional labor to mean the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore as *exchange value*. I use the synonymous terms emotion work or emotion management to refer to these same acts done in a private context where they have *use value*.

The first clause contained in the above quote is frequently used to define emotional labour in literature (see Grandey, 2000; Wharton 2009), however, using this statement in isolation does not fully capture how the concept requires for emotion to be utilised for profit in order for it to be *emotional labour* rather than purely feelings management. In the second clause contained in the above quote, Hochschild (2003) expresses how emotion is 'sold for a wage' (p.7), demonstrating how emotion is being objectified (Götz, 2013). Hochshild (2003) uses terms such as *exchange value* and *use value* from Marxian economics to express different attributes of feelings management in the context of the work life and private life. Emotion work, conducted in a private context, is concerned with satisfying a human need or want and, as such, it is attributed with *use value*. In contrast, where feelings are managed in fulfilment of a work role, emotional labour is a service produced for a market and, as such, emotion is a commodity which can be bought and sold, and has an exchange value. Hochschild's (2003) conceptualising of emotional labour is criticised by Bolton and Boyd (2003) as being too simplistic; they propose two further dimensions of emotional labour characterising modern workplaces, terming these: *prescriptive* and *philanthropic* emotion management. Prescriptive emotion management is defined as the following of occupational feeling rules, but not necessarily for cost-effective purposes; whereas philanthropic emotion management is defined as the following of occupational feeling

rules while also having the choice to engage more deeply during some social interactions. Bolton and Boyd (2003) make a case for how an individual may labour more strenuously at emotion management beyond normal expectations if they have positive feelings for the others involved, or if they feel that there is something special about the situation; this view suggests multiple motivations within emotion management, and responsiveness to the implicit meanings in social interactions. Furthermore, Hochschild (2003) overemphasizes a dichotomy between public and private emotion management, leaving no room for emotion management during normal workplace social interaction between colleagues (Bolton & Boyd, 2003).

Hochschild (2003) identified how, what she termed the *commodification* and *commercialisation* of feelings, requires workers' adhesion to certain emotion rules as a requirement of a role: Hochschild (2003) writes of 'display rules' (p.60) specifying the outward appearance of emotion as considered appropriate to a situation; whereas 'feeling rules' (p.18) require the individual to try to inwardly feel the desired emotion. It is these emotion rules which give rise to the emotion work in private life or emotional labour in work life, as they necessitate either the display of different feelings to those being felt, or the changing of feelings to match those required. Hochschild's (2003) theoretical perspectives on the exploitation of emotion have informed a wide range of work over the last thirty years, whereas, her theoretical construct of feeling rules have been less well received, attracting criticism for not fully expressing the complexity of how emotions are utilised in the modern working world (Koch, 2013). The notion that workers may act on different sets of emotion rules in response to the context and personal motivations diverges from Hochschild's (2003) original concept, and signals that the organisation is not the only agent in setting the emotional agenda. Feeling rules

form a part of the professional culture of some occupations, such as in the law, health and education sectors, where occupational feeling rules reflect 'an occupational ethos and specific morality' (Koch, 2013, p.131). However, Hochschild (2003) acknowledges the influence of professional cultures; she discusses the reported experiences of junior clinicians and describes a scenario where 'they were taught how to *feel* properly towards [the children]... the staff were expected to be warm and loving and always to be governed by a 'clinical attitude'' (p.52). There is a place for more research on occupational feeling rules, as analysis of how workers are required to manage their emotions has the potential of enabling researchers to better understand work cultures; workplace feeling rules reflect the cultural context in terms of organisational goals, occupational ethics, and social dimensions (Koch, 2013). As emotion becomes integral to a role, with a requirement to comply with occupational feeling rules, then feelings need to be managed in order to comply; the mechanisms of managing emotions and feelings are explored in the next subsection.

2.3.2 What do we do when we manage emotion?

Hochschild (2003, p.7) explains how emotional labour 'requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others'. For the cabin crew, part of their role involved smiling in order to promote a sense of calm and feelings of enjoyment in the passengers. Hochschild (2003, p.33) proposed two main mechanisms of how feelings are managed to meet the demands of a situation, drawing upon Konstantin Stanislavski's work on method acting to differentiate between these mechanisms: 'surface acting' and 'deep acting'. Interestingly, she retains the term *acting* rather than substituting it for *reacting*, to retain

the suggestion of performance. Hochschild's (2003) construct of deep acting is likened to method acting, as while engaging in method acting the performers *become* the character to such an extent that they *feel* the emotions of the character, and in turn, respond exactly as the character would. Surface acting is more superficial, with Hochschild (2003, p.33) explaining how 'In surface acting we deceive others about what we really feel, but we do not deceive ourselves'. Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) describe surface acting as a process whereby individuals 'modify and control their emotional *expressions*' (p.22). The use, and italicising, of the term *expressions* emphasises that the change is outward and inauthentic, and purely a surface appearance. Hochschild (2003) explains that felt emotions are suppressed or altered during surface acting resulting in a discrepancy or 'emotive dissonance' (p.90). Brotheridge and Lee (1998) propose that dissonance may also be the driving force behind the self-regulation processes which produces the desired display of emotion. In contrast, deep acting, like Stanislavski's method acting, requires control of the internal thoughts and inner feelings: like surface acting, this mechanism also requires effort on the part of the worker, however, in deep acting the effort is exerted in advance of the interaction to produce the authenticity of the worker feeling the desired emotions when required. Hochschild (2003) suggests that deep acting 'involves deceiving oneself as much as deceiving others' (p.33). A range of techniques may induce the required emotions, such as, changing the bodily state (taking deep breaths); deliberately visualising reality differently (seeing airline passengers as children to be soothed); or employing 'emotion memory' (mentally focusing on a remembered experience) (Hochschild, 2003, p.40). Hochschild (2003) proposed that surface acting and deep acting differ in terms of many of their effects on the individual, and this is explored in the next subsection.

2.3.3 What are the costs and benefits of managing emotion?

Emotional labour is suggested by Hochschild (2003) as being primarily beneficial for the employer rather than the workers, and as with physical labour there is room for exploitation. Hochschild (2003) argues that Goffman (1983), who theorised on the display of socially appropriate feelings, directed his focus too narrowly on the surface display of emotions and on the individual's behaviour, without due consideration of how this affects the individual's feelings and inner self. Hochshild (2003) suggests some negative consequences arising from emotional labour, and more specifically, from the associated dissonance: she writes of workers experiencing difficulties in casting off role-required behaviours in their private lives, becoming uncertain about their own emotions; and experiencing emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and alienation. In support of this assertion, Kinman and Jones (2001), whose work is grounded in occupational health psychology, report that numerous studies have linked workplace stress to negative outcomes in the worker's private life. Findings from Hochschild's (2003) studies include descriptions from female cabin crew relating to their smiles; the women spoke of their smiles being 'on them but not of them' (p.8), demonstrating a lack of connectivity with real feelings. Furthermore, this objectification of the smile may suggest the commodification of the smile itself. Hochschild (2003) presents a commercialised world which engenders alienation. However, criticism has been directed towards Hochschild's (2003) theorisation of alienation due to her incomplete application of Marx's Alienation Theory: Hochschild (2003) is criticised for restricting her analysis to only two of Marx's four aspects of alienation, namely, *labour process alienation* and *product alienation* (Brook, 2009); she also portrays her participants as powerless victims

(Bolton & Boyd, 2003). The four dimensions identified by Marx were inter-related; alienation of workers is also shaped by the extent to which they lack a sense of purpose to their labour, and experiences of class struggle. However, Hochschild's (2003) concept of alienation does not suggest that her research participants were blinded to the reality of capitalism, as they were 'attuned to the economic status of the customer' (p.138) in order to provide the required levels of customer-care, such as prioritising the needs of first-class travellers in the higher priced seats which were most likely purchased through corporate contracts. Furthermore, whilst it is the airline which sets the vision as to what constitutes good customer service, and aligns training and required practices to realise this, it is the cabin crew who control how much feeling is invested in the performance (Bolton & Boyd, 2003). Hochschild's work reveals her subjects' as agentic and resistant through creatively subverting the behaviour rules (Götz, 2013). Hochschild (2005) describes how within a structure where anger is not a permitted emotion a member of cabin crew 'launders her anger, disguises it in mock courtesy and serves it up with flair' (p. 114) by deliberately spilling tomato juice as she courteously serves a complaining passenger who is dressed in a white suit.

Research findings support Hochschild's (2003) theorising on a causal relationship between a dissonance resulting from surface acting, and emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Glomb & Tews, 2004; Picardo *et al.*, 2012; Pisaniello *et al.*, 2012). However, findings from a study by Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) suggest that this dissonance may be dissolved through deep acting; they suggest that adopting cognitive processes, such as using feeling memories as emotional stimulants to legitimately feel certain emotions, dismisses dissonance. Findings from their study also suggest that deep acting may support increases in the level of job

satisfaction, and enhanced feelings of personal efficacy in certain cases, thereby, demonstrating positive consequences of emotional labour for workers. Furthermore, Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) consider how literature on emotional stress supports the assertion that it is both the characteristics of the role and an individual's own characteristics which contribute to reported levels of work-related stress. Dunkel and Weihrich (2013) argue that emotional labour is a broader phenomenon than is presented by Hochschild (2003), theorising three separate dimensions: the first dimension relates to how Hochschild, (2003) makes emotions into 'an object to be worked on' (p.107) in order to elicit 'the proper state of mind in others' (p.7), such as a sense of wellbeing in the airline customers, so that these customers continue to use the service. Dunkel and Weihrich (2013, p.107) emphasise how emotional labour is integral to goal attainment, and as such this runs deeper than providing just a 'pleasant extra' to the core service provided, for example, where empathetic nursing care supports somatic healing (see Swanson, 1999), and early years practitioner-child bonding supports children's holistic development (see David *et al.* 2003; Elfer & Selleck, 1999; Elfer *et al.* 2012). Dunkel and Weihrich (2013, p.108) also highlight how emotions are not just the 'objects', but also 'the means of emotional labour', acknowledging the necessity of 'working with feeling'. This second dimension, refers to how workers require insight into the emotional state of others, or empathy, to enable them to display the appropriate emotions to produce the required outcome. Examples of this dimension can readily be drawn from the caring professions, such as in compassionate palliative care (see Larkin, 2016) and in key person attunement to young children (see Elfer *et al.*, 2012). Dunkel and Weihrich's (2013) third dimension of emotional labour considers how the emotional state of the worker is 'a framing condition' (p.108), and demonstrate this by referring to how emotional exhaustion may result in emotional apathy, thereby

diminishing the capacity for emotional labour. Implications for the individual, and these broader implications of emotional labour, are explored in the literature reviewed in the section titled 'Emotional labour in the caring professions'.

2.3.4 What, in fact, is emotion?

Hochschild (2003), in the Appendix to *The Managed Heart*, defines the nature of human emotion and feeling; this subsection explores these proposals in relation to the emotional systems involved in caring for others. Hochschild (2003, p.229) describes emotion as 'a biologically given sense' enabling us to gather information about the world and interact with it. She explains that, like the other senses, emotion is oriented to action. This affinity with action is a key feature of Bowlby's (1958) work on bonding and caregiving responses in humans; he proposes that evolutionary emotional systems underpin the related altruistic emotions of compassion and empathy. Bowlby (1958) describes the bonding of infants to a caregiver as a core bio-behavioural phenomenon present in all higher mammals; this need to form attachments being seen as innate, and having been passed forward genetically rather than learned; functioning as protection against adversity, while also facilitating psychophysical regulation and the teaching of skills for survival and development. Caregiving is also a core mammalian phenomenon, and is reciprocal to attachment, and as such, is characterised by psychobiological bonding to facilitate protection and nurture (Bowlby, 1958). Bowlby (1969, p.194) defined attachment as a 'lasting psychological connectedness between human beings'; with early attachment understood as the enduring emotional closeness which binds a child with a caregiver. Early attachment forms the *secure base* necessary for the child's exploration, learning and independence (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970;

Bowlby, 1969). Early attachment experiences teach young children that others recognise and respond to their needs; establishing the foundations for trust, empathy, and preconceptions of the value and reliability of relationships (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby (1969) also proposes that caregiving behaviours may be impaired if a caregiver's own feelings of attachment security are currently threatened: a practitioner's own attachment security should facilitate responsive caregiving, whereas insecurity would impede it, suggesting practitioner attachment security has implications for caregiving in the caring professions.

Hochschild (2003) uses the term *feeling* throughout her seminal work. For Hochschild (1990, p.119) feeling is conceptualised as 'an emotion with less marked bodily sensation'. Feelings are described by Hochschild (2003) as being both oriented towards action and towards cognition; and asserted as having three synchronous elements: appraisal of situation, bodily sensations, and expressive gestures. This model is linear in nature and reminiscent of the much earlier, and first, comprehensive theory of emotion in human development, termed *psychoanalytic theory*: Freud (1920) explained emotions as being human instincts inherently attached to vital bodily functions, or *libidinal discharges*, and proposed a mental model where libidinous or selfish forces emerge from the body, with the purpose of the mind to apply logic in order to remain reasonable. In contrast, Lucas and Claxton (2010) write of a *real-world intelligence* which comes to the fore in deciding how to proceed in complex situations. Individuals have active interests, concerns and anxieties, although these may not always be conscious; they may also have skills and capacities to apply to these, and a number of opportunities and barriers relating to these. Sensory information, wants, expectations, and physical action are instantaneously blended to produce the optimum

response, often without conscious thought (Chemero, 2009). Claxton (2012, p.80) theorises these processes as 'embodied cognition', and addresses the perennial dichotomies between feeling and thinking, and emotion and reason, when he writes:

> Intelligence is not in opposition to 'emotion', 'intuition' and
> bodily 'feelings', but is a broader concept that includes them all
> – as well as deliberation and analysis.

Hochschild (1990) supports this view that feeling as a form of intelligence when she writes: 'It is hard to know for sure what is true about where we stand in the world… one important clue is how we feel' (p.119). Claxton (2012) highlights how discourse on *emotional literacy* has predominantly focused on strategies to strengthen skills in the self-regulation of emotions; he asserts that concerns of *emotional intelligence* often focus more on being intelligent about emotion, than on how emotion is itself a form of intelligence, thereby reinforcing the false dichotomies between thinking and feeling, and between reason and emotion.

Hochschild (1990) writes of emotion as having strong socio-cultural links, and expresses a position on the importance of feeling to social relations, which reflects social constructionism. Theorists of the social constructionist model of emotion, such as Gordon (1989), propose a model of differentiated, socialised, and socially managed emotion; emphasising the inextricable links with social relations and socio-cultural processes. This model supports a view of feeling and emotional reactivity as cognitive and evaluative phenomena. Professional expertise in practices of care and support of vulnerable individuals of all ages, involves implicit practical knowledge, or *tacit* knowledge (Reinders, 2010). Positive interactions enable caring professionals to gain adequate insight into the interests, moods, hopes and expectations of the individuals in their care. Stern (1985) proposes the concept of *affect attunement* where a caregiver

has an awareness of the verbal and non-verbal signals provided by an infant, in order to engage in sensitive responses to the infant's needs. This situated dimension to their practical knowledge enables caring professionals to make intuitive judgements on the best course of action in order to care effectively (Reinders, 2010). However, it is this embedding of tacit knowledge in practice which makes extricating and transferring it to others problematic, which has implications for the education and training of the workforce.

2.3.5 Section summary

This section set out to explore Hochschild's (2003) concept of emotional labour. Hochschild (2003) describes a view of emotion and feelings in terms of the presentation of self, and not merely the individual's privately experienced reactions; she presents feelings as social expressions signalling the kind of self that the individual is required to present regardless of any disconnect with felt emotions. Fundamentally, human emotion and feelings are an evolutionary system characterised by psychobiological bonding to function as protection against adversity and facilitate infant development (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Bowlby, 1958; Bowlby, 1969). Furthermore, feelings may be theorised as a form of embodied intelligence (Chemero, 2009; Claxton, 2012; Hochschild, 1990), with professional expertise in care conceptualised as involving implicit practical knowledge (Reinders, 2010), gained through attunement to the interests, moods, hopes and expectations of the cared-for (Stern, 1985). The next section moves the reader from *unpacking* Emotional Labour Theory, and theorising emotion and feelings, to elucidate how the phenomenon is experienced by caring professionals.

2.4 Emotional labour in the caring professions

This section explores literature reporting how emotional labour is constructed in the caring professions, with a focus on experiences of the phenomenon in ECEC where literature is available. This section also examines empirical studies and debate demonstrating current understanding of the personal costs and benefits of emotional labour, and how emotional labour is supported by organisational practices, career preparation and professional development training.

2.4.1 How emotional labour is constructed in the caring professions

A review of emotional labour within learning disability nursing concluded that emotional labour has always been 'part of the image of nursing' (Mitchell & Smith, 2003, p.111). Care workers daily suppress their felt emotions, such as not showing repulsion or disgust when performing duties relating to hygiene, and displaying compassion and empathy when dealing with terminal illnesses and pain (McQueen, 2004). Compassion has long been bound to notions of suffering, with the overt compassionate professions including health and religious service. However, early years care may also be deemed as compassionate work if emphasis is shifted to the role of compassion in 'addressing *need* or *vulnerability*' (Taggart, 2016, p.178).

Research indicates that it is the requirement for nurses to continually display a *caring face* in performance of their role, which is reported as one of the primary reasons for nurses' experiencing stress (McVicar, 2003); this has led to the characterisation of nurses as 'emotional jugglers' (Bolton, 2001, p.97). Bolton (2001, p.97) describes the

nurse's ability to 'match face with situation but not necessarily with feeling' in a study involving forty-five nurses: findings suggested that nurses are able to display either the 'sincere face' (p.97) which represents their true feelings, or the 'cynical face' (p.97) which hides their true feelings; presenting emotional labour as agentic and skilful, and integral in the management of the emotional demands of the nursing role (Bolton, 2001). Emotional labour may be carried out by nurses because of wanting to offer 'authentic caring behaviours' (Mann, 2005, p.307), with nurses deriving satisfaction from doing so. Interactions with uncooperative, and sometimes hostile, patients demand suppression and altering of emotions by nurses (de Castro, 2004): a nurse is quoted as saying 'some patients are really horrible and even disgusting, which means you have to really emotionally labour' (Smith & Gray, 2000, p.48). Colley (2006), in reporting findings from her study of a group of trainee nursery nurses' learning to 'labour appropriately' (p.26), writes how in the early days of work placement the participants displayed real pleasure in working with children, but also distress in dealing with unpleasant incidents involving bodily functions, illness and difficult behaviour. Colley (2006) reports, even in these early interactions, how the trainees spoke of having to manage their emotions; and by 'the end of their first year, the management of feeling had become a central theme in all the female students' narratives' (p.21). The trainee nursery nurses' suppression of emotion ranged from inducing a calmer outward display of emotion, to limiting displays of affection felt for the children; they mostly accepted that their ECEC role required that they could, and should, be warm and positive towards all the children all of the time, without getting too attached to individuals (Colley, 2006). Lynch and Walsh (2009), from experience grounded in social work, term the enactment of emotion in caring as 'love labour' (p.33); like Colley (2006), Lynch and Walsh (2009) present both positive and negative

characteristics of affective work, setting the demands of professional caring alongside experiences of 'pure pleasure' (p.45). Similarly, Boyer *et al.* (2012) conducted four hundred hours of participant observations and twenty-two interviews with practitioners at private five day nurseries in the South of England; finding that 'despite being hard and emotionally draining, nursery workers can and do also experience profound emotional connections with the children in their care' (p.518) and nursery work 'can also be deeply gratifying' and 'rewarding' (p.535). All the interviewees in the research conducted by Boyer *et al.* (2012) were white, female and working class, and all but one were born in the United Kingdom; the sample may not be seen as representational of the ECEC workforce in England, and as such, may be considered a limitation to validity of the findings, however, there was diversity in terms of age, job role and qualifications.

ECEC and much other care work, involves longer term relationships than the short term and low-skilled customer care provided by Hochschild's (2006) cabin crew and similar service workers. Page (2011) explains that as ECEC practitioners invest time and energy in the care of young children they gain understanding of the child in the context of both the setting and their home; the longevity of this relationship facilitates the forming of a connection with the child, giving rise to attunement to their needs, and a depth of feeling which she describes as 'Professional Love' (Page, 2011, p.312). Daily interaction with children and their families provides opportunities for ECEC practitioners to foster felt emotions and attachments, which coordinate with the moral dimensions of their 'compassionate professionalism' (Taggart, 2016, p.178). 'Emotional Competence' in ECEC has been described as requiring compassion, empathy, affection and love, as enacted through an emotional connection with the children (Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2015, 2016). Research suggests that 'love matters'

(Gerhardt, 2014) and that there is the need for practitioners to have loving relationships with the children in their care (Page, 2011, 2017); while Boyer *et al.* (2012) report finding 'deep affection and even love between care workers and children in day nurseries' (p.535). Page (2011, 2017) theorises on the related constructs of love, intimacy and care, in proposing her concept of Professional Love, which she suggests can provide a foundation to support dialogue around the emotionally close interactions with very young children that characterise early years practice. Ahmed (2004), whose writing is grounded in critical race theory, recognises a dynamic cultural dimension to caring: 'Emotions do things and they align individuals with communities' (p.119). In the UK, adults' intimate relationships with young children have come under extreme levels of scrutiny (Page, 2017), binding the term *love* to a child protection discourse. Elfer *et al.* (2012, p.62) acknowledge how 'close relationships with young children in early years settings are complex because of the child protection issues involved'. In contrast, in research conducted in England and Hungary, Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2015, 2016) report that the term *love* is used freely to describe emotion in Hungarian practice by their Hungarian participants; whereas their participants in England cited examples of constraining their emotions with young children. The research participants were students studying Early Childhood in Higher Education institutions in each country, and were engaged in work experience, rather than being in full employment as ECEC practitioners; this situation could be seen as a limitation to the validity of the findings as individuals on placements may feel less confident about how to display emotion. Nevertheless, the research conducted by Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2015, 2016) raises awareness of cultural influences on care.

Hochschild's (2003) identification of an interplay between private and work lives is echoed in Osgood's (2012b) findings from a study in England within three inner London nurseries; the findings suggest that ECEC workers allow subjective private life experiences to influence their practice, whilst simultaneously striving to demarcate their private life from work life. The participants in Osgood's (2012b) study spoke of having to 'manage a caring self and emotionality 'in the right way'' (p.113), reflecting Hochschild's (2003) feeling rules. However, this skilful management of emotions in ECEC differs from that of Hochschild's cabin crew as the *rules* evolve from within a community of practice relating to the setting, and rely on practitioners' commitment and authenticity. Osgood (2012b, p.113) explains that 'the occupational demands of nursery work amount to more than the mere execution of a set of preordained competencies'. Early years practitioners must balance their emotional involvement and responsiveness to the children and their families with the maintenance of professional distance and boundaries (Miller & Cable, 2012). Furthermore, emotional labour in ECEC is not restricted to meeting the needs of children; emotional labouring in early years practice extends to interactions with adults. Early years practitioners may experience tensions between authenticity and surface acting in their emotional labouring with colleagues (Monrad, 2012), and with the children's families (Osgood, 2012b). Similarly, findings from Riley and Weiss' (2016) review of emotional labour research in healthcare, published from 1979 to 2014, indicates that workers are required to manage their emotions and relationships with colleagues and children's families, and respond to organisational and parental demands and ideologies, where there may be disagreement and conflict.

Subversion within the caring professions is presented in very different terms to Hochschild's (2003) report of wilful misdemeanour under the guise of courteous service by cabin crew. In contrast, when an individual chooses to become an early years practitioner they make a moral commitment to care for others through kind, warm and gentle interactions (Colley, 2006); resistance in the caring professions is aligned to ensuring the best outcomes for the individuals being cared for; reciprocity consisting of verifying that the care given has met the needs of the other. Hutchinson (1990) conducted empirical research involving interviews and observations with twenty-one American clinical nurses in a small scale and localised study; findings describe a four phase process of how nurses bend the rules by evaluating, predicting, rule-bending, and covering, for the benefit of the patient. This 'responsible subversion' (Hutchinson, 1990, p.3) further demonstrating the complexity in how emotional labour is constructed in the caring professions. The next subsection is concerned with exploring the impact on the caring professional of working with the depth of feeling and skilful emotion management which are evidenced in this subsection of the review.

2.4.2 Personal costs and benefits of emotional labour in caring professions

Corr *et al.* (2014) conducted a systematic review of research articles published between 1980–2012 identifying eighteen articles with a focus on the mental wellbeing of early years practitioners; the review findings present low mean scores of perceived stress and depression, compared to high scores of subjective mental wellbeing. The evidence base is very limited and risks of bias were identified, however, the findings demonstrate the incidences of stress and depression as being linked with poor working conditions as opposed to the performance of care. In accordance, there is some

published research evidence suggesting benefits to the self from performing compassionate acts of kindness and generosity. These proposed benefits include distraction from own problems; increased perceptions of self-efficacy, competency and meaningfulness; raised self-esteem; increased personal happiness; lowered anxiety levels; and reduced depressive symptoms (Alden & Trew, 2013; Midlarsky, 1991; Mongrain *et al.*, 2011). Research within nursing indicates that forming compassionate and caring relationships with patients can enhance the wellbeing of nursing staff; satisfaction gained from empathic interactions can protect staff from work-related stress by promoting feelings of personal accomplishment and resilience to raise levels of motivation, commitment and drive (Kinman & Leggetter, 2016). Furthermore, Colley (2006) suggests that the moral worth of the nursery nursing role, as perceived by the participants in her study, fostered commitment and resilience against the emotional stresses encountered in their work placements. Vincent and Braun (2013), in a study exploring emotional labour experienced by forty-two trainee early years practitioners, also report how intense emotional labour in ECEC is justified by a moral worthiness. Riley and Weiss' (2016) review of emotional labour research in healthcare identifies how the labour of caring can be 'taken-for-granted'. Organisational financial drivers align with workers' felt enjoyment of caring for others, to the extent of exploitation of their 'good will', with care workers constructing a morally 'worthy' case to justify their '*voluntary emotional labour*' (Vincent, 2011, p.1385). Moyles (2001) writes of the potential for the deep commitment of early years practitioners to be exploited, and paradoxically, their 'passion' undermines recognition of their professionalism and status. Essentially, exploitation can only take place because early years practitioners enjoy interacting with young children and gain satisfaction from helping them to develop and learn (see Boyer *et al.*, 2012; Colley, 2006; Taggart, 2015). Taggart (2015)

suggests that the compliant, altruistic dispositions of many early years practitioners may make them less able to recognise exploitation.

Bourdieu (1986) building on the earlier theorising of Marx, proposes that labour, such as educating, leads to the development of embodied capital; knowledge is acquired over time through both conscious learning and more passive socialisation into the culture. However, Colley (2006) argues that the female nursery nurses in her study were positioned to struggle to establish their emotional resources as capital due to their subordinate class and gender. Osgood (2012b) contests this negative view of submissive working-class women, routinely performing emotion to comply with externally imposed and gendered rules, presenting emotional labour as empowering the early years workforce:

> The capacity to effectively manage emotions and deploy them in a range of ways (through pedagogical practices with children, in work with colleagues, and interaction with families) and potential opportunities to construct themselves as worthy, insightful, autonomous professionals are opened up (p.14).

Similarly, Andrew (2015a) suggests that learning through the daily management of complex emotional relationships with children, families, and colleagues leads to development of critical skills; this emotional capital enhancing professional practice, their enjoyment of the children, and commitment to working in ECEC. Furthermore, Andrew's (2015a) asserts that 'struggled-for skills' (p.664) should not only be viewed in alienated terms as value for the children, their families, the setting, and for the wider community, as this discourages women from investing in themselves as professionals.

Research conducted over a number of years with early years practitioners (see Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Page, 2011; Elfer, 2012; Page & Elfer, 2013) explores the

impact of practitioners' professional, but emotionally close, relationships with the children: it is reported that early years practitioners express anxieties about forming such close individual relationships with children, including having concerns over maintaining the correct degree of professional distance. Furthermore, practitioners have expressed concerns over parents becoming resentful of such close relationships outside of the family, possibly undermining home relationships. However, Page (2011) reports that the six mothers interviewed in her nursery-based study in England appeared to want the practitioners caring for their young children to love them, although they did not always call it *love*. Brooker (2010) discusses the differentials of power within relationships between early years practitioners and parents; roles, agency and identity may be affected. For example, parents may view themselves as the *professional* in the care of their child, and perceive a practitioner's professional qualifications to have little value. Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2015, p.326) write of nurturing 'a love triangle between [practitioners], the parent, and the child': practitioners need to engage in professional development where they learn how to build these beneficial relationships with parents and carers. This view is also reflected in the writing of Brooker (2010) who cites Hohman's (2007) concept of 'The Triangle of Care'; through the key person being responsive and attentive to the parent and the child, and enacting patient listening, they develop 'a respectful reciprocity' (Brooker, 2010, p.182). Consequently, Brooker (2010) proposes that within workforce preparation programmes practitioners should be supported through discussions of differences in parenting beliefs, and encouraged to respectfully raise differences from setting policy with parents.

Elfer (2013) explores the complementary themes of transference (redirection of feelings to a new individual) and projection ('pushing' painful feelings onto another);

these key concepts of psychoanalytic theory are recognisable as defences against the conscious awareness of some experiences which are felt to be just too painful to manage. Elfer (2013) comments on how transference and projection may be deepened amongst early years practitioners through the key person approach. ECEC staff are particularly vulnerable to projection when working with children exhibiting emotional or behavioural difficulties; over twenty years ago, Greenhalgh (1994) described the potential effects on educators:

> …one might find oneself feeling hurt, abused, angry, frustrated, intolerant, anxious, de-skilled and even frightened. One of the reasons that working with children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties is so disturbing is that such intense and painful feelings are somehow pushed [or projected] into staff (as well as other children). Sometimes it might feel as if it is difficult to know where the feelings are coming from, and the intensity of them might lead one to question one's own competence and professional worth (p. 53).

Page and Elfer (2013) support the premise that long periods of sustaining emotionally close interactions with very young children, places high emotional demands on staff; similar emotional demands on other caring professionals have been associated with work-related stress leading to reduced performance, high levels of sickness absence and poor staff retention (Kinman & Jones, 2001). Furthermore, in an international study of nurses, Aitken *et al.* (2012) report that forty-two percent of the participants said that they were *burned out*, and struggling to provide empathetic caregiving behaviours. A link between experiencing stress and reduced performance is also established by de Schipper *et al.* (2009) who conducted a study of stress indicators with two hundred and twenty-one Dutch childcare centre workers. Diversity was addressed in the sampling strategy employed by de Schipper *et al.* (2009) in terms of selecting participants with a range of ages, qualifications, duration of experience, and

location of settings. One practitioner was male, and this was given as a reason for excluding his data from the analysis; this may be seen as gendered inequality of opportunity, resulting in a less accurate representation of the emotional experiences of the ECEC workforce. The findings from the study show that practitioners who displayed a lower quality of caregiving behaviour measured as having higher levels of stress hormone. de Schipper *et al.* (2008) theorise that less sensitive behaviour results in less smooth and rewarding interactions with the children, causing a rise in cortisol levels, creating a cycle of effect. Higher levels of cortisol were also found to be present in the morning; de Schipper *et al.* suggest that practitioners' interactions with children's families as the children arrive, and the children and their carers requiring simultaneous attention, may contribute to practitioners' experiencing early morning stress. However, it is acknowledged that early morning cortisol levels could also be as a result of private life activities prior to arrival at the workplace. The next subsection of this chapter is concerned with exploring the impact of organisational practices on emotional labour on the caring professional.

2.4.3 Emotional support from organisational practices in caring professions

Elfer and Dearnley (2007) examined similarities in the way that management in hospitals and nurseries promote particular attitudes and working practices to support coping with workplace stress, however, these mechanisms may contribute to stress rather than mitigate it. Elfer and Dearnley (2007) draw on the findings of empirical research conducted by Menzies Lyth (1988, p.45) to report that interviewed nurses indicated 'high levels of tension, distress and anxiety' in spite of well-intentioned 'social defence systems' being promoted by the management. Examples of these from

nursing include: promoting an attitude where a *good nurse* keeps an emotional distance from the patient, and is not seen as experiencing any personal upset; and organising staff deployment to avoid sustained contact with patients.   These practices act to encourage suppression of emotion in the individual out of fear of being seen as unprofessional or unable to cope, and thereby contribute to workplace stresses. Page and Elfer (2013, p.564) remind us that:

> Such emotions should be seen as an inevitable aspect of this part
> of the work and not as an indication of professional or personal
> failure.

Similarly, practices such as using child protection procedures to minimise physical contact may be intended to avoid children forming closer attachments with early years practitioners than those relationships experienced with parents.   However, adopting these social defence practices may impact negatively on the child, with their needs not met by sufficient holding and physical contact (Elfer & Dearnley, 2007).

Riley and Weiss' (2016) review of research on emotional labour in healthcare suggests a need for the provision of effective support to staff, including supervision, to enhance coping with the high levels of emotional demands. Vincent and Braun (2013) recommend for early years settings to ensure there are opportunities for reflection upon the stresses of enacting emotional labour to avoid practitioners *burning out*. Furthermore, Elfer and Dearnley (2007, p.278) comment on the need for changes in organisational practices in order for supervision to be effective:

> It needs to be recognised that resources have to be allocated for
> the time and facilitation for staff to think about and process the
> individual feelings evoked by their emotional work with the
> children. This involves an attitudinal shift too, seeing reflective
> practice as an entitlement of staff, both legitimate and necessary,
> if changes in professional practice are to be facilitated and
> sustained.

Containment, the means of managing projected feelings, is used in early years practice to support children's emotional development and wellbeing (Hobson, 2002); Elfer and Dearnley (2007) propose that containment can also be used between adults to support the emotional wellbeing of early years staff.   In this context the process is more than just providing a sympathetic ear, it is concerned with enabling practitioners to talk and reflect on anxiety-provoking circumstances with a trusted other who listens and encourages reframing with a focus on positive action.   Early years practitioners' 'emotional discomfort' may provide a platform for dialogue and reflection on their 'Professional Feeling' (Madrid *et al.* 2013, p.274). Elfer and Dearnley (2007) reviewed the findings from a six-month training intervention published by Hopkins (1988) from the Tavistock Clinic in London, England, to produce a model for nursery staff training. Elfer and Dearnley's (2007, pp.270-271) model aimed to support practitioners in group professional reflection in order to assimilate their personal feelings and become more empathic towards the children:

> the provision of a reliable and consistent meeting place with clear time limits; close attention to the meaning of detailed interactions in group behaviours and the relationship between what is said and how the group behaves; sensitive exploration, with careful attention to timing, anxieties, emotional conflicts and disagreements expressed by staff; encouragement of learning by experience and shared reflection within the group rather than by direct teaching; paying particular attention to discussing 'negatives' (absences, disappointments, frustrations and conflicts).

Elfer and Dearnley (2007) tested this model in an empirical study with twelve nursery managers of settings in a single local authority district in England. The managers were participants in five-hour training sessions which employed a combination of teaching and 'Work Discussion'. The findings, although with limitations, demonstrate that senior managers need to be committed to supporting professional reflection and

designate it as a systematic and ongoing institutional requirement. It was acknowledged that time and resources need to be allocated for staff to reflect on personal feelings as a consequence of their emotional labour. However, difficulties were identified in terms of managing the process without a setting having trainers with both psychoanalytic group facilitation skills and ECEC experience. Additionally, Goouch and Powell (2012) present a project within the context of the baby room as a form of professional development involving *dialogic encounter* between a small group of practitioners; the baby room practitioners were supported by tutors as co-learners to participate in structured group debate, moving beyond physical and practical aspects of their work to theorising their practice. The value of reflective dialogue between practitioners as professional development is further explored by Elfer (2012) in a study built on earlier work (see Elfer & Dearnley, 2007); nine nursery managers participated in monthly two-hour group reflection sessions over ten months, with Elfer's (2012) new findings suggesting a need for more research into how group reflection sessions are best managed. When the managers in Elfer's (2012) study each offered a topic for consideration the discussion failed to focus on the children: it was proposed that a group facilitator, someone to take responsibility for the discussion agenda and outcomes, may increase contributions to positive change in professional practice. Soni (2013) also considers how group supervision can support professional development in the ECEC workforce in a small scale study conducted with twelve Family Support Workers and three managers employed in a Children's Centre in England. Soni (2013) identified two key features of influence in the group supervision, namely group dynamics and management support. The importance of managers possessing the skills required to support staff in their professional reflection is highlighted in a case study conducted by Page and Elfer (2013) in a one hundred place urban nursery in England; a committed

deputy manager, with concern for his staff's wellbeing, is reported as having low confidence in his skills and experience in supporting staff training in professional reflection. Similarly, in a study of early career *burn out* in ECEC teachers working in Australian primary schools, Noble and MacFarlane (2005) report a reduced likelihood of heads having a strong background in early years philosophy or pedagogy; this deficit is shown to be a limitation to providing effective mentoring, with early years teachers in primary schools experiencing isolation, and a sense of powerlessness due to pressure for a more formal approach to ECEC.

Byrd (2012) examines the emotional climate in early years settings through a survey of ECEC staff and managers working in a variety of settings in East Midlands in England, followed by data collection in one main setting. The findings show a positive correlation between the implementation of organisational practices which address issues affecting the staff and children's wellbeing, and the development of a positive emotional climate. Furthermore, the study highlights how a nurturing management style is shown to contribute to a positive emotional climate, and improving staff retention and team stability. There are limitations due to the study being regional, and data being collected from one main setting, although it is acknowledged that the reflective tools developed during the research may have relevance to other early years settings. Sumsion (2003), in a review of literature relating to resilience in early childhood educators, suggests that staff self-efficacy and retention are adversely affected when the working environment offers little or no support; when poor social relations are experienced within the workforce; and by the roles and responsibilities sometimes conflicting, and often being highly demanding both physically and emotionally. Furthermore, Royer and Moreau (2015) present the findings of a large-

scale survey conducted in Canada with 1,535 ECEC workers, with the features of a workplace contributing to building resilience identified as: having a support network; ongoing professional development opportunities; and having a good relationship with an experienced mentor. Combining the role of reflective supervisor with the role of administrative supervisor may lead to difficult situations, dilemmas and fractured supervisory relationships (Bernstein & Edwards, 2012; Heller & Gilkerston, 2009). The most highly valued characteristics of early years reflective supervision are reported as being: person-centred; confidence-building; collaborative; and promoting better outcomes for the children and families (Madeley, 2014). Characteristics of the context, individual characteristics, and the interplay between the individual and the environment, contribute most significantly to ECEC staff retention (Sumsion, 2003). This subsection has explored the impact of characteristics of the work context, in terms of organisational practices in the caring professions; the development of desirable characteristics in the individual through professional training is examined in the next subsection.

2.4.4 Career preparation and professional development training

Elfer and Dearnley (2007, p.267) propose that 'staff training does not sufficiently address the personal implications and anxieties that children's attachments may entail for practitioners'. Furthermore, Elfer (2013) highlights the importance of understanding the complexity of emotional labour in ECEC and the need to develop models of training and support that take account of this. A breadth of literature suggests that although emotional labour is fundamental to many care roles, such as nurses, development of emotion management skills is not adequately addressed within

their professional education programmes (Mann, 2005). This lack of preparation is echoed by Cousins (2015) in a study investigating ECEC practitioners' concepts of love and care in England. Interviews were conducted with five senior practitioners working in five diverse London settings, with these participants reported as feeling that their work involves them as 'full human beings', however, their training had not prepared them for this. Taggart and Elsey (2013) also commented on this lack of training in the development of emotion management skills, and made recommendations for professional development opportunities in articulating and exploring 'the emotional vocabulary surrounding a *professional* disposition to care, based on developments in attachment theory' (p.1). Page (2016, 2017) also recommends the development of professional development training for nurturing children's development and supporting practitioners' resilience through 'an explicit *Attachment Pedagogy* which informs and structures practitioners' behaviours with children in terms of a Modern Attachment Theory' (p.88).

2.4.5 Section summary

This section set out to present current thinking and research relevant to emotion in the workplace, and the management of emotion as a requirement of professional caring practices; finding that neither Hochschild's (2003) presentation of emotional labour as it is experienced in customer service roles, nor prevalent social representations of care work as being feminised and low-skilled (Miller, 1996), adequately describe how emotional labour is constructed in the caring professions. Early years work has longevity and connectedness in the relationships (Osgood, 2012b; Page, 2011); with affectionate bonds formed between practitioners and the children

(Boyer *et al.*, 2012; Page, 2011, 2017; Taggart, 2016). Emotional labour in early years settings is performed by compassionate professionals (Taggart, 2016), with professional caring characterised by sustained skilful management of displays of emotion (Bolton, 2001; Colley, 2006). Emotion management in the caring professions is agentic, with acts of resistance aligned to providing care to meet the needs of individuals (Hutchinson, 1990). Furthermore, emotion work in early years settings is subject to cultural influence in terms of the emotions felt, how they are felt, and how they are enacted (Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2015, 2016).

Published work relating to consequences of emotional labour was reviewed with the aim of exploring impact on the caring professional. However, very little has been written on the positive consequences of compassionate acts (Corr *et al.*, 2014): the proposed benefits include distraction from own problems; raised self-esteem; increased perceptions of self-efficacy, competency and meaningfulness; raised personal happiness; lowered anxiety levels; and reduced depressive symptoms (Alden & Trew, 2013; Kinman & Leggetter, 2016; Midlarsky, 1991; Mongrain *et al.*, 2011). However, high emotional demands in care work have been associated with stress and *burn out* (Aitken *et al.*, 2012; Kinman & Jones, 2001); and long periods of sustaining emotionally close interactions with very young children in early years settings have been reported as being emotionally exhausting (Page & Elfer, 2013). Furthermore, it has been proposed that the psychoanalytical processes of transference and projection may be deepened amongst early years practitioners through the key person approach, particularly when working with children exhibiting emotional or behavioural difficulties (Elfer, 2013; Greenhalgh, 1994). Nevertheless, research within nursing indicates that satisfaction gained from their empathic interactions with patients can

protect them from work-related stress (Kinman & Leggetter, 2016); similarly, close emotional bonding with young children as a requirement of early years roles can be 'deeply gratifying' and 'rewarding' (Boyer *et al.*, 2012, p.535). Care work with young children 'can be pleasurable and burdensome even at the same time' (Lynch & Walsh, 2009, p.38), and the daily management of complex emotional relationships in early years practice leads to the development of critical skills as *emotional capital* (Andrew, 2015a; Osgood, 2012b).

This section also set out to explore literature relating to emotional support provided by organisational practices; finding that well-intentioned *social defence systems* across caring professions may contribute to workplace stresses; management strategies to encourage suppression of felt emotion in the early years practitioner may lead to fear of being seen as unprofessional, or unable to cope, if emotion is displayed (Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Menzies Lyth, 1988). Paradoxically, staff should be supported in learning how to deploy their emotions in building empathetic, beneficial relationships (Brooker, 2010; Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2015; Hohman, 2007). There is a positive correlation between the implementation of organisational practices which address issues affecting the staff and children's wellbeing, and the development of a positive emotional climate in early years settings (Byrd, 2012). Research findings support a form of professional development involving the psychoanalytical process of containment through the means of collective dialogic reflection (Goouch & Powell, 2013; Elfer, 2012; Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Hopkins, 1988). However, there is concern over senior managers not possessing the required skills to support professional reflection (Page & Elfer, 2013; Soni, 2013), and Primary School head teachers not having a strong background in early years philosophy or pedagogy to be able provide

effective mentoring to early years teachers (Noble & MacFarlane, 2005). Organisational practices which are reported to support staff durability are characterised by: staff support networks; good relationships with experienced, person-centred, confidence-building, and collaborative mentors; ongoing professional development opportunities; and better outcomes for the children and families (Madeley, 2014; Royer & Moreau, 2015; Sumsion, 2003).

Finally, published work has been reviewed relating to career preparation and professional development within the caring professions, with the aim of examining emotional support provided through education and training; findings suggest that the development of emotion management skills is not adequately addressed within professional education programmes for caring professionals (Cousins; 2015; Mann, 2005). Evidence-based recommendations have been made for ECEC professional training in emotion management and pedagogy based on advancements in Attachment Theory (Page, 2016, 2017; Taggart & Elsey, 2013). The output of my study is a briefing paper to support workforce educators and trainers in developing curricula to reflect these evidence-based recommendations (Page, 2016, 2017; Taggart & Elsey, 2013); with the authoring of this guidance addressing a deficit in current literature. Strategies for developing nurturing and supportive professional education and training for the caring professions are explored further in the next section.

2.5 Evidence-based strategies to support emotional labour

There is a paucity of published research or debate relating to emotional wellbeing in early years practice, including little having been written in relation to early

years teachers compared to teachers of other age ranges (Baron, 2015). Resilience is presented as helping other caring professionals to cope with their complex and emotionally demanding role (Grant & Kinman, 2012, 2013, 2014); accordingly, developing strategies for building emotional resilience should be integral in nurses' training (Ashton *et al.*, 2015), midwives' training (McDonald *et al.*, 2012, 2013) and social workers' training programmes (Considine *et al.*, 2015; Grant & Kinman, 2012, 2014). Page and Elfer (2013) also contend that practitioners working with babies and young children should be 'emotionally resilient' (p.557). The next subsection examines conceptualisations of resilience, and explores evidence-based strategies for enhancing resilience in caring professionals.

2.5.1 Resilience

In ECEC the term *resilience* is generally associated with fostering coping mechanisms in young children; it has been studied over the last twenty years and recognised as a protective resource in children experiencing transitions, stress and deprivation (Glover, 2009; Haggerty *et al.*, 1996; Rutter, 2007). Furthermore, the term is widely used in ECEC as it is present in the *Keeping Safe* principle of the EYFS statutory framework document (DfE, 2014), asserting practitioner responsibilities in promoting the welfare of children in their care. There is an emphasis on the importance of resilience for children, especially looked after children, and the importance of practitioners promoting children's resilience.

There is no single conceptualisation, theory or definition of resilience: Atkinson *et al.* (2009, p.137) propose that 'The ability to apparently recover from the extremes of

trauma, deprivation, threat or stress is known as resilience'; whilst Glover (2009 p.5) defines resilience as having the ability to 'bounce back from adversity'. Definitions of resilience which emphasise it as a state of reactivity to negative experiences, convey the adaptive quality of resilience, however, they do not encapsulate the complexity or the proactivity of the phenomenon (Grant & Kinman, 2013). Rutter (2012, p.341) describes resilience as 'a dynamic concept' that is 'accompanied by biological, neuroendocrine and neural changes'; whereas other authors represent resilience as a personality trait (Waugh *et al.*, 2008). However, there is agreement on not making the assumption that adversity will affect all people in the same way, and to the same degree: individual difference is crucial to resilience. Furthermore, Rutter (2012) offers evidence of the importance of individual difference in his findings; he reports that exposure to stress in some cases has a *steeling effect*, leading to an increased resistance to later stressors. Personal attributes associated with resilient care workers are identified as: reflective ability; emotional intelligence/literacy; empathy; self-awareness; self-efficacy; optimism; a sense of humour; effective coping skills; problem-solving skills; social confidence; cultural competence; commitment to professional values; commitment to self-care; work-life balance; and good support networks (Grant & Kinman, 2013). Similarly, Sumsion (2003) suggests that certain personal qualities are instrumental to ECEC staff resilience: these protective qualities are self-awareness, self-care, determination, leadership skills, not being risk adverse, and having the ability to see *the big picture*. Furthermore, subjective psychological wellbeing in ECEC has been positively linked with perceptions of autonomy (Royer & Moreau, 2015); where autonomy is not to be considered in conflict with connectedness, as engagement in the interests of others leads to greater sensitivity to own needs and desires (Lynch & Walsh, 2009).

There is a breadth of evidence indicating that work-based resilience training can enhance employees' resilience and improve dependent areas, such as an employee's subjective wellbeing, psychosocial functioning and workplace performance (Robertson *et al.*, 2015). Protective personal attributes may be developed and strengthened in caring professionals through evidence-based strategies including: enhancing reflective practice; mentoring and peer coaching; mindfulness and relaxation; and experiential learning (Grant & Kinman, 2013). The next three subsections consider published strategies to enhance emotional intelligence, reflective ability, and mindfulness. First, there is a review of literature which relates to developing emotional intelligence to understand and manage emotions for professional caring.

2.5.2 Emotional intelligence/literacy

Publication of a seminal work of the same name, by Goleman (1996), offered a concept in emotion management termed 'emotional intelligence' (p. 34): this new concept was described as:

> [the ability to]… motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations: to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and to hope.

The term *emotional literacy* is also in wide use. Emotional intelligence (EI) comprises competences that can be taught as skills while emotional literacy (EL) is more concerned with the implementation of strategies to promote emotional intelligence (Burman, 2009). Steiner & Perry (1997) offer a published training programme based on a definition of emotional literacy which demonstrates conceptual links with other personal assets requiring learning to take place; these links with reflective ability and

reflexivity position EL as 'the ability to understand your emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathise with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively' (p. 11). Additionally, close ties with other personal assets, such as social competency and social support, are also demonstrated by Steiner & Perry's (1997) argument that 'Emotional literacy improves relationships, creates loving possibilities between people, makes co-operative work possible, and facilitates the feeling of community'(p. 11).

Howe (2008) writes on the importance of EI in understanding and managing emotions for effective professional practice in social work; while research findings indicate that EI protects against work-based stress and *burn out* in nurses (Karimi *et al*., 2014; McQueen, 2004). Research findings from studies investigating the inclusion of EI training within nurse education programmes demonstrate participants' employment of active coping strategies, increased feelings of control and emotional competence, and enhanced subjective wellbeing (Karimi *et al.*, 2014; Por *et al.,* 2011). Study findings by Howe (2008), Karimi *et al.* (2014), McQueen (2004), and Por *et al.* (2011) would suggest that training in EI/EL may also lead to enhanced understandings of personal emotions and managing own feelings for professional care; supporting an argument for EL training to be included in ECEC workforce preparation and development programmes. The next subsection reviews literature relating to defining and developing professional reflective practice in the caring professions.

2.5.3 Reflective practice

Reflective ability has been reported to support the accumulation of emotional capital and resilience in social workers (see Considine *et al.*, 2015; Grant & Brewer, 2014), and in early years workers (see Andrew, 2015a; Elfer, 2007, 2013; Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Page & Elfer, 2013; Sumsion, 2003; Vincent & Braun, 2013). Furthermore, early years pedagogy hinges on practitioners engaging in reflective practice (Paige-Smith & Craft, 2011; Reed & Canning, 2010). In his seminal work 'The Reflective Practitioner: how professionals think in action', Schön (l983) builds on the earlier theorising of Dewey to propose reflection as a way of seeing relationships between professional knowledge and practice; practitioners learn from *doing* and use implicit knowledge to develop. Therefore, reflective practice calls for the practitioner to become fully self-aware and critically evaluate their own responses, learn from their direct experience, and make adjustments to practice that reflect this learning. Schön (l983) was concerned with theorising on the processes of reflection; proposing that reflection can take place before action, during action, and after action, although the reflection before action is lesser discussed (Greenwood, 1993). Schön (l983) proposes that this produces a kind of knowledge that is *phronesis*: knowledge which is pragmatic and concerned with practical judgement, variable depending on context, and action oriented (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012).

Tremmel (l993) describes Schön's construct of *reflection in action* as how practitioners '*give* themselves to the learning situation and to the action of the moment' (p.440). Finlay (2008b) identifies criticisms of Schön's construct of *reflection in action* from a phenomenological perspective: Ekebergh (2007) criticises the notion of

reflecting on the *lived* experience, arguing that it is at odds with phenomenological philosophy that requires an attitude of openness for an holistic focus on meaning as it is being presented; and Van Manen (2016) asserts that critical self-reflection requires distance from the experience and retrospection. The phenomenological open attitude is reflected in Schön's (1983, p.68) explanation of how 'The practitioner allows [oneself] to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which [one] finds uncertain or unique'. However, central to Husserlian phenomenological philosophy is a need to *bracket* or set side personal assumptions for consideration after the *lived* experience, therefore, the diversion occurs when Schön (1983, p.68) writes that the practitioner 'reflects on the phenomenon before [them], and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in [their] behaviour.' Present in both Schön's (1983) processes of *reflection in practice* and *reflection on practice*, is where the practitioner 'carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation' (p.68); essentially, the aim of engaging in reflective practice is to construct new theory to enhance and shape future practice.

Bolton (2010) considers the term *reflective practice* as being a limited metaphor for such a multi-faceted activity; that is, the flat inverted duplication of image which occurs on a mirror's surface does not faithfully represent the processes involved in reflective practice. Bolton (2010, p.10) asks the question: 'What is the reflection of shit?'; instead of leaving this as rhetoric she emphasises her point by responding to her own question and adds: 'Shit'. Bolton (2010) proposes that reflection is a dynamic process and not the act of dwelling on past events as a gloomy and negative preoccupation: reflection is not a passive going over and over things that have not gone

well and reliving all the negative feelings attached to these occurrences. Similarly, Rodgers (2002, p.230) describes reflection as:

> … high level of consciousness about what one sees ... a fine attention to detail and form; the perception of relations - tensions and harmonies; the perception of nuance - colors of meaning; and the perception of change - shifts and subtle motions.

Reflection is predominantly individualistic and a personal exercise (Reynolds & Vince, 2004); even within dialogical contexts, such as supervision sessions, the onus is principally placed upon the practitioner to reflect upon and evaluate their own practice, when a mutual, reciprocal, and shared process may be more fruitful (Finlay, 2008b). Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2016) emphasise how reflection is bound to 'the relational aspects of how understandings of practice are constructed through discussion of and observation of others in practice' (p.9). Furthermore, Bolton (2010) proposes use of a reflective writing model to bring together individual reflective writing exercises and group reflective discussion: the social interaction enhances self-awareness, future action planning, and *reflexivity*, where the process of reflexivity is defined as taking responsibility for the effects of their personal attitudes and behaviours on others (Bolton, 2010).

McMullen *et al.* (2016) introduce a model of *Pedagogy of Care and Wellbeing* (PCW) which guides practitioners 'as they think about, engage in, and then reflect upon practice with young children' (p.268). The PCW model consists of nine component 'senses' of wellbeing to guide in the development of caring environments, caring relationships, and caring experiences for the children. The PCW model does not exclusively benefit the children's wellbeing; the practitioners' own contentment, security, affinity, self-respect, communication, engagement, contribution, efficacy, and

agency are critical to creating these caring environments, relationships, and experiences.   Similarly, Elfer (2017) presents an adapted version of the Tavistock Observation Method for trial in early years practice to provide benefits to the wellbeing of both the children and the practitioners.   The method is underpinned by a model of professional reflection with attention to emotional processes.   Practitioners immerse themselves in the children's observed behaviours and experiences without synchronous recording of their observations; soon after, a narrative description of the child's observed behaviours and an account of the practitioners' own feelings, are written up for later reading and discussion with colleagues.   The group discussion not only facilitates sensitive construction of meaning in relation to the child's emotional state; it can also provide a form of emotional *containment* for the observing practitioner who may have experienced strong emotions, such as anxiety or distress, during their observation of the child (Elfer, 2017).

Ghaye (2000, p.7) proposes that reflection enables the practitioner to 'make sense of the uncertainty in our workplaces' and promotes the 'courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos'.   Recent research within ECEC, The Professional Love in Early Years Settings (PLEYS) project, captured the opinions of a wide and diverse sample of 793 respondents via a national open and anonymous online survey, ten individual interviews, and four focus groups (Page *et al.*, 2015).   The PLEYS Project sought early years practitioners' views on constructions of love, care, and intimacy in early years settings, examining how early years practitioners can safely express the affectionate and caring behaviours which their role demands of them.   The project findings indicate that practitioners would like more confidence in their professional decisions relating to love, care and intimacy; a deeper knowledge of

Attachment Theory; and access to examples of how to apply their understanding of the theory to their own relationships with babies and young children (Page, 2017). In response, an Attachment Toolkit has been co-produced to encourage use of a practice model and a 'Cycle of Reflection' in the workplace; these professional development materials aim to support in decision making in relation to practitioners' own relationships with young children, and their setting's policies, procedures, and practices including safeguarding. The PLEYS Project Attachment Toolkit (Page *et al.*, 2015) is designed to encourage self-awareness, and the ability to become deeply absorbed in thinking about the needs of the children so that all thought and action are non-judgemental and oriented beyond the practitioner's own needs; this ability to 'de-centre' (p.14) is akin to Schön's (1983) *reflection in action*, and a mindfulness that goes beyond surface seeing, allowing for full experiencing and noticing of the details of the moment. In consonance, McMullen *et al.* (2016) explain that total attentiveness, or 'engrossment', in the needs of the cared-for displaces the carers' own concerns; this 'motivational displacement' (p.261) is characterised by the one-caring seeking to respond in positive ways. In addition to providing benefits for the children, building staff self-awareness and the ability for mindfulness supports practitioners' own resilience (Page *et al.*, 2015) protecting them from becoming 'too attached' (p.14) to the children. The next subsection is concerned with exploring what has been written about mindfulness, and the benefits of enacting mindfulness in professional caring.

2.5.4 Mindfulness

Mindfulness has its traditions in Zen Buddhism, and the fundamental principle is 'to pay attention to *right here, right now* and to invest the present moment with full

awareness and concentration' (Tremmel, 1993, p.443). Early years practitioners develop a sense of presence, enabling them to empathetically engage with young children and respond with compassion; Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006, p.266) describe this as:

> a state of alert awareness, receptivity and connectedness to the mental, emotional and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments, and the ability to respond with a considered and compassionate best next step.

Taggart (2015) makes a case for early years practitioners engaging in habitual mindfulness as a mechanism for remaining focused and attuned to children while reducing anxieties in the self: both mindfulness and attunement require the attention to be drawn to the present moment, with mindfulness allowing space for attuning to the children. The findings of Taggart's (2015) recent small scale evaluative study shows consensus from practitioners on being more *emotionally available* to children when 'their minds are less preoccupied' (p.389); suggesting a place for learning on mindfulness within ECEC professional development programmes. This notion concurs with the writing of Jennings (2015) who presents a small scale study of the perceptions of thirty-five US pre-school teachers in relation to their personal wellbeing. The study findings demonstrate relationships between positive affect, mindfulness, self-compassion, and self-efficacy, in the emotional support of children's challenging behaviours. Mindfulness and self-efficacy were positively associated with perspective-taking and sensitivity; whereas, depression, emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation were seen to impact negatively on creating and maintaining supportive environments and relationships with children presenting challenging behaviours. Jennings (2015) proposes promoting training in mindfulness in professional development to reduce practitioners' stress and support emotional competence and wellbeing.

2.5.5 Section summary

The paucity of published research or debate relating to nurturing emotional wellbeing and resilience in the early years workforce is in stark contrast with the high volume of literature concerned with helping care workers cope with their similarly complex and emotionally demanding roles (Ashton *et al.*, 2015; Considine *et al.*, 2015; Grant & Kinman, 2012, 2014; McDonald *et al.*, 2012, 2013). However, Page and Elfer (2013, p.557) contend that practitioners working with babies and young children should be 'emotionally resilient'. Many conceptualisations and definitions of resilience have been published (see Atkinson *et al.,* 2009; Glover, 2009; Grant & Kinman, 2013; Rutter, 2012; Waugh *et al.*, 2008), however, there is commonality in the agreement that resilience is an asset which provides protection from the negative effects of stressors. Personal qualities which are associated with resilience in caring professionals include: reflectiveness; emotional intelligence/literacy; empathy; self-awareness; self-efficacy; self-care; determination; optimism; autonomy; humour; coping skills; problem-solving; social and cultural confidence; professional values; leadership skills; risk-taking; work–life balance; and good support networks (Grant & Kinman, 2013; Royer and Moreau, 2015; Sumsion, 2003). These protective attributes can be developed and enhanced through training in evidence-based strategies such as: enhancing reflective practice; mentoring and peer coaching; mindfulness and relaxation; and experiential learning (Grant & Kinman, 2013; Robertson *et al.*, 2015).

This section also explored literature relating to the implementation of strategies to build resilience in care workers, beginning with published work on the related concepts of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996) and emotional literacy (Burman,

2009). Research findings propose that EI training promotes understanding and emotion management in professional caring (Howe, 2008), while also protecting against work-based stress (Karimi *et al.*, 2014; McQueen, 2004). Similarly, engagement in reflective practice has been reported as supporting the accumulation of emotional capital and building staff resilience in social work (see Considine *et al.*, 2015; Grant & Brewer, 2014), and in early years practice (see Andrew, 2015a; Elfer, 2007, 2013; Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Page & Elfer, 2013; Sumsion, 2003; Vincent & Braun, 2013). Reflection is predominantly an individualistic personal exercise (Reynolds & Vince, 2004), even within dialogical contexts such as supervision sessions the onus is on the individual to reflect upon and evaluate their own practice (Finlay, 2008b). However, literature reports alternative collective models of reflection which are beneficial for both the children's wellbeing and building staff resilience (see Bolton, 2010; Elfer, 2017; McMullen *et al.,* 2016). Furthermore, Page *et al.* (2015) propose that developing practitioners' ability to reflect on their relationships and to 'de-centre' (p.14), a strategy akin to mindfulness, benefits the children while simultaneously building self-awareness for staff resilience. Mindfulness requires the attention to be drawn to the present moment, therefore, ECEC professional development training for habitual mindfulness is recommended by Taggart (2015) and Jennings (2015), as it has the potential to enable sustained and focused empathetic engagement with the children, increase staff self-efficacy, and reduce staff anxieties.

The paucity of published research or debate relating to nurturing emotional wellbeing and resilience in the early years workforce signals a need for more investigation of this under-explored area. To address the deficit of published guidance on training and professional development for emotional labour and supervision in early

years settings, the development of a briefing paper for ECEC workforce educators and trainers is an impact aim of my research. Through the authoring of a briefing paper as an output of my study, I respond to recommendations in the literature for learning on evidence-based strategies which have the potential to simultaneously nurture children's wellbeing and staff resilience (Elfer, 2017; Goouch & Powell, 2012; Jennings, 2015; Page, 2017; Taggart, 2015), to be included in early years training and professional development. Gilligan (1982) theorises on working with an *ethic of care*, and proposes that the caring professional needs to take care of self in order to be able to care for others; the next section of this chapter is concerned with constructs of care ethics and how my research methodology is underpinned by an ethic of care.

2.6 An Ethic of Care

The development of ethics of care theory is rooted in the moral psychology work of Gilligan (1982); she proposed that men and women have propensities to view morality in different terms, with women emphasising empathy and compassion over notions of morality as *rightness*. There may be tensions between different solutions or responses to a situation giving rise to ethical dilemmas. Gilligan (1982), writing on feminist constructions within ethical dilemmas, expressed how morality for women is typically situated and emotional; she emphasised the importance of dialogue in making moral judgements. Gilligan (1982) describes a morality where actions are seen as ethical in the sense of being relational rather than in Kantian moral correctness; defining this as 'a network of connection, a web of relationships that is sustained by a process of communication' (p.29). Care ethics are relational, and emphasise the uniqueness of each caring relationship and the parts played by the one-caring and those

being cared-for (Noddings, 1984). Furthermore, Noddings (1984) presents this dyadic care relationship as being reciprocal, proposing that both the one-caring and the cared-for benefit from their relationship, however, she acknowledges the 'generous inequality' (p.67).

Tronto (1993) describes four dimensions of caring, which he termed 'caring about', 'taking care of', 'caregiving', and 'care receiving' (p.165). Furthermore, Tronto (1993) asserts that care involves cognitive, emotional, and action strategies set within a moral relationship between individuals. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) conceptualise care ethics as being practical in nature, involving the carrying out of everyday actions, decisions and choices with consideration and respect for all concerned. Held (2006) emphasises how social relations are conducted with a 'compelling moral salience of attending to and meeting the needs of the particular others whom we take responsibility' (p.10); for example, as a parent interprets and attends to their child's needs, an ethic of care is expressed through their *responsive listening* (Bath, 2013).

Care ethics framed my relationships with the study participants and provided a context for interpreting the study findings. My role as the researcher in this study required the performance of emotion work: decisions and choices reflected my care for the participants; my actions were ethical in terms of responding in the best interests of the cohort of participants as a whole, and through my responsiveness to particular needs. The importance of social relations and an emphasis on dialogue are reflected in my selected data collection methods; social encounters enable connections to be made between the researcher and the participants, and as such, are situated and emotional.

The social interactions between myself and the participants were moral in the sense of requiring total attentiveness, empathy, responsiveness, and respect for the individual. Furthermore, my data analysis is underpinned by ethics of care theory; emotion and behaviours are interpreted through a moral lens which emphasises the importance of interpersonal relationships and response to vulnerability. The prominence of morality and ethics in my research methodology is further considered in the 'Methodology', 'Discussion' and 'Conclusion' chapters of the thesis.

2.7 Chapter conclusion

This literature review positions Hochschild's (2003) seminal work on the internal processes of emotion management and the resulting consequences, as paving the way for theoretical perspectives on the exploitation of emotion. However, the theoretical construction of *feeling rules* has attracted much criticism for not fully expressing the complexity of emotion in the modern workplace. Furthermore, the short term and low-skilled customer care observed by Hochschild (2003) does not reflect how emotions are skilfully deployed and managed in the caring professions (Bolton, 2005; Osgood, 2012b).

There is an abundance of published work relating to emotional labour and workers' wellbeing in other care sectors, however, relatively little has been written in relation to the ECEC workforce. The nature of care work is primarily emotional: it is the specific and unexpressed requirement in the caring professions to expend emotional labour which provides intrinsic rewards while also being a key source of stress. There is published literature concerned with emotional exhaustion, stresses and *burn out* of

caring professionals (Aitken *et al.*, 2012; Kinman & Jones, 2001; Page & Elfer, 2013).

However, it has also been reported that the satisfaction gained from empathic interactions may protect from work-related stress (Kinman & Leggetter, 2016). A very few studies have reported positive consequences of emotional labour in early years settings; these positive outcomes include enjoyment of forming close emotional bonds with children, raised self-efficacy, and development of emotional capital (see Andrew, 2015a; Boyer *et al.*, 2012; Colley, 2006; Osgood, 2012b), signally the need for more research in this under-explored area. My study responds to the need for more investigation of emotional labour in early years settings, and explores both positive and negative consequences of professional caring for young children.

Literature acknowledges the importance of understanding the complexity of emotion in ECEC; there are expressions of the need to develop organisational practices and models of professional development and supervision practice which take account of this complexity, while also enabling practice that is sensitive to children's individual emotional experiences (see Elfer, 2013; Taggart, 2015; Page, 2017). However, my literature review has revealed how little evidence-based guidance is available on supervision practices in early years settings, compared to the greater volume produced for other caring professionals coping with similarly complex and emotionally demanding roles (see Ashton *et al.*, 2015; Considine *et al.*, 2015; Grant & Kinman, 2012, 2014; McDonald *et al.*, 2012, 2013). Nevertheless, findings from the relatively few studies grounded in an ECEC context support a form of professional development involving the psychoanalytical process of containment through a means of collective dialogic reflection (see Goouch & Powell, 2013; Elfer, 2012; Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Hopkins, 1988). There is little published evidence-based guidance which is specific to

supervision practices in ECEC (for example: Heller & Gilkerston, 2009; Sturt & Wonnacott, 2016); this shortfall of guidance for early years leaders, coupled with the support from literature for collaborative reflection (see Goouch & Powell, 2013; Elfer, 2012; Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Hopkins, 1988), suggests a need for learning on supervision and professional reflection practices to be included in workforce education and training in preparation for entry to the sector and professional development curricula. However, there is no single piece of published work aimed at ECEC workforce educators to support the development of curricula reflecting supervision practices in the ECEC sector; this deficit in guidance is addressed by the output of my study, that is, a briefing paper to support workforce educators and trainers.

My review of literature reveals that the development of emotion management skills is not adequately addressed within professional education programmes in ECEC or other care work (Cousins; 2015; Mann, 2005). Research findings propose that EI training promotes the understanding and management of emotion for effective professional practice (Howe, 2008), while simultaneously protecting practitioners against work-based stress (Karimi *et al.*, 2014; McQueen, 2004). Similarly, engagement in reflective practice supports the accumulation of emotional capital and resilience in the caring professions (see Andrew, 2015a; Considine *et al.*, 2015; Elfer, 2007, 2013; Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Grant & Brewer, 2014; Page & Elfer, 2013; Sumsion, 2003; Vincent & Braun, 2013). Recommendations have been made for ECEC professional training in developing dispositions for care and habitual mindfulness (Jennings, 2015; Taggart, 2015), and the implementation of pedagogy based on advancements in Attachment Theory (Page, 2016, 2017; Taggart & Elsey, 2013). However, there is no single piece of published work aimed at ECEC workforce

educators to support the development of curricula specifically aimed at preparing students for working in the emotionally demanding ECEC sector: this deficit in the literature is addressed by the output of my study, a briefing paper to support workforce educators and trainers in developing curricula to reflect these evidence-based recommendations (Jennings, 2015; Page 2016, 2017; Taggart, 2015; Taggart & Elsey, 2013).

In conclusion, my review of literature has identified gaps in debate, empirical research and guidance relating to emotional labour and supervision in early years settings. My research addresses the deficit in published work on emotional labour in the ECEC context, positive consequences of emotional labour with young children, and models of current supervision practice in early years settings. Furthermore, to address the paucity of published work in this area, I formulated the research impact aim of developing guidance for workforce educators and trainers in ECEC career preparation and professional development as an output of my study. At the close of my literature review I present ethics of care theory as a conceptual framework for the research methodology. The next chapter sets out the research design and methods for the empirical study, with discussion of my methodological and ethical decisions and potential limitations.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that my research was conducted with a valid and ethical methodology. The information provided will also potentially assist future researchers in replicating the methodology, thereby adding to the body of knowledge relating to emotional labour and supervision in early years settings. This chapter sets out the research questions and research design. Furthermore, the selected methodology is discussed in relation to theoretical underpinning, and how it relates to philosophical writings and articulated phenomenological research methods. Data collection and data analysis procedures are critically examined, potential limitations are identified and discussed, and justifications are provided for choices and decisions throughout this chapter.

3.2 Research questions

My main research question is: How is emotional labour experienced and supported in early years settings? A short series of subsidiary questions were formulated to help *unpack* the component elements of the problem (Gorard, 2013). The first of these questions was of an exploratory nature, while the second and third questions were causal. My three subsidiary questions are as follows:

1. How do early years practitioners deploy and/or regulate their emotions in performance of their role?

2. What are the consequences of their emotional labour?

3. How effective are current models of supervision and professional reflection?

These research questions were responded to through an empirical study conducted in the South East of England with graduate early years practitioners: the conceptual framework for the research design is discussed in the next section.

3.3 Theoretical support

The purpose of this section is to explain how theory underpins the research methods. A discussion follows which makes transparent the following: my ontological and epistemological positions; the influences of the philosophy of phenomenology on the study; the embodiment of values and moral judgements; and the adoption of a methodology which promotes the development of consciousness and introspection on the part of the participants and the researcher.

3.3.1 Phenomenology as a philosophy and methodology

The philosophical and subsequent research approach, referred to as *phenomenology*, was founded on the work of Edmund Husserl in the early 20th century. The concept of Lifeworld, or *Lebenswelt,* underpins the writing of Husserl and emphasizes a world which is experienced, hence, the world is lived or *erlebt*. Lifeworld

is not a static concept, and is described as a *dynamic horizon* which is continuously changing as we *live* within it (Husserl & Heidegger, 1927). Each person has an individual lifeworld, although, this does not mean that the lifeworld is a purely individual circumstance: lifeworld encompasses shared human experience, and as such, presents a pool of inter-subjective consciousness. Lifeworld is one of the more complicated concepts in phenomenology, mainly because of its status as both personal and inter-subjective. The search for gaining description and understanding of lived experiences is integral to Husserlian phenomenology and, furthermore, pure phenomenological research seeks to describe individual experiences of phenomena from a perspective free from hypotheses or preconceptions. Contrary to these purest early phenomenological ideals, my approach may be seen as more explicitly interpretive and striving for explanations; the interpretive dimension to this research enabled the formation of practical theory to inform, support and challenge current thinking and action in support of the research aims.

According to Husserl (Husserl & Heidegger, 1927), phenomenological research involves the researcher in a change of attitude; the phenomenological attitude, or *epoché,* involves a setting aside, or *bracketing*, of past experiences and prior assumptions relating to the phenomenon. Gearing (2004) elaborates on this *phenomenological reduction* by proposing that bracketing has six forms: ideal, descriptive, existential, analytical, reflexive and pragmatic, and his work details the features of each of these. Tufford and Newman (2010) discuss tensions associated with bracketing, and more specifically, the practical aspects of bracketing such as issues concerning who should bracket, methods of bracketing, and when bracketing should occur within the research process. Finlay (2011) comments on how frequently

bracketing has been wrongly understood as an exercise in objectivity: she described bracketing as an act of openness and connection, rather than any attempt at being totally unbiased, distanced or detached. *Epoché* is neither about striving for objectivity, nor about being without bias; it is about *suspending* the researchers own suppositions and prior understandings in order to induce a sense of openness to the individual, and their telling of the phenomenon as experienced by them. Dahlberg *et al.* (2008, p.98) describe epoché as:

> …openness as the mark of a true willingness to listen, see, and understand. It involves respect and a certain humility toward the phenomenon, as well as sensitivity and flexibility.

Finlay (2011) explains how the researcher wholly focuses on meaning as it is being presented in the participant's description of the phenomenon: the researcher accepts what the participant tells them about their own experience as the participant's *truth*, and focuses on understanding the phenomenon as it is expressed by the participant. This view requires researchers to challenge themselves in bracketing their own experiences initially by not assuming any commonality of experience. Dahlberg *et al.* (2008, p.98) suggest developing 'a capacity to be surprised and sensitive to the unpredicted and unexpected'. Therefore, openness requires the researcher to be genuinely curious and welcoming of the possibility of being surprised (Finlay, 2008a).

Heidegger refuted the notion that a person can totally put aside their own bias and just 'be of the present' or *vorhanden* (Heidegger, 1927/1998): he acknowledged that a person's own culture, background, gender and past, influence their experiences. Heidegger provided an alternative concept to bracketing which he referred to as *authentic reflection*: authentic reflection is a knowing and transparency of the researcher's personal assumptions about a phenomenon (Heidegger, 1927/1998).

Authentic reflection is an awareness and self-consciousness of how the researcher's personal beliefs impact upon the research process. I demonstrate an awareness of the potential influence of my personal assumptions and empathy, and consider how the concepts of authentic reflection and reflexivity relate to this study, in the 'Discussion' chapter of the thesis.

3.3.2 Experience as the foundation of knowledge

The epistemological theory regarding experience as the foundation of knowledge is termed *empiricism* (Aspin, 1995). In contrast to the positivist view of knowledge as objective, universal and generalisable, the qualitative researcher adopts an epistemological stance where interpretation and perception can be counted as knowledge (Silverman, 2008). Phenomenology provides the theoretical grounding for empirical qualitative study as it is emphasizes how *reality* is perceived in human consciousness and shared human experiences (Husserl & Heidegger, 1927). Marx (1859/1977, preface) proposes that 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness'; that is, human experience is reflected in perceptions of reality. Furthermore, interpretations of reality have an effect on behaviour, with individuals acting on the basis of their perceived reality: for example, if it is believed that there is a mouse under the table individuals will act accordingly whether or not there is a mouse there (Morrison, 1998). This example supports the premise that in order to understand the social realities of the phenomenon, the study needed to be grounded in the human experiences of that social reality (Bryman, 1988). That is, how practitioners perceive they are required to feel and behave in performance of their ECEC role influences how they enact emotional labour

in the setting and experience the related consequences. The methodological decision to use focus groups and individual interviews for data collection enhanced inter-subjectivity (Husserl & Heidegger, 1927) and the gathering of perceptions of lived experiences or *subjective truths* (Silverman, 2008); this decision is further discussed and justified in the next subsection.

3.3.3 Connected knowing as an epistemological orientation

Where there is a predominance of females within the participant sample a rationale supported by Belenky *et al.* (1997) and Bath (2013) favours a methodology supporting social constructivism, and employing social interaction. Belenky *et al.* (1997, p.26) used the term 'ways of knowing' to describe how value-laden dialogue with others provides women with tools for representing their experiences, and developing consciousness and introspection, or 'a dialogue with *the self*''. Readings of Belenky *et al.* (1997) further explain how the passing of language back and forth enables women to expand and reflect upon each other's experiences. Listening, dialogue and learning are interconnected, producing meanings and knowledge which is negotiated and agreed (Bath, 2013). Belenky *et al*. (1997 p.119) explains how being open to the ideas of others is a procedure for deeper knowing:

> Each individual must stretch her own vision in order to share
> another's vision. Through mutual stretching and sharing the
> group achieves a vision richer than any individual could achieve
> alone.

My study participants shared experiences of their emotional work in focus groups, and with the researcher in individual interviews, thereby, enhancing understandings of self, individual realities and behaviours (Belenky *et al.*, 1997).

3.4 Research design

The purpose of this section is to make the methodological decisions transparent, and to demonstrate how the research was designed as a good fit with the research questions, and with concern to the achievement of the research aims.

3.4.1 Translation of phenomenological ideas into a research approach

While a considerable body of literature exists on the philosophy of phenomenology there is less written on translating the philosophical ideal into a research approach (Litchman, 2013), and furthermore, much empirical research purported as being phenomenological include little detail or clarity on what makes them phenomenological (Norlyk and Harder, 2010). Crotty (1996) reviewed thirty nursing articles relating to phenomenology and published a text critiquing interpretations of phenomenological methodology in their qualitative research; he (1996) argued that these studies were not in accordance with pure philosophical phenomenology, lacking critique, description and objectivity. Paley (1997) also put forward a view that nurse researchers failed to be guided by the key concepts of Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology; he asserted that the methods used in nursing phenomenological research lacked evidence of phenomenological reduction. Utilising research methods aligned to a more philosophical phenomenology is more appropriate to exploring an understanding of the phenomenon itself (Dahlberg, 2006). However, the purpose of much nursing research is to view phenomena from the participant's perspective in order to effect change; a more scientific methodology is a good fit with the research aim of addressing confusion, concern or gaps in knowledge about a specific health-related phenomenon. Giorgi (2000) is highly critical of the writing of both Paley (1997) and

Crotty (1996) on phenomenological nursing research; he highlights these authors' failure to distinguish how scientific phenomenology is distinctly different from 'practising philosophy' (Giorgi, 2000, p.11): Giorgi (2000) advocates appreciation of the value of phenomenological nursing research as a more scientific type of phenomenological work as opposed to being a purely philosophical treatment of a phenomenon; making a more scientific approach completely appropriate if the methodology is chosen to be a match with the research aims (Barkway, 2001). A scientific phenomenological approach is outlined by Van Manen (2016 pp.9-13) through identification of the characteristics of phenomenological research: the study of lived experiences; the explication of phenomena as they present themselves to consciousness; the study of essences or meaning (depending on the specific approach); the description of the experiential meanings we live as we live them; the human scientific study of phenomena; the attentive practice of mindfulness; a search for what it means to be human; and a poetizing activity. The characteristics referring to openness, reflection and reflectivity, and emphasis on emotion and sensation as opposed to pure intellectuality, are discussed in the 'Discussion' and 'Conclusion' chapters of the thesis; through reflection on my coming to know, and making transparent my preconceptions about the phenomenon, I acknowledge that my personal assumptions are integrated into the findings and justify my holistic interpretation of meaning.

Norlyk and Harder (2010) conducted a systematic review of eighty-eight published empirical studies in nursing where the methodology was stated as being phenomenological, and they report considerable variation across the studies. The majority of researchers considered phenomenology to be about *experience*, however, emphasis was placed on the lives of the individual subjects in some studies, while in

others, emphasis was placed on the phenomenon being experienced. There was a range of understandings of *phenomenological reduction*, with some researchers viewing this as a process, while others viewed it as an attitude. Variation within the samples was considered crucial, however, *variation* was defined in different terms: through demographic characteristics; experiences in relation to the investigated phenomenon; and the number of participants. Researchers' concepts relating to adopting an *open attitude* also varied: some researchers argued for the necessity of setting aside preconceptions, while others argued that preunderstanding was crucial. My preunderstandings, and their influence, were examined as part of the analytical process. Variation was achieved through the diversity in the sample demographic and workplace characteristics. The next subsection presents the data collection methods and justifications for my selection decisions.

3.4.2 Selection of data collection methods

The study employed two qualitative data collection methods which required social interaction and supporting an open attitude. Data were collected through focus group activities and via individual semi-structured interviews. The choice of social interaction over other qualitative data collection methods, such as written reflective accounts and poetry, or visual artifacts, enabled the capture of more nuanced data; significant implicit meanings were disclosed in silences, voice tone, body language and facial expression. The concept of a *phenomenological sensibility* is elucidated by Finlay (2013) through her definition of Gendlin's (1996) *felt-sense*; the whole body has a sentience which helps to empathize, interpret and understand experiences of another individual. Thereby, the social interaction of interviewing contributed to more holistic

data collection through heightening my ability to both sense and make sense of the participants' experiencing in a *more-than-verbal* way (Todres, 2007).

3.4.3 Selection of data analysis methods

I have concluded from reading a number of phenomenological research studies that all aspects of the methodology are often not apparent. For example, a phenomenological study by Edmonds (2010) was explicit regarding data collection methods on one hand; while on the other hand, it reported that four themes were identified from the interviews and the reflective journals of nursing students studying abroad without giving detail as to how the data was analysed. Giorgi (2007) and Wertz (2011) discuss employing the process of thematic analysis, where systematic readings of transcripts enable recurrent themes to emerge. Furthermore, they write of the phenomenological researcher seeking immersion in the data, and describe the researcher as *dwelling* on the implicit meanings; this term refers to the researcher being absorbed in the analytical process and examining the data in close detail, and in an unhurried way. Thematic analysis was adopted in my study and the stages of the analytical process are discussed in detail in the subsection titled 'Data analysis' in the 'Methods' section of this chapter.

3.4.4 Data saturation and sample size

The sample of participating practitioners is acknowledged as being small, although, this is justified by the aims, and the adoption of a phenomenological approach. Data saturation is conceptualised in a variety of different ways among

researchers (Morse *et al.*, 2014), although, it is generally accepted as the state where no new information is being presented and further coding is not practicable (Guest *et al.*, 2006; Mason, 2010). Exhaustion of resources does not necessarily equate to data saturation having been reached (Fusch & Ness, 2015), nor does having examined a large number of examples; Burmeister & Aitken (2012) suggest that the type of data collected is more critical to whether data saturation is attainable than the size of the sample. Data can be conceptualised as *rich* and *thick* data (Dibley, 2011); thick data is characterised by a large quantity having been collected, while rich data is synonymous with quality and characterised by being more detailed, multi-layered or nuanced. The probability of attaining data saturation was enhanced in this study by a research design where both the quality and quantity of data were of concern (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The use of focus groups provided thick data in the form of group perspectives about the phenomenon, before conducting individual interviews to collect rich data as descriptions of how the phenomenon was experienced on a personal level. The probability of data saturation was further enhanced by the design of the data collection tools, avoiding a situation where there was a constantly moving target (Guest *et al.*, 2006): all the groups considered the same real life scenario, the scenario encouraged exploration of the same areas addressed by the individual interview questions, and the individual interviews were structured to ensure that multiple participants were asked the same questions.

Although when applying for ethical approval I had estimated the need for twenty individual interviews, I was mindful not to enforce this priori calculation on the number of participants being individually interviewed, and instead to align my focus with the aim of achieving data saturation. My position on data analysis methods

acknowledges and promotes a pragmatist paradigm (Morgan, 2014); I made a methodological decision based on the best fit of the practical application not to restrict my analysis to only qualitative methods to determine how coding was distributed across the whole data set.   This quantitative method was merely an indirect treatment of the lived experiences: I represented the distribution of characteristics not in terms of numerical summation of frequency but as presence and absence (see Table 7, p.116). This blurring of the qualitative-quantitative distinction supported the analytical process, and demonstrated validity by making data saturation transparent.

3.4.5 Pilot study of the data collection and appraisal tools

The research methodology incorporated a pilot study for pre-testing the focus group scenario and individual interview questions. The pilot study was conducted away from the participating university on the campus of a university located in Berkshire in England with two students enrolled on that university's EYITT programme.   The scenario and questions were pre-tested with two practitioners with experience in different early years settings in the Thames Valley in England; these individuals represented diversity of ethnicity, age and duration of experience in early years practice as also reflected in the study sample. I decided to conduct the pilot study away from the participating university to maintain the population from which my study participants would be drawn.   Furthermore, the selection of individuals enrolled on an EYITT programme as the pilot participants is justified by the aim of seeking the most likely individuals to be able to maximise collection of usable data from other EYITT students.

The aim of the pilot study was to receive feedback on the clarity and relevance of the focus group scenario, and the individual interview and debriefing questions. The pilot study revealed a necessity for minor amendments in the wording of some of the individual interview questions (Appendix ii., p.244) to maximise collection of usable data. This observation resulted in uniting synonyms within a question to support wider comprehension. For example, both the words 'detriment' and 'drawback' were used in the question asking: 'Do you feel that being a key person has any detriments or drawbacks?' There were no issues raised by the pilot study relating to the interview appraisal and debrief questionnaire (Appendix vi., p.258), however, one aspect of this questionnaire design did attract negative comments from some of the participants. Within the interview appraisal and debrief questionnaire there were five instances where two related questions were posed together with the intention of providing clarity, nevertheless, in two of the pairings it was unforeseen that opposing responses would be produced. If the first question received a positive response, then the second question would receive a negative response, for example when asked: Were the questions clear? Did you need to clarify what was being asked? The completed questionnaires showed responses such as 'yes/no', 'yes and no', and the words 'yes' and 'no' with arrows connecting these to the relevant question. Qualifying comments were also displayed, such as: 'All questions were clear' and 'They were okay'. A similar situation was apparent when the participants were asked: Did the questions used fully exhaust your knowledge or feelings about the subject? Do you feel you could have given more information had more or different questions been asked? The completed questionnaires displayed similar solutions as before. Qualifying comments included 'All were appropriate' and 'All questions were worded well, I did not need any other questions or information'. The pairing of questions with the similar meaning and slight rephrasing

was intended to aid comprehension, nonetheless, it was reported by some participants that the question pairing was confusing and slowed completion. However, the findings of my study have not been adversely impacted, and valuable learning for future research was provided.

3.4.6 Timeline

The research was empirical and small-scale, with the two data collection phases were contained within a single academic term (see Table 1, p.85). In addition to attrition being mitigated by the drawing of individual interviewees from a larger pool, mitigation was also enhanced through planning for the two data collection phases to be confined within three months, with all data collection conducted during the EYITT programme teaching weeks.

3.5 Research setting and participants

The purpose of this section is to provide the contextual grounding for the study and to present justifications for sampling decisions. The study was conducted at a university in the South East of England. The university offers programmes relating to early years education and care (ECEC), including a BA Early Childhood Studies programme, and Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) pathways. My choice of participating institution and selection of participants took account of the following:

a) The School of Education at the participating university is an accredited provider working with the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) in

Research timeline

Proposal

Task	Description	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17
Draft proposal	Identify problem, locate it, research question, aim of study and significance of research	X																											
Final copy proposal			X																										
Write consents			X																										
Write ethics form			X																										
Apply for ethics					X																								
Draft introduction	Introduction - stimuluis, context, hypothesis, research questions, aims	X	X	X	X																								

Literature

Task	Description	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17
Plan review	Identify literature drawn on to inform the project, why these and relationships to question, critically examine, identify gaps	X	X	X	X																								
Identify & locate lit		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																		
Evaluate lit		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																		
Draft lit review		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																		
Continue reviewing		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Theoretical

Task	Description	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17
Identify & locate	Identify theoretical /conceptual resources drawn on to inform the project, why these and relationships to question	X	X	X																									
Draft framework		X	X	X	X																								

Methodology

Task	Description	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17
Draft methodology	How study will be conducted, justify	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																				
1st phase data collection/analysis	Small focus groups, scenario, thematic analysis, essence									X	X																		
2nd phase data collection/analysis	Individual interviews, semi-structured, thematic analysis, essence										X	X	X																

Reporting

Task	Description	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17
Draft findings	Findings - themes, essence, relate to conceptual frame and research questions													X	X	X	X												
Draft discussion	Discussion - relate findings to literature, conceptual framework, research question																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Draft conclusion	Conclusion - significance, reflection, recommendations, output																								X	X	X		
Final copy thesis	All chapters completed, submission																												X

Table 1. Research Timeline

training towards the Teachers' Standards (Early Years) and achievement of Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS); students enrolled on this programme are potential leaders in early years practice.

b) For the duration of the data collection and analysis I was employed as a lecturer within the School of Education at the participating university, however, I did not teach on the EYITT programme. This situation afforded me ease of access to a group of graduate early years practitioners from a wide geographical area, while also promoting a view of me as a researcher, rather than a lecturer with influence over outcomes of their study.

c) The students enrolled on the EYITT programme are typically diverse. They are either self-employed, employed, or on placement; and working in schools, children's centres, preschools and nurseries. The enrolled students are from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and cultural heritages. There is a wide range of ages, and some students are recent entrants to the sector while others have worked in ECEC for many years; some students also have experience of working in ECEC outside of the UK. Individuals hold a variety of qualifications and follow a diverse range of career routes into the profession. Early years roles include: childminder; teaching assistant; baby, toddler or preschool practitioner; special education needs coordinator (SENCo); room leader; senior manager; setting owner; agency worker; counted within an adult-to-child ratio; supernumerary; currently acting as a key person; and not currently assigned key person responsibilities.

d) There is also diversity in the workplaces. The ECEC settings included private, voluntary and independent (PVI) and state funded provision, with the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) or Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)

inspection gradings ranging from 'Inadequate' to 'Outstanding', and all grades between these. The ECEC settings are located across North London (Inner and Outer London Boroughs) and the home counties of Middlesex, Essex and Hertfordshire in the South East of England.

The student cohort included twenty-three permanently employed practitioners and ten others who had not yet found permanent positions. The Teachers Standards (Early Years) (NCTL, 2013) require the demonstration of knowledge, skills and understanding of working in ECEC provision for the full birth to five years age range: students without permanent employment attended work placements in a range of schools and early years settings, while employed practitioners attended work placements only for provision not offered by their own workplace. All enrolled students were graduates. Thirty members of the EYITT cohort were female and twenty-seven of these women volunteered to become participants in the research. Two of the three male practitioners in the cohort volunteered to participate in the study, although one of the male practitioners consented only to participate in a focus group. The total number of volunteers who provided written consent (see Appendix x., p.265) was twenty-nine, with a high ratio of female to male practitioners as reflects the numerically dominant position of women in early years education (EOC, 2006). From the twenty-nine consenting volunteers, a sample of twenty participants participated in the focus group activity, composed of eighteen females and two males. It had been my original intention to select the first twenty volunteers' names as they appeared in alphabetical order on the cohort register, thereby impeding effects of reflexivity in the sampling process. However, I ultimately had to take a more pragmatic approach to selecting the participants from the pool of volunteers as not all the twenty-nine

volunteers attended the university on the planned date of the focus group activity: the focus group participants were those attending the seminar on the planned date, also acting to limit my personal influence on the sample selection. Eighteen individual interviews were conducted with informed consenting EYITT students (see Table 2, p.90; Table 3, p.91). Not all the participants who took part in the focus groups participated in an individual interview; participant availability influenced both the selection of participants for individual interviewing, and the order in which they were interviewed. Nine of the participants in the individual interviews had previously taken part in the focus groups while the other nine individually interviewed participants had not. Due to participant availability all the individually interviewed participants were female.

A requirement of their training programme ensured that all participants had experienced working with a range of different ages of children, and working in different settings: each participant had experienced a variety of early years environments and cultures, and different approaches to setting organisation and management. Details of the participants' current workplaces were collected at the time of individual interviewing. Participants were based in early years settings located across a variety of Local Authority Districts, and these districts had different ranks of average scores in the 2015 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) (DCLG, 2015). The IDACI provides national relative ranking of districts based on numbers children living in:

> …families that are income deprived i.e. in receipt of income support, income based jobseeker's allowance or pension credit, or those not in receipt of these benefits but in receipt of Child Tax Credit with an equivalised income (excluding housing benefits) below 60% of the national median before housing costs.

In England there are 153 districts, with a rank of 1 signifying the most deprived district; the district locations of early years settings attended by individually interviewed participants ranged from the 19th to the 127th rank. These participants' workplaces were not located in either the most or the least deprived areas in England, however, the range in IDACI ranking demonstrates diversity in the communities served by the participants' workplaces.

My aim was not to focus on any specific participant demographic, or to explore experiences in any particular socio-economic situation, or in a specific type of early years provision: my interest lay in gaining a deep understanding of the lived experiences of a variety of individuals working in diverse professional situations within early years practice. Furthermore, enrolment on the EYITT programme affords individuals the potential for future employment as early years leaders and managers, if not already employed in these positions. Therefore, I adopted a sampling strategy to elicit understandings of emotional labour and the role of supervision from individuals who were, or would be, the policymakers in settings and the owners of organisational approaches to professional supervision. The participating university embeds cognate teaching and learning into their EYITT programme, with supervision practices modelled and discussed as part of the programme: discussion of any potential influence on the findings is addressed in a section titled 'Limitations and reflexivity' within the 'Discussion' chapter of this thesis.

Pseudo-nym	Employment status (employed/ placement)	Age range	Ethnic identity (personal descriptions)	EY practice (in full years)	Description of workplace (type of provision, LA rank for deprivation, number of child places, number of staff, organisation, Ofsted grade)	Acting role (and brief relevant employment history where provided)
Abigail	Placement	30-40	Italian	7	Private day nursery, IDACI 98/153, 56 places, 5 rooms, high number of agency staff, Ofsted graded good.	Baby room practitioner. No key person experience. Previously in early years practice in Italy (6 years).
Bonnie	Placement	20-30	Black British	1	Private day nursery, IDACI 127/153, 30 places, 3 rooms, 5 staff, new setting/not yet graded by Ofsted.	Practitioner in Preschool room. Not currently a key person. Previously volunteered/ placements in a range of settings while studying.
Clodagh	Self-employed	50-60	British Jew	20	Private day nurseries, IDACI 98/153, providing for 45 2-5 years and 90 0-5 years, Ofsted graded as good.	Supernumerary owner manager of two settings with a co-manager. Previously worked as a childminder.
Danielle	Employed	20-30	White British	4	Registered charity/committee run preschool, IDACI 105/153, 25 places, 8 reserved by LA for SEN provision, 12 staff, graded by Ofsted as inadequate.	Deputy manager. Not currently a key person. Previously volunteered/ placements in a range of settings while studying. Beforehand worked in the fashion industry.
Eva	Employed	20-30	British Cypriot	1	Private day nursery, IDACI 98/153, 25 places, 10 staff, Ofsted graded as outstanding.	Baby room practitioner. Key person for 3 children. Previously employed in another private day nursery.
Fiona	Employed	20-30	British Asian	6	Private Montessori nursery, IDACI 105/153, 120 places, 7 rooms, 13 staff, graded by Ofsted as good.	Head of Planning/ Room Leader. Key person for 13 children (19 before starting EYITT). Previously Head of Preschool. Beforehand Head of Toddlers.
Gertrude	Self-employed	40-50	British Venezuelan	14	Childminders, IDACI 98/153, 6 under 5 years day care, 9 over 5 years after school provision, 1 assistant, Ofsted graded as outstanding.	Childminder and key person for 3 children. Previously a pre-school teacher in Venezuela (4 yrs). Before qualifying worked as an assistant preschool teacher in Venezuela (3 yrs).
Hermione	Employed	30-40	White British	18	Preschool based at an independent infant school, IDACI 127/153, 3 classes, 70 places, 13 staff, graded by ISI as outstanding.	Deputy Manager and Room Leader. Key person for 10 children. Previously at private daycare settings.
Imogen	Employed	30-40	Dutch	8	Reception class in Primary School, IDACI 105/153, 3 form intake, QTS teacher, graduate TA, with part time support from 2 unqualified LSAs, Ofsted graded as outstanding.	Teaching assistant.
Julia	Employed	30-40	Romanian	2	Children's Centre nursery (Toddlers), IDACI 37/153, 70 places, 3 rooms, 8 staff in room, graded by Ofsted good.	Agency worker (1 year contracts). Key person for 3 children with SEN Previously an actor.
Katie	Placement	30-40	White British	1	Large chain day nursery, IDACI 100/153, 3 rooms, 26 place baby room with 6 employees plus agency staff, Ofsted graded good.	Baby room practitioner. No key person experience. Previously a paediatric nurse in NHS.
Lisa	Placement	20-30	White British	1	Children's Centre nursery, IDACI 32/153, 3 rooms, 15 children in baby room/ 5 staff, graded by Ofsted as good.	Baby room practitioner. Not currently a key person. Previously at university studying English Literature.

Table 2. Profiles for participants who were individually interviewed (A-L).

Pseudo-nym	Employment Status (employed/ placement)	Age range	Ethnicity/ Race/Culture (personal descriptions recorded)	EY practice (in full years)	Description of Workplace (type of provision, LA rank for deprivation, number of child places, number of staff, organisation, Ofsted grade)	Acting Role (and brief relevant employment history where provided)
Mary	Placement	20-30	White Irish	1	Private day nursery, IDACI 19/153, 40 places, 3 rooms, high number of agency staff and apprentices, Ofsted graded as outstanding.	Preschool practitioner. No key person experience. Previously volunteered/ placements in a range of settings while studying.
Nicole	Employed	30-40	British Asian	8	Preschools based at independent Japanese schools, IDACI 61/153 & 98/153, 4 classes, 12 staff, graded by ISI as requires improvement.	Managing two settings with a co-manager. Not currently a key person. Previously worked on UN children's social projects internationally.
Orla	Employed	30-40	British Asian	2	Registered charity/committee run preschool, IDACI 127/153, 3 rooms, 60 on role, 12 staff, Ofsted graded as good.	Preschool practitioner. Not currently a key person. Practiced in India as a qualified dietician.
Rhonda	Employed	20-30	Polish	9	Registered charity/committee run preschool. IDACI 23/153, 3 rooms, 50 places, 10 staff, Ofsted graded as outstanding.	SENCo and key person for 4 children with SEN. Previously worked for a UK charity with children severely affected by autism. Beforehand worked as a teaching assistant in a school in Poland.
Tegan	Placement	20-30	White British	8	Private day nursery, IDACI 106/153, 50 places, 3 rooms, 15 staff, Ofsted graded as outstanding.	Practitioner. Not currently a key person. Previously volunteered/ placements in a range of settings while studying.
Wendy	Self-employed	50-60	British Asian	20	Private preschool, IDACI 61/153, 65 on role, 7 staff, Ofsted graded as good.	Supernumerary owner/manager. Previously worked as a radiographer in NHS.

Table 3. Profiles for participants who were individually interviewed (M-W).

Overall, the sampling strategy provided ease of access to a cohort of thirty-three potential participants who were all aged over eighteen years, and held the potential of becoming early years leaders, if not already in management roles within the early years workforce. The diversity of the participants and the common, specific nature of the experience under investigation, supports the validity of findings. Further discussion of the production of the participant profiles appears within the section titled 'Ethical Considerations' in this chapter.

3.6 Methods

The purpose of this section is to clarify the research processes, to justify decisions relating to method choice, and to acknowledge methodological features which could be considered as limitations.

3.6.1 Data collection

I planned two phases of data collection. The first phase involved the collection of data from focus groups using a real life scenario (Appendix i., p.243) as a discussion stimulus. The four focus groups were each composed of five members in order to be small enough for everyone to be able to provide an opinion and share their thoughts, and yet big enough to deliver a range of diverse perspectives (Krueger & Casey, 2009). The focus groups introduced the participants to discussing how emotion is employed within early years roles, encouraging discussion of the participants' experiences of emotional labour. The aim of using focus groups was to gain an insight into the range of experiences, thoughts and feelings; it also enabled the participants to negotiate group perspectives through processes of expansion and reflection upon each other's experiences (Belenky *et al.*, 1997). The EYITT Programme Leader formally consented to data collection taking place during seminar sessions (see Appendix xii., p.269); the format for the focus group activity was discussed and agreed with the EYITT Programme Leader in advance. The focus group activity was conducted during a single one hour mid-morning seminar session; this duration was decided upon in order to avoid disruption to the students' normal timetable. The focus group activity was structured to follow a workshop session plan that was familiar to the students: there was a short exposition outlining the research aims and objectives; this exposition was

followed by focus group discussions on the scenario with manual collaborative mind mapping to gather and organise the multiple perspectives; the session was closed with a short plenary. During the discussion and mind mapping I reminded the groups to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to define and express their thoughts on each aspect of the scenario. The plenary included the sharing of personal learning occurring as a result of participation in the research (see Appendix viii., p.261). It was acknowledged that focus groups are subject to the effects of peer influence and desires for cohesion (Billingham, 2007). However, situating the focus groups in the first phase of data collection supported validation of group perspectives during the second phase of individual interviews. Manual recording in mind maps, and formulating summarising statements from these visual representations, supported concept construction; the participants negotiated the constructs through dialogue (Belenky *et al.*, 1997).

The second phase of data collection involved in-depth questioning through individual interviews with participants. The individual interviews were semi-structured with a scheme of five predetermined main questions (Appendix ii., p.244) derived from the research questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Additional predetermined subsidiary questions were formulated for use as required to clarify areas of interest, and to facilitate deeper understanding of particular situations. Data collection was focused on responding to the research questions, therefore, the main questions and subsidiary questions were designed to act as planned prompts. However, even with these prompts I was still required to make spontaneous decisions to formulate other questions in order to elicit rich, specific, and relevant data from each participant. My skills as an interviewer also relied on me anticipating and preventing some problems in advance, such as not imposing own opinions or closing off dialogue too early (Field & Morse,

1989). I was aware that the data collected in the individual interviews needed to be 'self-communicating' (Kvale, 1996, p.145) as no follow-up interviewing had been planned. Questioning during the interviews reflected the nine classifications of questions provided by Kvale (1996, pp.133-135) and defined by the effect produced by them: using a variety of questions maximised the collection of rich and relevant data, and supported validation of my interpretations (see Table 4, p.94).

Classifications	Examples
Introducing	Interviewer: I have already asked you whether you are a key person, and you have told me that you are not a key person (.) so how would you describe a key person role? (Lines 1-3)
Probing	Interviewer: Do you see it (.) as a good thing? (Line 11)
Direct	Interviewer: How would you describe that emotion? (Line 46)
Follow up	Interviewer: Okay tell me a bit about those (.) What *are* the professional boundaries? (Lines 77-78)
Specifying	Interviewer: Okay can you give me an example? (Line 54)
Interpreting	Interviewer: Are you talking about coaching? (Line 23)
Structuring	Interviewer: Can I move on to the next question? (Line 50)
Indirect	Interviewer: Okay but then you are doing more acting (.) but not just for the children but for the staff this time? (Lines 191-192)
Silence	Interviewer: Okay yes (4) yes? (Line 74)

Table 4. Examples of how the nine classifications of questions (Kvale, 1996 pp.133-135) were reflected in the individual interview with Abigail.

3.6.2 Transcription

The dialogue from the individual interviews was recorded digitally in MP3 format on a personal laptop computer, and later transcribed in full to produce word processed text data. Where practicable transcription was completed within twenty-four

hours of the interviews and in all cases transcription was completed within seven days of the interview. The following methodological decisions enabled sustained closeness to the dialogue during data analysis, supporting more nuanced interpretations (Dresing *et al.*, 2012): my decision to personally transcribe the audio recordings rather than employ someone to transcribe these for me; to word process rather than use transcription software; and to transcribe as soon after data collection as feasible. Typing up the audio lent itself to beginning the analytical process alongside the transcription process. As I carefully listened to the recorded dialogue I recalled and noted body language and facial expression which I recognised as indicating significant implicit meanings. I also noted nuances reflected in silences and the tone of the participants' voices.

Prior to beginning transcription the advantages and disadvantages of different transcription conventions were considered, and a hybrid system was created to meet the research needs (Dresing, *et al.,* 2012). The recorded audio file was transcribed verbatim. Primarily, simple transcription rules were applied (Dresing, *et al.,* 2012), then some features of more detailed and complex systems were adopted. Non-verbal and background sounds, e.g., laughter, sighs and coughs were captured by typing these in parentheses. Some para-verbal elements were captured by the use of italic, e.g., '…and should be from everyone not just the key practitioner but *all* the practitioners observing everyone…' (Appendix iii., p.246). There was no *cleaning up* by removing interjections, slang, grammatical errors, or misuse of words or concepts. Enunciated reductions, standard contractions and colloquialisms were transcribed along with filler words such as: 'err' and 'erm'. The choice of transcription system was based on acknowledgement that although the simplest transcript, without vernacular or

identification of pauses or intonation, provides faster access to the surface content of the interview, in order to understand individuals' opinions and perceptions the inclusion of more detail provides a better impression of the participants' intentions. Only transcribing parts of the interview and writing notes on the rest was considered and rejected. Although this method is quicker than full transcription it was acknowledged that there would be a risk that the transcribed parts could be out of context and be difficult to interpret without constantly referring back to the audio file. Additionally, what is thought significant at the time of transcribing may not be thought so later on in the analysis.

3.6.3 Manual methods versus technology

The individual interviews generated many hours of audio recordings which in turn required many more hours of labour-intensive word processing and coding per recorded hour. This workload was managed within the timeframe due to the small size of the sample. After word processing, I printed hard copies of the transcripts and annotated them in graphite pencil; recording codes, categories, themes and analytical notes during the analytical process (see Appendix iv., p.251). A somatic method was selected over employing specific coding software, promoting a sense of physical closeness to the data; this manual treatment resonates Gendlin's (1996) *felt-sense*, and a view of the body as having a sentience which helps to empathize, interpret and understand an individual's experiences (Finlay, 2013). The labour-intensiveness of the process of listening to the audio, typing the transcription, reading and rereading the text, manually coding, mapping and comparing sections of text, and making numerous code revisions may be seen as a limitation (Burman & Parker, 1993). The employment of

coding and analysis software could be considered less tedious and time-saving (Miles *et al.* 2014), however, it is still the responsibility of the researcher to convert the dialogue to text, generate the codes, and organise them (Lichtman, 2014). I made judgements on processes, emotions and values as they were revealed during transcribing: I maintain that manual methods enabled a sustained closeness to the text, enhancing the deciphering of the core meanings.

3.6.4 Data analysis

Thematic analytical methods prevail in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006); I adopted similar thematic analytical processes to Giorgi (2000) who provided a four step method for analyzing a transcribed interview. The first step embraces how phenomenology is holistic and a sense of *gestalt*, or wholeness, is sought through a thorough reading of the entire transcript. During subsequent readings everyday language is used to assign labels to describe meaning in units of text. A third stage requires common themes linking the descriptive labels to be identified, with the participant's quotes provided to give examples of meaning within these themes. The final stage moves away from the individual concrete situation to the researcher expressing explicit statements which are consistent with the experience of all the participants. I also analysed the text data from the focus groups and interviews through a process of rigorous and systematic reading and coding. Single word or short phrase codes, which evoked their core meaning, were allocated to units of text. This initial coding process facilitated the discovery of a number of descriptive codes within each interview, or *data set*. On discovering connections, codes were grouped to form categories and given a label to express the salient idea connecting them. Furthermore,

codes were labelled and grouped not merely as a result of likeness as, paradoxically, commonality may be in the differences or the patterned variation (Saldaña, 2013), demonstrating the complexity of the aggregation and labelling process; categorising not only captured the meaning of the individual codes but also described the concepts constructed from grouping them. I *worked within* the data to refine the groupings, before *working across* the data to compare categories across the data sets (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Categories did not always naturally form distinct and discrete units, and some had somewhat *fuzzy* boundaries (Tesch, 1990), suggesting they were inextricably linked.   The comparison of codes between categories made causal relationships transparent leading to the identification of analytical themes to encapsulate the categories (Miles *et al.* 2014). The analytical transition is mapped in Table 8 (p.118). A hierarchical system of superordinate, parallel and subordinate codes demonstrates the transformation from particular to general, from concrete to abstract, and from implicit to explicit meaning (Burnard, 1991; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Giorgi, 2000).

Throughout the meticulous coding process conceptually interesting connections were formed and reviewed: Abbott (2004, p. 215) used the analogy of 'decorating a room; you try it, step back, move a few things, step back again, try a serious reorganization, and so on'. Charmaz (2006) developed a metaphor where a 'working skeleton' of theory is constructed from linking together codes as if they were bones. Similarly, Miles *et al.* (2014) recognised that codes act as the triggers for deep reflection and concept building. Justifications for the decisions made in respect of the aggregation of codes and categories are discussed in the next subsection in relation to specific examples.

3.6.5 Analytical decisions

This section demonstrates decision making relating to the assignment of code and category labels. Furthermore, it aims to demonstrate how judgements were made in relation to the aggregation of codes into categories, and categories into analytical themes. Potential alternative labelling and grouping is discussed, and evaluated in terms of support lent to arriving at alternative themes. Examples which demonstrate the complexities of the labelling and aggregation process have been carefully selected.

Code labels were assigned to illustrate the core ideas evoked by units of text (Giorgi, 2007). There were no requirements for these units in terms of word number, or for them to form a sentence. The units varied in length, with some being a single clause within a sentence, while others were a number of related sentences. The key feature for assignment of a code label was the demonstration of a salient meaning. For example, Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) describes the key person's role as 'like an maternal errr (1) figure'; this unit of text was labelled as 'maternal'. Similarly, Danielle's (employed deputy manager for a charity-run preschool) description of her role contained a unit of text labelled as 'maternal':

> I suppose when you have key children they're pretty much like
> your own children but not born to you kind of thing (.) it's sort
> of like a second mother kind of role.

Both examples express the idea of a parallel being drawn, at least to some extent, between the care of a key person and that of a mother; while they may also evoke a sense of the key person having similar feelings for the children as a mother would have for her own child as she carries out her caring duties. However, some units of text assigned with this same code label demonstrate a similar meaning even though they do

not contain the terms 'maternal' or 'mother' directly. For example, Eva (employed in a private day nursery, working with under-2s) asserts: 'I love the children like my own…'. Similarly, Nicole (manager of two preschools based in independent schools) states: 'I love these children like I love my daughter…'. Furthermore, these units of text may also be interpreted as conveying 'feelings of love', another code label adopted during the initial phase of the coding process, demonstrating how a unit of text may evoke meanings which correspond with more than one code label. Nevertheless, assigning code labels of either 'feelings of love' or 'maternal' to these units of text has the same outcome; the coding process seeks to make connections, therefore, these two units of meaning were ultimately grouped within the same category and theme. Therefore, this labelling decision did not impact the analytical outcomes as demonstrated in Table 5 below.

Category	Codes
Affection	Affection for the children Feelings of love Maternal Special relationship with children

Table 5. 'Affection' category of codes.

The second phase of the coding process required the aggregation of codes based on discovering connections between them; codes were grouped to form categories and given a label to express the salient idea connecting them. These connections were sometimes obvious from the wording of the labels. For example, the category labelled 'affection' consists of four code labels: 'affection for the children', 'feelings of love', 'maternal' and 'special relationship with children'. However, the connections between

the codes within the category labelled 'emotional climate' may not be so immediately obvious; this category aggregates the code labels: 'feeling rules', 'maintaining professional boundaries', 'key person absenteeism' and 'influence of managers'. This category encapsulates examples where expectations, attitudes, and behaviours have impacted on emotional relationships, satisfaction and wellbeing within the workplaces. This demonstrates the complexity in the aggregation process and how categorising not only captures the meaning of the individual codes but also describes the concept constructed from grouping them. Furthermore, complexity is also demonstrated by code labels being assigned as a result of commonality through *patterned variation* (Saldaña, 2013). That is, a statement may be salient because it discusses a concept or the phenomenon in a way that is different or even unique. For example, in a sample of eighteen, where seventeen participants report a certain quality being present, it is still relevant that one individual is reporting the quality as absent. Similarly, the code titled 'influence of managers' was assigned to examples where managers' moods had both positive and negative influence on the emotional climate of the settings. However, if separate codes for positive and negative influences had been assigned at this stage, this data would still have ultimately been grouped in the same category and theme because of the connected difference. Therefore, the decision not to assign separate code labels did not impact the analytical outcomes as demonstrated in Table 6 below.

Category	Codes
Emotional climate	Feeling rules Maintaining professional boundaries Influence of managers Key person absenteeism

Table 6. 'Emotional climate' category of codes.

The third phase of analysis saw the aggregation of categories and emergence of the six themes. The categories did not always naturally form distinct and discrete units, and some had somewhat *fuzzy* boundaries (Tesch, 1990), suggesting they were inextricably linked. For example, the 'emotional climate' and the 'emotional support' categories are connected by the causal relationship between levels of support and guidance provided for practitioners and the quality of the emotional environment. Furthermore, it is the comparison of codes between categories which made causal relationships transparent, leading to the identification of the analytical themes which encapsulate these categories (Miles *et al.*, 2014). For example, grouping these two related categories lead to the emergence of the theme: 'Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour'; the theme demonstrating the connected differences within the codes and the bond between the categories.

Analysis of labelling and aggregation decisions within this subsection has demonstrated the emergence of the themes from the data, and not from my own predispositions. Transparency in the analytical processes is further addressed in the 'Discussion' chapter by consideration of how the final phase of data analysis required working across the themes to identify relationships and potential conflict between themes.

3.6.6 Validity, credibility and trustworthiness

There are many definitions of *validity*, and alternative terms used interchangeably, with it argued that it is not a fixed construct (Winter, 2000). *Understanding* may be a more fitting term for the validity sought in this research

(Cohen *et al.*, 2013); this construct of validity fits well with a phenomenological approach and the notion of aiming for maximum understanding of each unique complex social situation on its own terms. Furthermore, I sought credibility by being as honest as possible in interpreting meaning in the data by constant consideration of reflexivity and revisiting the question: 'Whose meaning is presented here?'. I was deeply concerned with confirmability and maximising capture of the meanings and intentions of the participants; I addressed this verbally by verifying via respondent validation during the interviews (McCormack, 2004), and through interview appraisal and debrief questionnaires (Billingham, 2007) (see Appendix vi., p.258).

Rather than striving for objectivity, the research methods were trustworthy in terms of being systematic, credible, verifiable, justifiable, useful, valuable, honest, genuine, and based on sound research ethics (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wellington, 2000). Furthermore, Polkinghorne (1983) suggests four evaluative attributes of powerful and trustworthy phenomenological studies: vividness (possessing a sense of reality), accuracy (recognisable from own or vicarious experiences), richness (evoking emotion), and elegance (thoughtfully expressed); essentially Polkinghorne (1983) suggests that the trustfulness of a study is determined by how deeply the reader is able to connect with the phenomenon as it is being presented. Similarly, Todres (2007) describes the presentation of descriptive narratives which reflect universal human qualities and encourage readers to connect personally with the themes. The trustworthiness of findings in this study has been demonstrated through the clarity in the disclosure of the analytical process and how findings have been reached (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003); the evidence upon which analytical claims are based is included in the form of examples and quotations. Furthermore, the inclusion of examples and

quotations act to draw the reader into a close relationship with the phenomenon (Halling, 2002). Findings from the data analysis are discussed in the 'Findings' chapter of this thesis under the analytical themes as subheadings, and with texture-rich contextual information, and participants' quotes included.

3.7 Ethical considerations

A favourable ethical opinion for conduct was attained from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Reading (Appendix v., p.252) prior to approaching potential participants or the commencement of any data collection. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how the study was conducted with moral awareness; I consider how all processes were conducted ethically and with respect for the rights and needs of those participating in the research.

3.7.1 Participant recruitment

Provision was made for outlines of the research context, aims and methods to inform potential participants and the EYITT Programme Leader about the nature of the research in advance (BERA, 2011). Information sheets contained detailed descriptions of the activities which participants would be asked to take part in, to ensure that they fully understood what the research would involve and what to expect (Appendix vii., p.260; Appendix viii., p.261). Furthermore, four weeks before any planned data collection the EYITT Programme Leader invited me to present a short talk to the group of potential participants. This presentation outlined the research context, aims and

methods, including details regarding the main planned questions. Students were invited to pose any questions about the study.

Care ethics framed my interactions with the potential study participants; my participant recruitment reflected my care for the students. It was acknowledged that the choice of whether to participate in the study or not, was potentially subject to perceived power relations: there was a risk that decisions regarding whether to participate may have been influenced by myself as the researcher being a member of the Education Department staff, thereby influencing students to want to be seen as 'doing the right thing', and to create a positive impression (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). To avoid possible feelings of duress it was made clear that I was conducting the research as a student of the University of Reading and that I had no insider connections with their course of study: the students were told that participation or non-participation in the study would not affect programme grades or their relationship with the participating university. It was stressed that participation in the research would not have any impact on their programme achievement, not only verbally by the researcher when introduced in the seminar, but also included in the participant information sheet. Furthermore, the students were advised that they did not have to make a decision regarding participation or non-participation at the presentation, and that there were a variety of means of accessing the documentation to volunteer and provide informed consent. These actions were intended to mitigate coercion and the effects of power imbalances inherent in education contexts. Furthermore, the motivations driving the students' volunteering had importance for me aside from adherence to research conduct guidelines; it was important that the students participated because they wanted their under-represented voices heard for social change beginning at the individual level, as opposed to taking

part out of concern that they would be discriminated against otherwise. Participation in the study held the potential for critical reflection by these early years practice leaders, enabling an awareness of the wider environment in which they operate, and the social power exercised through their networks and relationships (Reynolds, 1998). My participant recruitment was ethical in terms of responding in the best interests of these students, and conducted with concern to empowerment and egalitarianism.

Participants and the EYITT Programme Leader were required to give active consent in the form of written contracts (Appendix v., p.252; Appendix vi., 258) prior to any data collection. Paper-based versions of the research information sheet and consent form were available at the presentation. Paper-based informed consent documents could also be collected from either myself or the EYITT Programme Leader at a later date; and electronic copies of the research information sheet and consent form could also be requested by email. The students were further informed that they did not have to volunteer for both phases of the study and that their participation in only one phase would still be welcomed and valued. Twenty-eight of the twenty-nine consenting participants expressed a desire for involvement in both a focus group and an individual interview; they also explicitly consented to audio recording. The remaining participant, one of the two male participants, consented to involvement in a focus group only, and not in an individual interview, and not with audio recording; his wishes were respected and he participated in the focus group activity which was not audio recorded.

It was acknowledged that even though the presentation and information sheet detailed the main planned interview questions there was still a possibility that participants might raise sensitive issues during interviewing, and '…in practice it is

often impossible for researchers to inform subjects about everything' (Cohen *et al.* 2013 p.78). The participants were assured verbally that their rights would be respected at all times, and where there was any reluctance for a participant to voice an open opinion on an emerging topic, the sensitive issue not being followed-up (BERA, 2011). The combination of both the presentation and the information sheet provided comprehensive information in order for the students to make a fully informed decision on whether to participate. As part of the informed consent process, participants were reassured that if they did decide to withdraw from the research, they did not have to provide an explanation as to why they were ending their involvement and that they would not face with any penalties for not continuing (BERA, 2011). Participants were informed that they had the right and freedom to withdraw and end their involvement in the study at any time: even if participants gave their consent at the start of research, they may not have been able to anticipate whether they would enjoy the experience or whether a change in their situation may occur, therefore, they would not be expected to proceed.

3.7.2 Data collection

The data collection was conducted with an ethic of care. Focus groups and interviews are social encounters and, as such, require planning for a range of other non-cognitive factors, and regard for the rights and protection of individuals involved (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). All data collection was conducted on the participating university campus during normal business hours, in a familiar building, and in familiar seminar rooms. The initial presentation and the first phase of data collection were conducted in groups which sought to promote participants' comfort with the unfamiliar; thereafter a degree of familiarity with both myself and the study

had been established supporting comfort and openness in the individual interviews. Appraisal of the focus groups and debriefing was conducted verbally at the close of the focus group activity. The focus group participants provided both verbal and written feedback on the experience of participating in the focus groups (see Appendix viii., p.261); confirming that the focus groups had been conducted ethically, that learning had occurred, and that the experience had been enjoyable for those participating.

The individual interviews were conducted in a familiar vacant seminar room to afford privacy, and they lasted less than forty-five minutes each. The opening interview questions captured personal and professional information to compile profiles (see Table 2, p.90; Table 3, p.91); all the participants provided their signed agreement to inclusion of the ethnicity data provided by them in the final research report (see Appendix vi., p.258). The initial questions were not challenging and eased the participants into the interviews. Furthermore, the first main interview question and related subsidiary questions focused on eliciting understandings of the role of a key person, enabling a rapport and trust to be built between the interviewer and interviewee before discussing personal emotion. Participants were verbally reassured that all their comments would be anonymised, and advised when the recorded interviewing had begun and finished. Written confirmation was attained from each interviewee as to whether they felt that the interview had been conducted with respect for their rights and needs, and whether they had enjoyed the experience: this confirmation was collected within two weeks of interviewing via an interview appraisal and debrief questionnaire (Appendix vi., p.258). Additionally, the interview appraisal and debrief questionnaire provided opportunities for respondent validation as the participants were asked to comment on whether the interview transcription represented their intended meanings. General comments

appearing on the interview appraisal and debrief questionnaire are displayed in Appendix vii. (p.260).

In addition to planning for the mitigation of adverse affects on participants during the interview and focus group activities, the participants were offered the contact details of sources of support. As a lecturer at the participating university I routinely carry the printed email address of the Counselling & Mental Health Team and instructions on how to book an appointment for counselling support via the university online booking system. Additionally, I hold the telephone numbers and website addresses for the Samaritans and NHS111 as these services enable students to access immediate and confidential emotional support in crisis and health advice respectively, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. The contact details for the university Counselling & Mental Health Team, the Samaritans and NHS111 were shared with the EYITT students on a slide during my introductory presentation to the whole cohort, and during the debriefing for the focus groups. Furthermore, a printed copy of the university's Counselling & Mental Health Team contact details, instructions on how to book an appointment for counselling support via the university online booking system, and contact details for the Samaritans and NHS111 were offered to participants at the close of the individual interviews. My respect for the participants' privacy, and the confidentiality of these services, prevents certainty, however, I was not made aware of any participants having accessed these services in relation to emotional responses to the study, nor did any of the participants advise me of an intention to do so.

Data saturation is generally accepted as the state where no new information is being presented and further coding is not practicable (Guest *et al.*, 2006; Mason, 2010).

By the coding of the sixteenth individual interview, and the findings being applied across the whole data set, I was satisfied that no new coding was emerging; this situation indicated that data saturation had been reached, and as such, that I had reached the point where consideration of more cases would not be necessary. However, after coding the sixteenth interview, two participant volunteers who had neither been individually interviewed nor participated in the focus group activity requested an individual interview. These two students were amongst the least experienced practitioners on the EYITT programme, neither held key person responsibilities, and both worked with children aged between three to five years. I was faced with a dilemma: I was struck by the intensity of the two student's motivation to have their voices heard, while also recognising that further data collection would lead to many more hours of data processing. However, additional data collection acts to increase confidence in the findings, with the collection and processing of further cases not seen as having any potential adverse effects on the study. Ultimately, I made an ethical decision to conduct the two additional interviews out of respect for the individuals, and a moral commitment to support the social empowerment of these women.

The inclusion of data collected from male participants provides further evidence of how data collection was ethical in terms of giving all the participant volunteers having a voice within the research. In a study presented by de Schipper *et al.* (2009) stress indicators in two hundred and twenty-one Dutch childcare centre workers were explored; one practitioner was male, and this was given as a reason for excluding his data from the analysis and findings. I conducted my study without gendered inequality of opportunity and with respect for the minority group having the right to a voice. Furthermore, as the result of giving voice to both male and female practitioners, I have

also captured a more accurate representation of the emotional experiences of the ECEC workforce.

3.7.3 Data processing

Care was taken of the participants through ensuring respect for their entitlement to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity (BERA, 2011): the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 were adhered to during the processing of all data. The process of how confidentiality would be maintained was explained to participants in the information sheet and through the talk, before they were asked to give their consent to participation. Furthermore, it was explicitly stated how the data would be stored and who would have access to it. Research records were stored securely on a password-protected personal computer with only the researcher having access to these records. Collection of personal data for compiling participant profiles (Table 2, p.90; Table 3, p.91) was not conducted until the individual interviews; this decision avoided risk of excessive data collection and afforded privacy. Participants self-defined their ethnicity, and explicit written consent for processing this sensitive data was attained at the beginning of the individual interviews. To protect the participants' identities, all data was anonymised through the use of pseudonyms. The pseudonyms were drawn from 2015/16 UK storm names until this list was exhausted, then 2016 Atlantic storm names, to ensure that there were no connections with the participants' true identities. Furthermore, to avoid any missing anonymisations, the pseudonyms were allocated as soon as informed consent was attained so that no real identities appeared in any written notes. An advantage of participants having their identity hidden is that they may be more likely to be objective with their responses, and feel more confident to freely

express their true feelings without fear of repercussions. Where participants directly mentioned names, the original names were substituted with fictional names to also ensure their anonymity. Data was stored securely on a password protected personal computer and retained no longer than necessary for the purpose it was obtained: all stored data was deleted on completion of the thesis writing.

3.7.4 Practitioner researcher debriefing

The notion of 'outsideness' and 'insideness' in early years research is complicated (Albon & Rosen, 2014). The participants were aware of my lecturer and researcher status signalling my position as an 'outsider', however, emphasising commonalities of sector experience induced a sense of 'insideness' and equality. The resulting intimacy encouraged openness and honesty in the descriptions of the participants' feelings, experiences and practice in their settings; and engendered openness towards the telling of their experiences (Finlay, 2011). I identified with aspects of the participants' lifeworlds, making emotional connections between the practice experiences described and my previous early years professional experience in areas of disadvantage. Page (2014, p.859) reflects on the personal impact of gathering the life stories of mothers:

> I was emotionally drained by the experiences and at times could not bear to listen to large extracts of the interviews in one go. I frequently had to 'psyche myself up'. I spent a long time wondering what it must have been like for the women, particularly when their stories connected with my experience but also when they did not.

Page (2014) explains that her mother participants' descriptions of their experiences did not simply impact on her when able to make connections with her own experiences. In

my study, ethical concerns relating to the data collection had been rightly focused on care of the participants, and included participant debriefing. However, I felt a need to share my reflections on the personal impact of the deeply reflexive methodology with my thesis supervisors; this collaborative reflection was ethical care in the form of a practitioner researcher debriefing.

3.8 Chapter conclusion

This chapter presents a study which responds to the research questions, and aims to impact current thinking and practice relating to emotional labour and supervision in ECEC. The study has a phenomenological research design and is concerned with gathering and analysing the lived experiences of emotional labour in early years settings (Husserl & Heidegger, 1927). A phenomenological approach is supported by the sampling strategy, the diversity of the participants, and the common but specific nature of the phenomenon under investigation. Transparency of the data collection and analytical processes demonstrate that the methodology was systematic, ethical and honest. Support is lent to the trustworthiness of the findings by presenting justifications for methodological decisions and their implications. Limitations associated with the sample size, pilot study, selected data collection, transcription and analysis methods, are acknowledged and evaluated within the sections of this chapter. Furthermore, acknowledgement and evaluation of additional factors with potential influence on the findings are discussed in the 'Discussion' chapter of the thesis under the heading: 'Limitations and reflexivity'.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings identified, and provide sufficient examples from the data to support the analytical judgements made. First, a frequency table presents the presence and absence of codes in the eighteen individual interviews (see Table 7, p.116); secondly, the emergence of themes is presented in Table 8 (p.118); and thirdly, examples of raw data are used to demonstrate analytic points. These examples take the form of verbatim quotations from: individual semi-structured interviews; verbal and written feedback from debriefing; extracts from the written outputs of the focus group activity. Inclusion of the participants' own words has enabled the constructions of their experiences and depth of feelings to be expressed in ways that the researcher's lone narrative could not. The use of verbatim quotation has enabled the participants to have their own voice within the research. Furthermore, inclusion of some lengthy swathes of quotation allows the voices of the early years practitioners be heard as they were delivered.

This chapter also aims to demonstrate that the data analysis and presentation of findings have been conducted ethically. Where there is potentially counter-evidence, in relation to a theme or individual clause within a statement, this is stated and examples presented for consideration and evaluation in the 'Discussion' chapter of the thesis. Furthermore, descriptive statistics have been used to help the reader to understand how

prevalent or typical a finding is. Some quotations are lengthy and encompass examples illustrating a number of clauses and statements. However, to improve the readability of the chapter each quotation is used to illustrate only one analytical point. Additionally, several quotations from different participates have been used to demonstrate a single point where the expression of their similar experiences may be slightly differently nuanced. Quotations are accompanied by citation of the participants' pseudonyms, workplaces, status of their employment and role, in order to enhance contextualised understanding without the reader having to repeatedly refer to the profiles (Table 2, p.90 ; Table 3, p.91). Furthermore, evidence in support of methodological decisions is provided within this chapter: the findings have been related back to the conceptual framework to make explicit how theory underpins the research methods. These decisions are considered under two headings reflecting characteristics of scientific phenomenological research methodology as outlined by Van Manen (2016, pp.9-13): the study of lived experiences; and the explication of the phenomenon as it presented itself to consciousness.

The findings are presented in response to the research questions. My main research question is: How is emotional labour experienced and supported in early years settings? Subsidiary questions address the component elements of the problem as follows:

1. How do early years practitioners deploy and/or regulate their emotions in performance of their role?

2. What are the consequences of their emotional labour?

3. How effective are current models of supervision and professional reflection?

Interviews in order conducted	Attachment	Assessment	Care routines	Information sharing	Protecting children	Supporting development	Attunement	Commitment	Compassion	Empathy	Patience	Responsibility	Improving children's lives	Supporting families	Wider community	Affection for the children	Feelings of love	Maternal	Special relationship with children	Fulfilling own attachment needs	Rule bending	Acting for children	Coping with challenging behaviour	Acting for colleagues	Conceal emotions from private life	Acting for children's families	Cultural differences	Being professional	Acting for managers	Maintaining emotional distance	Distraction from private life	Enjoyment of working with children	Pride in children's progress	Raised self-awareness	High self-efficacy	Feelings of wellbeing	Anxiety from children's situations	Low self-efficacy	Fatigue from prolonged caring	Impact on private life	Impact on self	Feeling rules	Maintaining professional boundaries	Influence of managers	Key person absenteeism	Professional Supervision	Support from colleagues	External support	Self-support strategies	Support for children's PSED	Partnership with families	Stress management	Team building	Coaching	Mentoring	Reflection	Qualifications, pay and status	Autonomy	Outdoors	Creativity	Workload
1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
5	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
7	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
11	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
12	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
14	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
15	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
16	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
17	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Table 7. Frequency of presence and absence of codes across the data set.

4.2 Emerging themes

The thematic model presented in Table 8 (p.118) demonstrates the hierarchical system of analytical transition from descriptive subordinate codes, grouped to form parallel categories, and aggregation of categories into the superordinate analytical themes. Furthermore, the relationship between the themes and the research questions is made explicit by the organisation of my findings: first, in response to the subsidiary research questions, and second, through the complementary themes as follows:

Question 1: How do early years practitioners deploy and/or regulate their emotions in performance of their role?

- Theme 1: Practitioners enact ethical care, in the belief that they are improving lives.

- Theme 2: Practitioners have affection for the children in their care, with some staff displaying subversive behaviours.

- Theme 3: Practitioners regulate their emotions in workplace interactions to serve a moral commitment, and protect the self.

Question 2: What are the consequences of their emotional labour?

- Theme 4: Practitioners may experience both negative and positive consequences of their emotional labour.

Question 3: How effective are current models of supervision and professional reflection?

- Theme 5: Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour.

- Theme 6: Staff support and workforce development strategies need to be promoted.

Codes	Categories	Themes
Attachment Assessment Care routines Information sharing Protecting children Supporting development	Tailored care	Practitioners enact ethical care in the belief that they are improving lives.
Attunement Commitment Empathy Patience Responsibility	Moral emotion	
Improving children's lives Supporting families Wider community	Moral worth	
Affection for the children Feelings of love Maternal Special relationship with children	Affection	Practitioners have affection for the children in their care, with some staff displaying subversive behaviours.
Fulfilling own attachment needs Rule bending	Subversion	
Acting for children Coping with challenging behaviour Acting for colleagues Concealing emotions from private life Acting for children's families Cultural difference	Agentic display	Practitioners regulate their emotions in their workplace interactions to serve a moral commitment, and to protect self.
Being professional Acting for managers Maintaining emotional distance	Protecting self	
Distraction from private life Enjoyment of working with children Pride in children's progress Raised self-awareness High self-efficacy Feelings of wellbeing	Positive consequences	Practitioners may experience both negative and positive consequences of their emotional labour.
Anxiety from children's situations Low self-efficacy Fatigue from prolonged caring Impact on private life Impact on self	Negative consequences	
Feeling rules Maintaining professional boundaries Influence of managers Key person absenteeism	Emotional climate	Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour.
Professional Supervision Support from colleagues External support Self-support strategies	Emotional support	
Support for children's PSED Partnership with families Stress management Team building Coaching Mentoring Reflection	Professional development	Staff support and workforce development strategies need to be promoted.
Qualifications Pay Status Autonomy Outdoors Creativity Workload	Sector development	

Table 8. Analytical transformation from descriptive codes to themes.

4.3 Question 1: How do early years practitioners deploy and/or regulate their emotions in performance of their role?

4.3.1 Theme 1: Practitioners enact ethical care, in the belief that they are improving lives.

4.3.1.1 Tailored care

All the individually interviewed participants suggested engaging in care which is relational in support of the clause: 'practitioners enact ethical care'. The following two extracts have been quoted as they are typical of examples illustrating how forming attachments is perceived as part of the practitioners' responsibilities for supporting children's wellbeing and development:

> …the child leaves the parent and runs to (.) or is comforted quickly because they're picked up and because they have trust and emotional bond with the key person (.) so that they can switch easily between the main key person who is either the carer or parent to their key person within the nursery (.) so it is a nice transition.
> (Clodagh, private day nurseries, supernumerary owner/manager)

> …because of that healthy attachment you are able to work with them and extend their learning and and get a good response from them (.) they feel comfortable enough to talk and communicate (.) I think it's really important to make sure (.) that I make a bond with each of them obviously some children are a little bit difficult (.) so you don't have that natural bond with them so I just have to spend more time with them to create that
> (Fiona, room leader in a private Montessori nursery)

These two extracts relate to practitioners employed in nursery settings, working as key persons for a small number of children aged under four years. In contrast, Imogen (employed in the Reception Class in a primary school) explains: 'I think children

should have special relationships with *everyone* working in the setting'. Imogen shares the key person responsibilities for the whole class of thirty-two four- and five-year-olds jointly with the Class Teacher and expresses a need for all adults working in the classroom to build nurturing bonds with all the children. The extracts in this subsection demonstrate emotional bonding between adult and child to enable sensitive care in support of the clause: 'practitioners enact ethical care'.

4.3.1.2 Moral emotion

All the individually interviewed participants suggested deployment of emotions in the interests of supporting and protecting the children in their care, lending further support to the clause: 'practitioners enact ethical care'. The following extracts are typical examples demonstrating how key persons '…have that extra connection that makes them attuned to that child…' (Imogen, employed in a Reception class in a primary school). This state of attunement was described by one practitioner as: '*being with them* [the child] in the moment' (Abigail, private day nursery placement, working with under-2s). All four focus groups recorded that their role required them to become attuned to the child, respond to their needs and *care for* them. Members of Focus Group 1 recorded that their care was 'oriented towards the children's needs' and required 'knowing the child' in order for 'attunement to the child's world'. Members of Focus Group 2 recorded a general consensus regarding them 'being attentive and attuned to the child's thinking' and 'focusing on meeting the child's needs', as achieved through 'total immersion in the child' by 'blotting out all distractions'. Members of Focus Group 3 recorded that their responsibilities in 'meeting emotional and physical needs of the child' required them to be 'sensitive and being in tune with the child'.

Members of Focus Group 4 also recorded the need for 'creating a caring environment' which enables 'responding to individual needs'. In all eighteen individual interviews emotion was asserted as intrinsic to caring for young children; conveying a need to work with empathy for the children and their families. The three following extracts demonstrate how emotions such as responsibility, commitment, patience and empathy are deployed in protecting and supporting the children:

> …errr they feel very responsible and deep feelings of responsibility which in itself motivates them (.) and builds upon their emotional strength with the family and children as well as for the children themselves (.) so the key person needs to because they need that commitment and closeness with the children
> (Clodagh, private day nurseries, supernumerary owner/manager)

> …patience has a lot to do with it so yeah yeah (.) and I think about it like that yeah definitely (,) I think I'm quite lucky we haven't had much challenging behaviour ermm in my last year but it is a lot about being patient (.) and making sure that when they do do something they feel really good about it
> (Hermione, deputy manager of preschool in independent school)

> …there are some very tiny toddlers that come to our setting because it's from 2 to 5 (.) age group (.) there are days where they are really really sad because they are missing their parents (.) I'm feeling empathy as well and there is a lot of (.) a lot of sensing (.) intuition about what they need
> (Orla, employed at a charity-run preschool)

The extracts in this subsection demonstrate deployment of emotions in the interests of meeting development needs and protecting the children in support of the clause: 'practitioners enact ethical care'.

4.3.1.3 Moral worth

All eighteen individually interviewed participants demonstrated a belief that their emotional labour makes a positive contribution to improving children's lives and

supporting families.   The following extract is a typical example illustrating the subordinate clause that practitioners labour 'in the belief that they are improving lives'.

> …it's more a joy than a burden…and that's why I want to work in early years…I know those first five years make such a big difference and you can have such an impact on children's learning and development (.) and their happiness for now and the future [smiling]
>   (Imogen, employed in a Reception class in a primary school)

Furthermore, the following two extracts demonstrate how practitioners feel a moral commitment to the families of the children in their care; managing their empathetic displays of emotion in order to be supportive of the families.

> I knew that the parent needed support and I was here doing stuff for the child and that but I also had to give this level of support to the parent and it was sort of hard to sit there and listen to the parent (.) but you can't you just have to go 'Well okay I'm here if you need to talk' (.) stuff like that and I think it's always very hard   (Danielle, deputy manager for charity-run preschool)

> Parents of children who have special needs are a really hard piece of work because sometimes it's harder to work with parents than it is with the child (.) because often it's difficult to accept that the child has special needs (1) ermm (1) you just sometimes says the things that the parents want to hear because you don't want to hurt the parents' feelings (.) empathy (.) you are understanding how they might be feeling and you're responding to that (.) in the same way that you respond to the children   (Rhonda, SENCo at a charity-run preschool)

The three preceding extracts suggest that although early years practitioners find their role emotionally challenging in different ways, they are sustained by a sense of the underlying worth of their emotional labour.   Furthermore, four of the eighteen participants in the individual interviews demonstrated a belief in the breadth of the positive impact of their role; they expressed how the wider community may also benefit from the deployment of their emotions.   For example, Abigail (private day nursery

placement, working with under-2s) described how '…you feel like you're doing something errm that's is actually bettering people's lives (.) helping parents to work (.) it's helping the nation to thrive (.) it's a good thing yeah?'; while Gertrude (self-employed childminder) expressed '…that's going to make us a better society (.) we can help those who have not had a great opportunity'. These two extracts demonstrate a sense of having a personal stake in the economic future of the country, rebalancing societal inequalities, and promoting tolerance within communities: the different challenges of their emotional labour appear to be regarded by the practitioners as being worthwhile illustrating the subordinate clause that practitioners labour 'in the belief that they are improving lives'.

4.3.1.4 Summary of Theme 1

Practitioners demonstrate a moral commitment to their work which is expressed through moral emotions such as patience, empathy and compassion. This is articulated in connection with their perceived duty to meet children's attachment needs and promote positive outcomes.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Practitioners have affection for the children in their care, with some staff displaying subversive behaviours.

4.3.2.1 Affection

Three of the four focus groups recorded a broad consensus that early years practitioners have affection for the children, in support of the clause 'Practitioners have

affection for the children in their care'. However, only two of these three groups described these feelings as *love*: members of Focus Group 1 recorded a 'deep affection' that is 'distinctive and separate from intimate love' and 'different from parental love'. Members of Focus Group 3 recorded the importance of 'caring with emotion' where 'care exceeds the necessary' and is exemplified by 'outward expressions of love'.

In the individual interviews, nine of the eighteen participants specifically used the word *love* to describe their feelings for the children, as demonstrated in the following extracts from the individual interview with Wendy (supernumerary owner/manager of private preschool):

> I have a girl who is ready to go off to school…when I walk in she will come up to me and be like 'I love you' and then she will give me a kiss on there [demonstrates a kiss on the cheek] it is not been initiated by me and maybe I have just walked in (.) in the setting so I say 'I love you too' (.) because I genuinely do, I don't have to be over-emotional and say the extent to it

Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) expressed a viewpoint in the following extract of there being a difference in the *quality* of the emotion when experienced in the workplace:

> …there is love definitely (.) it's not just the same love (.) it's not just the same love (.) I love my friends and I love my husband… my love for my nephew in Sardinia… it's like a spectrum and it has different shades [clasps hands to chest over her heart when talking about 'love']

Three other individually interviewed participants expressed a viewpoint that the distinction lies in the spontaneity of displays of private affection compared to managed displays of professional affection, as illustrated in the following extract.

> *Rhonda*: I show them love and support
> *Researcher*: Tell me about this 'love' that you show them
> *Rhonda*: Unconditional

> *Researcher*: So, is this like the love for children in your family?
>
> *Rhonda*: Yes but there are different boundaries
>
> *Researcher*: Okay, different boundaries (.) tell me a little bit about the boundaries then?
>
> *Rhonda*: My sister's daughter (.) my niece I feel like I love her too (.) but I can be crazy with her and tease her a little bit (.) and hug… because it's not professional (.) and there is like different boundaries and the child is ermm I can't take it to a personal level (.) I have to stay professional
>
> (Rhonda, SENCo at a charity-run preschool)

Furthermore, distinctions are made between personal concepts of love and care, with the following example demonstrating how having feelings of *love* may be contested

> Don't think it can be called love (.) love has a very very (.) more facets to it (.) there is way more than the kind of care I would say care more than love (.) although the care you do you have for that child and your responsibility in the workplace…it cannot be love (.) because love cannot be restrained it cannot have boundaries put upon it (.) that if you feel that the child is feeling really unwell today you cannot leave it there you will have to take it further (.) think about it keep asking about it (.) enquire about it even at home which is very unprofessional …then if that boundary has been set it should not be called love (.) because if you love somebody you can't care for them 9 to 5 and then after that you don't think about them (.) can't do it no (.) so I want not call it 'Professional Love' (.) it's about care and it's about duty   (Orla, employed at a charity-run preschool)

Additionally, the two following extract demonstrate how although these participants expressed having feelings of *love* for the children, they did not feel comfortable with openly using the term *love* in a professional context:

> Using the word *love* is loaded (.) I mean it's a shame I think it has connotations that I think we're not really meant to use in the workplace with children (.) but we should you know (.) I'm half and half about using it because half of me thinks (.) of course we should because we're with these children every day and of course we *love* them (.) but then I wouldn't really say 'I really love this child' to everyone in the room because it sounds a bit dodgy (.) you know I mean?
>
> (Lisa, placement in a baby room at a Children's Centre)

Love? I don't ughh that word I don't know (.) I mean I really really like them so much yeah (.) I mean you know I feel like we have to have a really nice bond but it's not that kind of love, it's just it's just that little bit of a love thing that I feel to have a bond (Tegan, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

Whereas, eight of the eighteen individually interviewed participants likened their work to a maternal role as demonstrated in the following two extracts:

A key person is err…like an maternal errr (1) figure (.) how do you say like maternal person who will take care of the child like mainly take care of the child
(Abigail, private day nursery placement, working with under-2s)

I suppose when you have key children they're pretty much like your own children but not born to you kind of thing (.) it's sort of like a second mother kind of role
(Danielle, deputy manager for a charity-run preschool)

The examples in this subsection demonstrate variance in conceptualising love and care. Nevertheless, the extracts illustrate that early years practitioners have affection for the children, in support of the clause **'**Practitioners have affection for the children in their care'.

4.3.2.2 Subversion

Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) explains how affection for the children may make it difficult to follow some rules:

I think that boundaries can sometimes be crossed when [practitioners] are attached to the child (.) and I mean I have been in that situation myself with key children and because we have such a good bond (.) you might not want to put certain rules in place which becomes difficult… keeping them on your lap ermm and letting them have things… [fidgets with her clothing hem].

Orla (employed at a charity-run preschool) asserted the importance of being self-aware and adhering to the setting's display rules:

> I think it's part of my job to be conscious about what my duty is to the little ones (.) duty in the role that you are in (.) it's all about self-consciousness (.) in what you're doing and what you're supposed to be doing

Furthermore, Mary (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) identifies how feelings of affection need to be managed to avoid preferential behaviours:

> I thing is (1) I don't want to sound really nasty (.) there are always going to be some children you are more attached to but you just have to be professional in the way that you don't (.) especially for other children, that you don't (.) I don't know like show it over (.) like in my setting there is a little girl and she calls one of the key persons actually 'Oh my nursery mummy' and stuff like that and it is nice but then you don't want the other children to feel left out

Wendy (supernumerary owner/manager of private preschool) encourages her staff to manage their displays of emotion so not to show favour for individual children:

> …sometimes they are distressed you might give them a hug (.) well it depends on when it's needed and in the situation but if it's needed (.) however I do you tell my staff not to favour one over the other (.) so if there is a hug have called a group hug (.) so that no one else is left out

Members of Focus Group 2 recorded that 'forming a secure attachment for the child's benefit' requires 'being selfless' and making 'your own needs become secondary'. However, Gertrude (self-employed childminder) describes how she subverts rules set by herself as the lead practitioner in her childminding setting:

> For me okay ermm (.) it's just nice to have that little special link with a child it's just really (.) I have this little girl who calls me 'Mama' (.) I know her mother isn't very happy but I feel just so warm and needed (.) and it just it gives me pleasure in being able to satisfy that child's emotional needs [hugs own body] just

the children's joy the happiness of the children (.) the smiles (.) I
know it sounds really corny and too perfect but it just makes my
day (.) when we play together and they give me a hug (.) yeah it
is just fantastic (.) you have to wean them off because they have
to go to school where no one is going to touch them (.) no one is
even going to give them a little hug

In the above extract, Gertrude suggests that she may ignore the parents' wishes,
whereas, Mary (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) acknowledges
'…how you do interact with children…does come down to the parents' wishes as well'.
Where parents' preferences are adhered to, subversion of rules may still have
implications for the child, as demonstrated by the following account from the individual
interview with Eva (employed in a private day nursery, working with under-2s):

I mean you know sometimes when you do get attached to
children the you do get a bit needy a bit (.) but I think that it is
just (.) you know (.) normal to be attached to people you can't
help it but just to be aware of it is the important thing (1) yeah I
have seen it quite a lot (.) I can think of one baby in particular
that was really attached to her key person and her behaviour was
impacted so much because she had that attachment (.) and
obviously we told the practitioner not to give in to her but
obviously when that person doesn't listen and isn't there she is a
completely different child (.) but [the parents] sort of seemed to
like that she was really close to her key person ermm

Examples of subversion and behaviours serving fulfilment of a practitioner's own
attachment needs support the subordinate clause 'with some staff displaying subversive
behaviours'. However, there is a potential for this subordinate clause to be interpreted
as challenging the clause 'practitioners enact ethical care'; which is evaluated, and the
clause justified, in the 'Discussion' chapter under the heading '5.2 Relationships and
potential conflict between themes'.

4.3.2.3 Summary of Theme 2

Practitioners feel affection for the children in their care with the key person role, in particular, being characterised by close emotional bonds between staff and children. However, some practitioners may demonstrate subversive behaviours in enacting their affection and commitment to individual children and their families.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Practitioners regulate their emotions in workplace interactions to serve a moral commitment, and to protect self.

4.3.3.1 Agentic display

The following extracts have been quoted as they are typical of examples which illustrate the clause: 'Practitioners regulate their emotions in workplace interactions to serve a moral commitment'. All focus groups recorded that displays of emotion are continuously managed in performance of ECEC roles. Members of Focus Group 1 recorded 'not being able to express own feelings during work time' as 'feelings are picked up by the children so [we] have to show them the *right* emotions'; as demonstrated by 'having a relationship with the child despite personality clashes' and 'having a partnership with parents despite personality clashes'. Members of Focus Group 2 recorded 'not expressing own emotional needs', and 'not able to display own emotions such as crying or shouting'. Members of Focus Group 3 recorded a role requirement for 'relentlessly working with fake or real emotions'; while members of Focus Group 4 recorded that they manage outward displays of emotion in order to

satisfy 'concerns over whether a child will like you', a 'constant need for validation and acceptance by colleagues' and to meet 'parental pressures and expectations'.

All eighteen individually interviewed participants expressed their enjoyment of working with children, and also a need to act to some extent in performance of their ECEC role. Orla (employed at a charity-run preschool) expressed her opinion on the importance of displaying emotions with the children, while also identifying a need for emotions to be managed in the setting:

> I would say if I'm most happy I'd be more smiling and chatty (.) and I will smile and I will laugh (.) if I'm not happy I will be quieter (.) but I will definitely smile (.) because it is finally the child's wellbeing that we are responsible for in the setting, not just me or how I feel…if you are asked to be plastic or unnatural all the time then it is going to reflect on (.) you would never know when the person is actually feeling (.) is that person genuinely listening to the child or not listening to the child?

Gertrude (self-employed childminder) also explained: 'I am honest but at the same time I have to act a little bit'. Katie (large chain day nursery placement, working with under-2s) identified that her outward display of emotion supports children's learning and development, while also complying with the settings' display rules:

> I think that's part of learning and development, that my face reflects what I am saying to you, because we know about mirroring and how children learn and develop that way so I think that if you (.) you are telling a child off erm that you need to not be smiling because that's mixed messages that won't be understood (.) I think that (.) I (1) I am always at work upbeat and positive but I think that that's I am normally but I think that it is exaggerated because I'm being watched by other staff and that is what is required

Ten of the eighteen individual interviewed participants commented on the need for managing outward displays of emotion when coping with children who are presenting challenging behaviours, as demonstrated in the following two extracts:

…trying to think of a word…challenging?...in that case I have to pretend a little bit (.) just to start to be (.) and this can be draining if there is no help…[facial expressions mirror emotions being verbalised]
(Abigail, private day nursery placement, working with under-2s)

I know that I am not confident in is behaviour management and I need to prepare myself for putting on that stern face
(Mary, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

Eleven of the eighteen individually interviewed participants reported regulating their displays of emotion with colleagues, as illustrated in the two extracts below:

I think a certain amount of the time yes it is genuine because we do get along (.) spend what seven hours a day with these people five days a week (.) you spend more time with them with them than your family (.) so they become your family ermm but when sort of problems arise and you've had an argument or something I think when the children are there obviously (.) you can't just show her what you're actually feeling especially especially in front of the children you need to get along with them (.) and make sure there are no signs for the children to pick up on
(Danielle, deputy manager for a charity-run preschool)

Sometimes when I have just had a bad morning with my own kids getting out of the door I'm really tired (.) but I'm really conscious of trying to leave my emotional baggage at the door when I come in (.) I just really try to not project that on to anyone I work with when I'm stressed or really tired (.) I act but that takes a lot of effort sometimes (.) it makes me more tired
(Imogen, employed in a Reception class in a primary school)

Thirteen of the eighteen participants in the individual interviews also reported that they manage their displays of emotion for carers and parents. The following interview extract demonstrates concealment of feelings to preserve positive relationships:

…parents blame other children for certain things even when the other children haven't necessarily done anything (.) and it sort of like the parents are just complaining when it was their child that was doing something (.) but you can't turn round and say what their child is actually like (.) you have to put on a front and be like (.) 'Well okay I will look into the other stuff and I will do this and do that' (.) but you know what happened and you just

don't want to upset this parent by saying 'Actually it was your child who initiated this behaviour'
(Danielle, deputy manager for a charity-run preschool)

The following extracts demonstrate the management of displays of emotion to mitigate concerns families may have about the care of their children:

I mean I always put a mask on when I meet parents because I'm in charge of their children and I don't want them to have any worries (.) umm so yeah I would say that the parents definitively feel comfortable when they come in to pick up their children and they see that we are happy and not stressed
(Eva, employed in a private day nursery, under-2s)

Ermm with parents I'm not myself (.) I put on a whole different acting kind of persona ermm (2) and even yeah with parents (.) even when I hear myself on the phone I think 'This is not how I'm feeling' (1) errmm there is a certain kind of need for me to want them to be happy (.) and (.) want them to be happy about how the child is performing (.) so I do feel like I need to impress them in some way (.) whether it's through my knowledge on something or what they are saying with the child
(Fiona, room leader in a private Montessori nursery)

Of course anyone who says hasn't done it [acting] is a liar (.) but especially for parents I think (.) when (.) when parents come in and they are really proud of something you don't want to squash that so as professional as I think you get to have that game face don't you ermm so there is definitely some of that (.) you want this parents to feel proud of the children but the entire time you're thinking (.) yeah I guess that's alright
(Hermione, deputy manager of preschool in independent school)

Julia (employed in a nursery at a Children's Centre), who previously pursued an acting career, described her surface and deep acting for 'different audiences' in the workplace:

Julia: …to make them believe you need to believe (.) and there is a different way to behaving according to the audience
Researcher: Does the term 'method acting' mean anything to you?
Julia: Yes yes I believe so much in what I'm doing (.) so I transfer into real feelings…blending with my own character
Researcher: Is this what you do at work now?

Julia: With parents yes I err (2) ermm and with staff (.) I am expected to have more of a (.) professional ermm relationship (.) and I find that a little bit difficult (.) I'm not two persons but as I told you the children are different audience to the staff so I am acting in a different way

Researcher: Does anybody see your felt emotions?

Julia: My real emotions? err (2) yes yes the children but (.) yeah remaining professional and (.) yeah I'm pretending my behaviour is bigger (.) I'm acting a little bit because the audience is different with the children

Ten of the eighteen individually interviewed participants reported concealment of private life emotions in order to perform their role. The following four extracts illustrate practitioner's preparations for required positive outward displays of emotion:

I have a row with my husband it will impact me and I have to act because I cannot put my anger anywhere and I have personal suffering (.) I have to (.) I have to and you know I have to smile and even if I don't want to make a massive joke or party with balloons I will try to contain (.) myself and put on my professional face for the children arriving

(Gertrude, self-employed childminder)

I don't psych myself up but I think it's just (.) because of course we go in to set up everything just before we open the door you get into 'work you' so you are like 'Okay fine' (.) and then it's just like 'Oh hello'(.) well it's all the positive ones and making sure you're always smiling it's making sure when a child comes over you don't look concerned on your face you just look caring and (1) and you are always attentive to their needs (.) always having this persona that everything is positive, everything is really great and it doesn't matter what else is happening in your life because you have to build an atmosphere that these children don't think anything is wrong

(Danielle, deputy manager for a charity-run preschool)

…you can't go in a bad mood and take that out on the children so I do think there are ways you have to make yourself feel different and have your (.) happy face on around the children

(Mary, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

…when I come to work and before I enter the classroom with the children I take a deep breath (.) and errm it's kind of putting a mask on (.) it is because I leave my worries behind (.) I can't show my frustration so I just rationalise it (.) we have to leave them behind (.) have to leave them behind at the door

(Rhonda, SENCo at a charity-run preschool)

The extracts within this subsection illustrate the clause: 'Practitioners regulate their emotions in workplace interactions to serve a moral commitment'; emotions are managed in order to maintain a positive emotional environment for the children and mitigate concerns of the families.

4.3.3.2 Protecting self

The following extracts have been quoted as they are typical of examples which illustrate the subordinate clause relating to how emotions are regulated in workplace interactions 'to protect self'. Twelve of the eighteen individually interviewed participants described how they manage their emotions to mitigate personal upset, as demonstrated in the following extracts from three individual interviews:

> I am very empathetic and very informal but sometimes I say to myself this is not your child (.) so I had a child at a previous placement that was abused and I was really concerned (.) but I had to let it go and just talk to the centre and the social worker and everyone (.) and I just report the whole situation and I had to let go because it wasn't my child
> (Abigail, private day nursery placement, working with under-2s)

> I think that a lot of the time when you are feeling sad it is because something has related to you so if a child that you were really fond of is leaving you feel sad not for them but for you because you mourn them having gone errr I think any vocation is going to be emotionally draining as you have compassion (.) and I was a nurse in intensive care before and so (.) I know it's so (.) my perspective having worked (.) having run an intensive care for a number of years (.) I'm not saying that it's not as consequential I'm just saying that I am more able to departmentalise it as being incredibly important but I have done my day and I did my best and will continue to tomorrow and I have to leave that there [face expresses concern]
> (Katie, large chain day nursery placement, under-2s)

> Some practitioners who cuddle mine to make me feel jealous (.) there were times when I came home in tears (.) I try and keep a distance in the sense (.) like some practitioners are really

properly cuddling and kissing the children whatever and I'm not
like that
        (Tegan, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

Whereas, seven of the eighteen individually interviewed participants reported regulating their emotions for managers in order to be seen as a *good* practitioner or as *being professional*, as illustrated in the two extracts below:

…there is a point at which you have to show that you are strong
that you are (.) that you will go do your stuff (.) that you are
resilient
(Abigail, private day nursery placement, working with under-2s)

I try and act like things are you know going well which I do…
so yeah I would say I do pretend… you are hiding feelings that
you shouldn't really have to hide I guess
        (Eva, employed in a private day nursery, under-2s)

The extracts in this subsection illustrate the subordinate clause relating to how emotions are regulated in workplace interactions with children and adults 'to protect self' from personal upset, and to appear competent.

4.3.3.3 Summary of Theme 3

Practitioners act to some extent in performance of their ECEC role; their displays of emotion during their interactions with children, families and colleagues are managed in order to be supportive of the parents' and the children's wellbeing and development. Furthermore, emotions may also be regulated, and displays of emotions managed, to protect the self. Emotion may also be regulated to protect the self from anxiety over children's difficult situations. Furthermore, in interactions with managers feelings may be suppressed to produce displays of emotion which the practitioner associates with competence and professionalism.

4.3.4 Summary of findings in response to Question 1

In response to the question: 'How do early years practitioners deploy and/or regulate their emotions in performance of their role?' the findings suggest that practitioners feel affection for the children in their care, and that the key person role in particular is characterised by close bonding between staff and children. Participants reported enactment of moral emotion deployed in the interests of protecting and supporting children's wellbeing and development. Some practitioners may demonstrate subversive behaviours in enacting their commitment to individual children and their families, and to meet own attachment needs. Practitioners perceive that they make a positive contribution to improving children's lives, supporting families, and contributing positively to society, assigning their role a sense of moral worth.

The findings suggest that practitioners may display different emotions from those felt, or exaggerate their felt emotions, to serve a moral commitment to the children and their families. Emotion may also be managed to protect the self from upset relating to children's difficult circumstances. Furthermore, emotions may be managed during interactions with colleagues to maintain a positive emotional environment for the children; with emotions also regulated with the setting management as a result of needing to be seen as a competent and *professional* practitioner.

4.4 Question 2: What are the consequences of their emotional labour?

4.4.1 Theme 4: Practitioners may experience both negative and positive consequences of their emotional labour.

4.4.1.1 Positive consequences

All individually interviewed participants reported that their emotional work provides intrinsic rewards. Extracts have been quoted as they are typical of examples which illustrate the subordinate clause: practitioners may experience 'positive consequences of their emotional labour'. Nine of the eighteen individually interviewed participants expressed a sense of pride in children's achievements promoting a sense of high self-efficacy, raised self-esteem, and contributing to practitioners' feelings of wellbeing, as illustrated in the following two extracts:

> Well I felt happy and joyful when I was working with this child on speech and we are working on phonics (.) and just getting her to the point where she is actually knowing how to spell she's starting to blend (.) I think that is more joy because you have really accomplished something that you can see (.) the growth of speech and language (.) so working with things like that you definitely feel proud that you can see the effects of it
> (Bonnie, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

> …something like that they have made a massive step in development you go home and want to tell everyone about it (.) yeah yeah because you are working with them every day (.) you are putting in the input for them to be able to learn (.) so yes when they do achieve it makes you feel (2) sort of accomplished because it means all of your work and all of your effort has actually done something to make a difference
> (Danielle, deputy manager for a charity-run preschool)

The intrinsic rewards of enjoying working with children and having close relationships with them were expressed by all eighteen individually interviewed participants, as demonstrated in the two individual interview extracts below:

> … it's not just what I can do it's what they can give to me (.) and I get a lot from those children (.) I get a lot of emotional feedback (.) and it's very much a *feel good* factor (.) that is selfish but I get it anyway as it just comes to me you know
> (Clodagh, private day nurseries, supernumerary owner/manager)

> …it's naive to think that (.) that we don't all enjoy having a special relationship with children and I think that is a nice relationship and it is nice to be wanted and too (.) if somebody is upset to be able to make them feel better and those sort of things so I think that is something very rewarding to be the key person (.) it is nice to see a child's progress and to be able to understand not only the progress for the child but for the family as well so ermm yeah I think that there is lots of emotional rewards (.) yeah well it makes me feel empowered as a practitioner and it makes you feel that you are valued and respected responsible trustworthy reliable
> (Katie, large chain day nursery placement, under-2s)

Raised self-awareness was reported by nine individually interviewed participants, while ten participants expressed a sense of high self-efficacy. Lisa (placement in a baby room at a Children's Centre) describes how she has increased her self-awareness: 'I've learnt about myself (.) especially being in the baby room'; while Gertrude (self-employed childminder) expresses her high self-efficacy:

> Working with children for me I can do it standing on my head (.) I know it sounds like boasting but I had to find out what I was good at and I feel very privileged

Managing displays of emotion, and immersion in work with children, may also benefit the self by pushing aside negative emotions, such as, stresses relating to the private life. Nine of the eighteen individually interviewed participants reported that

working closely with the children was a distraction from negative thoughts relating to their private life, as demonstrated in the following two extracts:

> *Eva*: Ermm (2) just try not to focus on anything else apart from the children (.) yeah
> *Researcher*: Okay so you don't have to think about something particularly happy that has happened to you, or anything else to change your mood?
> *Eva*: No
> *Researcher*: So it's just focusing on the children?
> *Eva*: Yeah it does take your mind off things that are the reason I'm coming in stressed
>   (Eva, employed in a private day nursery, under-2s)

> I just think that you you take yourself away from the situation (.) because you're like thinking about the child and what picture they're painting and you are not thinking about 'Ah I had a big argument with my partner' or something like that
>   (Mary, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

Bonnie (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) and Katie (large chain day nursery placement, working with under-2s) explained how managing outward displays of emotion promotes positive mood changes in the self and in other staff:

> Well in a way when you're in a bad mood and you've just got this happy face on all the time it does help just to change your mood
>   (Bonnie, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

> I am [acting] for (2) myself because I think it makes you feel better if you don't go in on a Monday morning and you are like [grimace] as it makes you feel down and all the staff yeah
>   (Katie, large chain day nursery placement, under-2s)

The extracts in this subsection illustrate the subordinate clause: practitioners may experience 'positive consequences of their emotional labour'; practitioners' experience intrinsic rewards from their emotional labour, such as the development of personal and professional skills, enjoyment of the children, and distraction from private life stress.

4.4.1.2 Negative consequences

All four focus groups recorded having feelings of fatigue and exhaustion from long days of caring for children. Members of Focus Group 1 recorded being 'tired physically as well as emotionally', 'feeling drained and it coming in waves' and how this 'affects motivation, patience and personal life'. Members of Focus Group 2 recorded feelings of being 'emotionally used up, spent and drained' and 'feeling unable to give any more of self to anyone else's emotional needs'. Members of Focus Group 3 recorded that 'long hours lead to tiredness' and how exhaustion is the 'effect of children crying constantly'. Members of Focus Group 4 recorded feeling 'mentally drained' and 'feeling like you can't give any more'.

Twelve individually interviewed participants also described experiencing fatigue from prolonged caring and how this impacts the self. The following extracts have been included as they are typical of examples which illustrate the subordinate clause: practitioners may experience 'negative…consequences of their emotional labour'. Gertrude (self-employed childminder) describes her perception of the consequences of her long working days of childminding: '…it impacts on my wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, because I'm tired…' Extracts from the individual interviews with Imogen and Orla are typical examples illustrating how other participants expressed their experiences of fatigue from prolonged periods of caring for children:

> Sometimes I am really really tired at the end of the day (.)
> sometimes I can feel really drained especially when it has been
> a loud day (.) one of those days where you just stop feeling
> [weariness expressed in tone of voice]
>   (Imogen, employed in a Reception class in a primary school)

…sometimes you're feeling low (.) you are feeling very tired (.) but that doesn't mean that will be an excuse for doing any less (.) any less of what you're doing and of course this is the same for anybody in any profession…and especially when we have groups that have many physical needs to be catered to (2) just catering to their physical needs is one thing (.) catering to their emotional needs is extremely important for any individual in any setting (.) so I think even if the children are content and happy you are catering for their emotional needs as well (.) I'm sure that also takes a lot of your energy [voice lacking former enthusiasm]   (Orla, employed at a charity-run preschool)

All the individually interviewed participants expressed having experienced anxiety relating to a range of the children's difficult and distressing situations. Extracts have been quoted as they are typical of examples which illustrate the subordinate clause: practitioners may experience 'negative…consequences of their emotional labour'. The following two extracts illustrate anxiety from empathising with children's separation from their parents during the working day:

I had a bit of anxiety working with babies…something was triggered and I felt really they shouldn't be there and I felt well they were kind of lost or abandoned and empathising with them (Abigail, private day nursery placement, working with under-2s)

Sometimes I feel I feel that this child at this moment really (.) needs the parent more than anyone else in the world (.) but that is not practically possible (.) I do understand that there are restraints but I will not lie about feeling sad I do feel sad and stressed [highly animated]
                    (Orla, employed in a charity-run preschool)

The following extract from the individual interview with Bonnie (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) is a typical example illustrating anxiety relating to children's difficult home lives:

…it is difficult sometimes when you see children who are having difficult situations at home and they would come in and they would say their family have been kicked out this morning (.) and that would make you want to do stuff (.) there are

boundaries but you want to do…that would be on your mind a whole day thinking (.) when they go home they haven't got anywhere to go…[looking down]

The following extract from the individual interview with Fiona (room leader in a private Montessori setting) illustrates how anxiety may be experienced while working with a child displaying challenging behaviours:

...he was just so difficult he would actually hit like hit (.) I had never been hit by a child before (.) he used to hit kick if you didn't (.) you had a chance stop him because he would try and hit someone else or himself (.) and he would get so angry and frustrated we tried so many different methods with him and strategies (.) if anyone named the strategy we would literally try (.) like you would ask people come on give us ideas (.) so you would do that for a couple of days of the week…I feel so bad firstly for him and also I felt really bad because it was affecting all the other children in the room and the staff

Furthermore, five of the eighteen individually interviewed participants described how they take concerns about the children into their private life, as demonstrated in the following two extracts:

Bonnie: I wonder if they are coming into school tomorrow, the next day (.) see you definitely do think about it more when you leave class
Researcher: So do you talk to anyone confidentially about how you feel?
Bonnie: The family liaison staff talks to me about the child and it helps (.) but I still just go home and tell them… [mumbling presumed negative] and they tell you 'Don't worry' so I get through
　　(Bonnie, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

I moved up to a Year 2 class and one of the brothers was there so I think that family (.) yeah so I made a special resource for him (.) when you go home I don't know what you should feel (.) it's just so hard to stop thinking about them
　　(Mary, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

The extracts in this subsection illustrate the subordinate clause: practitioners may experience 'negative…consequences of their emotional labour'. Practitioners experience anxiety relating to a range of difficult and distressing situations being experienced by the children in their care; this anxiety may also be carried forward into the private life.

4.4.1.3 Summary of Theme 4

Practitioners may experience positive consequences of their emotional labour such as enjoyment of having close relationships with children, distraction from their private life, and feelings of self- and role-worthiness. However, practitioners may also experience anxiety from empathising over difficulties and distress experienced by the children and their families, as a negative consequence of emotional labour.

4.4.2 Summary of findings in response to Question 2

In response to the question: 'What are the consequences of their emotional labour?' the findings suggest that maintaining positive displays of emotion, and full immersion in their work with children, may benefit the self by pushing aside negative emotions relating to their private life. Participants reported enjoyment of working with children and having close relationships with them, however, they also reported experiencing anxiety over concerns for children's difficult circumstances. Even when role boundaries are acknowledged, worries over children's negative situations may be carried over from the work life into the private life. Participants reported experiencing emotional fatigue as a result of engaging in continual attentiveness and responsiveness

to the children over long periods of time, however, they may be sustained by a sense of the moral worthiness of their role, with pride in children's achievements supporting perceptions of high self-efficacy and raised self-esteem.

4.5 Question 3: How effective are current models of supervision and professional reflection?

4.5.1 Theme 5: Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour.

4.5.1.1 Emotional climate

The following extracts have been quoted as they are typical of examples which illustrate the statement: 'Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour'. All participants in the individual interviews reported that their setting guided staff behaviour and set behavioural boundaries, including having rules relating to the display of emotion. Three of the four focus groups recorded comments relating to professional boundaries: members of Focus Group 1 recorded that their caring is 'defined by boundaries' and how they need to be mindful of 'not getting too attached'; members of Focus Group 3 recorded the necessity of 'being aware of the balance, limits and boundaries of the key person role'; members of Focus Group 4 recorded requirements for practitioners 'being approachable to children' while ensuring 'appropriate physical contact'.

Nicole (manager of two preschools based in independent schools) identified a link between her setting's display rules and the culture of the staff and families of children attending the setting: 'The setting is encouraging in terms of offering physical affection because in Asian culture that is very much the norm'. Abigail also commented on the 'cultural difference' she has identified between ECEC practice in Italy and in the UK. Furthermore, the following two extracts are typical examples illustrating how display rules are not consistent across settings:

> Like in my other settings you're not allowed to have a child on your lap you're not allowed to hug a child you're not allowed to (.) so like a child comes in you just have to place them next to you (,) if they are crying and they come to you for a hug you have to like show them affection from afar (.) whereas some settings are like 'I love you' (.) so when I left my other setting and came back to this setting I was so used to being like 'Oh that's nice' and tapping them from afar (.) then they expected you to hug back
> (Bonnie, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

> …I was quite surprised that just from being on the course and talking to people (.) I remember the conversation came up one day and people said they weren't allowed to cuddle them (.) and I found it quite shocking and as well and some settings you aren't allowed to have them on your laps (.) if you are crossing your legs you put in between your legs (.) but yeah I think that's a bit strange but in our case it is fine you can have cuddles
> (Lisa, placement in a baby room at a Children's Centre)

The following extracts demonstrate inconsistency across staff perceptions of the appropriateness of kissing the children, and their desire to do so. Furthermore, the extract from Julia's interview illustrates management influence on staff perceptions of the display rules:

> I am cuddling the children every time I can (.) if they need it or deserve it (.) sometimes I kiss them on the cheek because I saw the headteacher and the manager do it (.) so I wasn't doing that until I saw them (.) so I knew I was allowed to kiss them (.) nothing in private (.) even if I want to hug them in private (.) I don't because I don't want to be misinterpreted
> (Julia employed in a nursery at a Children's Centre)

I wouldn't kiss a child (.) because yeah and I personally think that giving them a hug is okay but I would go on what the setting has (.) I have been in settings where that's what they do (.) so I think it's important erm they kiss them sort of on the cheeks and stuff like that but…there is rules that say obviously no kissing on the lips or anything like that

(Mary, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

Ten of the eighteen participants in the individual interviews described the influences of management behaviours on the emotional environment of the setting. Gertrude (self-employed childminder) describes her own influence as manager: 'Everything the whole ethos the atmosphere of the setting (.) if I'm in a mad mood believe me it is going to impact the whole setting'. The following extracts echo this manner of influence:

…she vent problems around babies and because she is the room leader nobody is allowed to say anything…here in England it depends on the manager and the room leader (.) they set the ethos for the place sometimes…I try several times when the room leader wasn't there because she is very strict and everyone (.) I said to them 'Why don't we do this? Why don't we try this? Why don't we try to go outside and do this? Because in Italy it is much more happy and we go outside' (1) they were like 'How do you think we can do this?' and I thought 'Oh my god' this is a 50 year old women and a 22 year old women (.) they just feel really anxious and spend their weekends looking for jobs

(Abigail, private day nursery placement, working with under-2s)

Some teachers are irritable but I find that quite inappropriate because I think that is unprofessional (.) it is her job role to be the class teacher (.) where you are there to create a great learning experience and environment for the children so I think that is inappropriate but it does happen

(Imogen, employed in a Reception class in a primary school)

The extracts in this subsection illustrate the statement: 'Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour'. Management influence

the emotional climate of the setting by guiding staff behaviours through setting behavioural rules and boundaries, and by the effects of their own displayed emotion. Management influences may contribute positively or negatively to the emotional environment.

4.5.1.2 Emotional support

The following extracts have been quoted as they are typical of examples which illustrate the statement: 'Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour'. All eighteen individually interviewed participants reported that meetings between individual members of staff and managers, termed 'Professional Supervision', were conducted in their settings. The following extract from the interview with Eva (employed in a private day nursery, working with under-2s) demonstrates variation in managers' approaches to supporting staff emotionally in the setting:

> …my manager always says if there is anything on your mind the door is always open to talk about things (.) so she is supportive my new manager definitely ermm (.) but in my old place my boss would say whatever is happening outside you need to leave it at the door but we don't leave our emotions at the nursery door (.) me and my manager didn't really have a very good relationship ermm I felt she was quite unapproachable (.) so even when I did say things it was difficult to even just say it let alone saying like it's making me unhappy

All six individually interviewed participants with senior management responsibilities reported that 'Professional Supervision' is conducted through regular meetings in accordance with EYFS requirements, however, there was little to suggest in five of these six interviews that there is emotional support for staff in these meetings.

The following two extracts with senior managers demonstrate little emotional support

for staff in supervision meetings:

> …we have discussions about training and anything to do with parents and children (.) I don't think I've ever seen them [staff] unhappy in a meeting because we're always there to support them as a big team working together
> (Clodagh, private day nurseries, supernumerary owner/manager)

> *Researcher*: Ermm so is there a place for sharing their own emotions for your key persons?
> *Wendy*: You know to be honest I have not thought of that but of course sometimes there is (.) we are taking a child at the minute who is challenging everybody and mum knows it as well
> *Researcher*: How does the key person feel?
> *Wendy*: Angry sometimes
> *Researcher*: Does she come to you to discuss this?
> *Wendy*: Well we are all there
> *Researcher*: And are there regular supervision sessions?
> *Wendy*: Every 6 to 8 weeks
> *Researcher*: Do you initiate these or does the member of staff have to?
> *Wendy*: Well I have to initiate them because that is a requirement
> (Wendy, supernumerary owner/manager of private preschool)

Two manager participants reported how their senior managers provided emotional

support for them, however, they did not comment on the level of support provided by

them for other staff:

> Well we have one-to-one meetings every half term even so say I have the one-to-one meeting with my manager but if something happens today I [would go] to my manager and go 'I have to talk to you (.) something has happened and I'm not coping with it' ermm and she will always make sure there are staff that cover (.) and take me out and speak to me to see that I am okay no it is not something that is left to the next week ermm she will always try to resolve whatever it is (.) my manager is my mother (.) so yeah [giggles]
> (Danielle, deputy manager for a charity-run preschool)

Hermione: Yeah my manager is pretty good with supervision ermm however my manager and I are quite close (.) there are often times we have meetings that we're in there for far too long because we are going off topic so I'm quite lucky we feel so comfortable
Researcher: Is the talk ever to do with your emotions?
Hermione: Ermm it's a bit of everything (.) it's about other staff and the children and me and my feelings ermm
(Hermione, deputy manager of preschool in independent school)

The findings suggest that the quality of the relationships that practitioners have with their managers may impact their access to emotional support from management. Furthermore, the following two extracts from individual interviews suggest that supervision meetings may be better conducted with other individuals in the setting:

…I didn't feel like I was able to say how I was feeling (.) having supervision not with your boss because it is then easier to talk about things… I think maybe if you don't have a good relationship with the person that you are talking to and can't be honest then it is sort of pointless (.) but as long as it is productive and positive I think it is always a good thing
(Eva, employed in a private day nursery, under-2s)

I would probably rather discuss how I feel with the people in the room rather than the manager I wouldn't (.) I wouldn't go to the manager 'Can we chat about so and so because it's upsetting me' no I just wouldn't do it
(Tegan, private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s)

These extracts suggest that staff may be more apprehensive about being open to their managers in supervision meetings, as they fear it may impact the manager's perception of them as being a *good* practitioner or as *being professional*. Similarly, the following extract proposes a more flexible approach to professional supervision, whereby practitioners have a choice of whom to have supervision meetings with depending on the circumstances at that particular time:

I feel that because Reception is the only year that has the early years foundation stage (.) supervision is a requirement (.) but I find in my school a lot of the EYFS rules or regulations are bent a bit because (.) they are being overruled by all the systems that

are in place for the rest of the school and no supervision at all ermm for teaching assistants (.) well it would be great to have that put in place it depends I (.) it depends who you have a good (.) it depends who you feel comfortable with (.) it could be the class teacher…but it may not always be appropriate (.) because at points when I have not felt supported by my class teacher who is also my mentor (.) I would not want to have supervision with her I would rather have supervision with the Head of Early Years at the school

(Imogen, employed in a Reception class in a primary school)

Furthermore, this extract also illustrates how the duty for professional supervision may be waived in a school context.

Members in three of the four focus groups recorded difficulties with sharing own emotions with their managers: members of Focus Group 1 recorded that 'managers' support is dependent on them being understanding and having empathy with staff', and that 'support could just be somebody asking 'Are you okay?' and then listening', however, they reported 'not feeling *heard* by managers'; members of Focus Group 3 recorded that 'documentation relating to discussions with managers reduces the level of sharing emotions'; members of Focus Group 4 recorded that 'sensitivity in managers' is an important quality.

All four focus groups recorded that emotional support may also be provided by colleagues. Members of Focus Group 1 recorded that 'team support is dependent on the quality of relationships, team working and communication'. Members of Focus Group 2 recorded a benefit from 'sharing responsibilities with another key person'. Members of Focus Group 3 reported being able to 'release through talking to colleagues'. Members of Focus Group 4 recorded the importance for 'staff to show sensitivity and understanding to each other'. Eight of the eighteen individually interviewed

participants indicated that they receive support from colleagues. However, the following extract from the interview with Fiona (room leader in a private Montessori nursery) demonstrates reluctance of one practitioner to share personal feelings with work colleagues as it may conflict with managerial aspects of her role:

> I'm friends with everybody at work and I'll talk to them but I wouldn't say they are my *friends* [mimes speech marks around the word] because I don't feel that is appropriate because then I can't turn round to them and say (.) 'Haven't done this' or (1) 'You know you're not performing in this way' or (.) I just don't want anything to sort of cloud my judgement so even getting personal in terms of talking about their social lives (.) but if they try to talk to me about mine I am quite closed off

All four focus groups recorded self-support strategies in coping with the emotional demands of their role: members of Focus Group 1 recorded 'self-calming through managing breathing and going outside in the fresh air', 'taking 15 minutes to have a cup of tea away from all the noise', and 'physically remove yourself from the children or adults for a few minutes'; members of Focus Group 2 recorded 'taking time out to recharge and rest, drink tea, go outdoors, stroke the nursery pet, and do banal tasks which do not have an impact on emotions'; members of Focus Group 3 recorded 'doing something different which does not require high levels of attachment to children'; members of Focus Group 4 recorded that they 'move between inside and outside'.

Eight of the eighteen individually interviewed participants reported using external sources of emotional support. Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) explained that she sought help from an external professional when she did not feel supported by the setting: 'I actually contacted my counsellor before because

she was a teacher as well'. Imogen (employed in a Reception class in a primary school) also described seeking support from an external professional under similar circumstances:

> There is someone (.) she is a SENCo from another school and I worked with her last year and I have asked her for advice and mainly to do with children behavioural problems

However, the following extract from an individual interview with Hermione (deputy manager of preschool in independent infant school) demonstrates that even when the relationship with a manager is positive, and emotional support is available, individuals may still access external sources of emotional support:

> I tell my partner quite a lot (.) but yeah and I also have a friend of mine who works in a similar background and she's actually been coming into the setting because she's a recruitment officer (.) so sometimes we meet up and talk things over

However, the following extract from the interview with Orla (employed at a charity-run preschool) suggests that some practitioners may be reluctant to share their feelings, preferring to adopt self-support strategies such as reflection:

> Very open door policy fortunately (.) it is a good setting they are very open about their relation that staff has with the management (.) so is a very open door policy we are more than welcome to come and express our feelings (.) with a manager who is very receptive (.) so that is good (.) I haven't said that I am upset at any time no (.) because of the kind of person I am (.) I did not feel that I wanted them to know (.) maybe it is just because of the way I am (.) I think about 'Why do I feel like that?' I reflect about it more (.) and I think maybe this is something I need to understand (.) and learn why I am feeling like that (.) maybe it's more of me
> (Orla, employed at a charity-run preschool)

The extracts in this subsection illustrate the statement: 'Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour'. The findings suggest

wide variation between the frequency, initiation, focus and content of supervision meetings. Participants recommended more flexible allocation of supervisors to promote openness within relationships; with some participants reporting that they adopt self-support strategies, and receive support from colleagues and external sources.

4.6.1.3 Summary of Theme 5

Some workplaces have a more positive emotional climate where the influence of senior staff and managers is more positive in mitigating staff stress and fatigue; conversely, some workplaces have more negative emotional climates and the influence of management may contribute to negative experiences.

4.5.2 Theme 6: Staff support strategies and workforce development are needed.

4.5.2.1 Professional development

The following extracts have been quoted as they are typical of examples which illustrate the clause: 'Staff support strategies…are needed'. Seven of the eighteen individually interviewed participants specifically referred to using reflection to assist them in coping with emotional demands of their role and to focus on supporting children's development, as demonstrated in the following two extracts:

> …make sure you are very self-aware and insightful about what motivates you (.) about what upsets you (.) what inspires you (.) so that you can be a really good reflective practitioner because by doing that you are always maintaining your personal emotional health and also improving provision by reflecting on your practice
>
> (Katie, large chain day nursery placement, under-2s)

> I do think a lot and reflect upon how can the child be made most comfortable with that situation (.) so I do reflect on that (.) it helps in my reflection I I use it to positively develop myself (.) what is the thing that I can do better next time
>
> (Orla, employed in a charity-run preschool)

Members of Focus Group 2 recorded a 'need to improve support within the setting by teambuilding and de-stressing activities such as learning to meditate'. Wendy (supernumerary owner/manager of private preschool) explained how she organises teambuilding activities outside the setting: 'I do regular outings, this Sunday for a meal where everything will be paid (.) they will all be happy and chatty.' Members of Focus Group 4 also recorded a recommendation for 'more training on supporting children's emotional and social development and how to manage their behaviour', and on 'understanding how to build emotional attachments where the child is not too dependent on you'.

Clodagh (supernumerary owner/manager of two private day nurseries) described a need for training in supporting children's personal, social and emotional development, and working in partnership with parents:

> I would like to see (.) ermm they [key persons] learning that they don't have to be with the child all day doing everything with the child to develop personal and social (.) but they need to know how the child is developing… as well forming really close relationships as close as possible while still being professional as well with the parents find out and share information so they can work together as a team (.) to support that child

Furthermore, Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) recommended mentoring and coaching to improve support for children's development:

> …not just the senior practitioner but *all* the practitioners observing everyone (.) just to give feedbacks (.) even anonymously but really kind ones

These recommendations focus on building workforce resilience while developing staff capacity to enact moral emotion.

During the appraisal and debriefing discussion following the focus group activity, members of all four focus groups expressed that they had experienced benefits from sharing personal experiences and feelings relating to their own emotional labour. A member of Focus Group 1 explained that it was 'Good to know others feel same and you are not alone', while another member asserted that 'It's just good to have the opportunity to talk about your feelings and know you are not being judged'; a member of Focus Group 2 expressed having 'Loved just talking about how I feel and and good practice with these people'; a member of Focus Group 3 reported that she '.. liked taking part in the talk and understanding why I feel like this'; one member of Focus Group 4 described that 'It was easy to talk about how I feel and see everyone feels the same', while another member of Focus Group 4 explained that they are '…the sole male in early years in a school, I have the stress of feeling I'm not trusted not accepted with the other adults in school, I liked to talk and identify with the experiences and emotions of these, and know I am the same about feelings'. These quotations suggest that practitioners benefit emotionally from opportunities to meet together, discuss, and share their feelings. Furthermore, members of three of the four focus groups revealed that through discussion they formulated emotional support strategies for the self, and to support other staff: a member of Focus Group 2 explained that 'It was a chance to think about ways to recharge yourselves'; a member of Focus Group 3 shared her learning that 'As a leader it gave me an opportunity to reflect on differences between staff needs

(.) relating to supporting them (.) no blanket intervention would work effectively'; a member of Focus Group 4 explained also that 'I learned that changing environment is the best way to get an immediate release from stress so go outside when it gets too much (.) take the children outside'. These quotations suggest providing opportunities for practitioners to meet, discuss, and share their feelings, experiences and practice, enhancing their professional development.

4.5.2.2 Sector development

The following extracts have been quoted as they are typical of examples which illustrate the clause: strategies for '…workforce development are needed'. Katie (large chain day nursery placement, under-2s) expressed a need for raising the qualifications and status of early years work:

> …if we are trying to drive up standards then the public need to have a perception of that (.) somebody said to me that when girls come out of college they decide on early care or hairdressing and that…it's of paramount importance that there should be a graduate in every setting to as I said drive up the standards of provision

Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) also expressed a view that staff should hold graduate qualifications to improve the quality of provision, however, she also advised that 'many practitioners are good even though they have just NVQ3'. Abigail also commented on a perceived low status of ECEC within the workforce, and asserted that 'some of them [early years staff] are just doing it because they believe they can't do anything else'. Furthermore, Tegan (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) explains that even though she is a graduate she has little practice experience.

Well I've got a degree so fair enough I'm level six but the degree didn't give me any experience in settings it was all coursework and theory based (.) so I said I don't really have much experience

Whereas, Lisa (placement in a baby room at a Children's Centre) suggests a reticence in graduate staff to tell others of their level, particularly where they are more highly qualified than their seniors:

I wouldn't make it explicit completely…I do sometimes get a little bit embarrassed (.) and say 'Oh I'm doing my EYTS' (.) 'Oh it's a bit of a funny qualification you know' and 'It's it's just a bit of an add-on'(.) that's when they pushed me and asked me what level it is and then I say 'Level six' (.) because there's room leaders to a level three but you are more qualified than them so could make it feel awkward

Eleven of the individually interviewed participants commented on the demands of their workload, particularly when key children numbers are high and staff are not given non-contact time for record keeping, as demonstrated in the two following extracts:

The workload (.) it is a lot of work (.) I mean it depends on the setting but in the setting I was in I had to complete seven observations a month for each child which accounts to about 49 different observations and when you have got (.) I was working for 7:30 in the morning to 6:30 at night every day and I felt like I didn't really have any time to myself and I think that when you are overloaded

(Eva, employed in a private day nursery, under-2s)

I find really hard to juggle in terms of the amount with 19 key children (.) I'm always behind (.) making sure the learning journeys I mean I can write reports really fast I know exactly where each of them are in each of the areas (.) it means I get really stressed out because it builds and builds and builds (.) we are not given any time out in our setting to do that so it's all expected done in my time

(Fiona, room leader in a private Montessori nursery)

Three of the four focus groups recorded the demands of maintaining relationships and meeting children's needs when they are allocated high numbers of key children: members of Focus Group 1 recorded the importance of 'taking the time and putting in the energy to get to know the child' while expressing concerns over 'difficulties with dividing your attention between all your key children', 'keeping the children safe' and 'trying to meet the needs of all the children'. Members of Focus Group 2 recorded the requirement for 'focusing on meeting the child's needs', 'expending both physical and emotional energy on supporting and protecting the children', and 'aiming to be available for all the children but having difficulties due to time restraints'. Members of Focus Group 4 recorded concerns over 'being able to spend enough quality time with each child' and 'staff guilt over taking time off'.

All four focus groups recorded recommendations for improved ways of working in settings to provide more effective emotional support for staff in their settings. Members of Focus Group 1 recorded that managers should encourage staff to 'try a change of routine', and also work with staff to 'write policies and procedures which ensure emotional support is provided effectively'. Members of Focus Group 3 recorded the need for a statutory requirement setting out a percentage of 'non-contact time' for early years practitioners, which would be similar to the planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time allotted to school teachers. There was also a suggestion recorded by members of Focus Group 3 to 'reduce numbers of key children' allocated to key persons to lessen their workload. Members of Focus Group 4 also recorded a recommendation to 'set times for *not* doing paperwork', and to 'revise procedures to support staff wellbeing e.g. staggered settling-in periods'. Members of Focus Groups 2 and 4 recorded recommendations for improving professional supervision meetings:

members of Focus Group 2 recorded that 'counselling should be available' for staff; members of Focus Group 4 recorded a recommendation for all settings to 'make time and space for reflection', ensuring there are 'opportunities for talking about own emotion in supervision time'.

During the appraisal and debriefing discussion following the focus group activity, members of all four focus groups recorded that participation in discussions on supervision with other managers and leaders had been professionally beneficial for them. A member of Focus Group 1 explained that 'We [as leaders] realised just how much personalities matter when it comes to coping with feelings and the children'. A member of Focus Group 2 revealed that 'As a leader it gave me personally the opportunity to consider how my staff (.) and I know them (.) might feel and what support they need'. A member of Focus Group 3 asserted that 'This will impact on our practice as managers and there are positive outcomes from taking part'. A member of Focus Group 4 proposed that 'Yes it was very good and we should do it again about another topic to share what we know and help each other out to be better managers'. Furthermore, another member of Focus group 4 revealed a tension between being male and working with young children, while simultaneously expressing recognition of experiencing similar emotions in performance of his role as his female peers:

> I'm the sole male in early years in a school (.) I have the stress
> of feeling I'm not trusted nor accepted with the other adults in
> school (.) I liked to talk and identify with the experiences and
> emotions of these [setting managers and leaders of practice] and
> know I am the same about feelings

This subsection has provided examples which illustrate the clause: strategies for '…workforce development are needed'. Participants recommended the raising of

ECEC qualifications, pay and status; while also introducing a statutory requirement for PPA time, and statutory key person to child ratios, to reduce workloads. Furthermore, the findings suggest that managers and leaders in early years settings would professionally benefit from opportunities to meet together for discussions on supervision practices and strategies for supporting staff emotions.

4.6.2.3 Summary of Theme 6

There is a need to promote support strategies to improve staff wellbeing and build workforce resilience; education and training is required to build the workforce's capacity for providing empathetic care.

4.5.3 Summary of findings in response to Question 3

Question 3 asks: 'How effective are current models of supervision and professional reflection?'. In response, the findings suggest that the emotional climate of a setting is influenced by the attitudes, behaviours, and display rules of management; managers may be supportive, or conversely, contribute to staff experiences of stress and fatigue. Openness may be inhibited in supervision sessions by poor relationships with managers, and concerns about keeping records of conversations. Participants reported receiving support from colleagues, external sources, and engaging in self-support strategies. Recommendations were made for promoting staff support strategies and workforce development including: engaging in teambuilding; training in supporting children's personal, social and emotional development; meditation training; and coaching and mentoring. Participants also recommended for staff and management to

work together on policies and procedures to improve staff wellbeing, ensuring that emotional support for staff is included in professional supervision meetings. Furthermore, the participants suggested that managers and leaders in early years settings professionally benefit from opportunities to meet together for discussions on supervision practices, and strategies for supporting staff emotions. The recommendations support a view for ECEC workforce education and training providers to work in partnership with settings' management to build workforce resilience and develop staff capacity to enact moral emotion. Other recommendations included the introduction of a statutory requirement for PPA time, and a reduction in key person to child ratios to reduce workloads.

4.6 How the findings reflect the methodological conceptual framework

Characteristics of phenomenological research as outlined by Van Manen (2016, pp.9-13) include 'the study of lived experiences', and 'the explication of phenomena as they present themselves to consciousness'; these characteristics are adopted as subheadings to structure the exposition of how the findings reflect the conceptual framework.

4.6.1 The study of lived experiences

Comparison of the frequency of characteristics presented by the participants (see Table 7, p.116) reflects that there are both similarities and differences in how emotional labour is experienced by diverse individuals working in diverse professional situations within early years practice. Each practitioner presented their individual lifeworld;

however, the findings demonstrate that this does not mean that the lifeworld is a purely

individual circumstance (Husserl & Heidegger, 1927).

4.6.2 The explication of the phenomenon as it presented itself to consciousness

Lifeworld encompasses shared human experience, and as such, presents a pool

of inter-subjective consciousness (Husserl & Heidegger, 1927). The summarising

statements of the negotiated group perspectives recorded in the focus groups' mind

maps represents concepts constructed through passing language back and forth,

expanding and reflecting upon each other's thoughts, feelings and experiences (Belenky

et al., 1997). Furthermore, my interaction with the participants in the individual

interviews also encouraged the presentation of the phenomenon to consciousness; the

participants expanded and reflected upon their descriptions of lived experiences in

consideration of my questions.

4.7 Chapter conclusion

All decisions relating to the research design supported the aim of responding to

the main research question. The lifeworlds of a diverse sample of EYITT students engaged

in early years work in a wide range of settings were elicited through two phases of data

collection methods employing social interaction. Thematic analysis saw the emergence

of six themes which are aligned to the three subsidiary research questions: these themes

respond to the main research question when combined. Each stage of the data

collection and analysis processes, and the decisions made, are justified in terms of

achieving the research aims and conducting a trustworthy and ethical study. The

following chapter continues with discussion of the findings and their implications for research and ECEC practice.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Chapter introduction

This introduction begins by restating the research questions and demonstrating their relationship with the emerged themes. My main research question is: How is emotional labour experienced and supported in early years settings? This problem has been explored through three subsidiary questions, as presented in Table 9 below, with their complementary themes.

Subsidiary Questions	Themes
1. How do early years practitioners deploy and/or regulate their emotions in performance of their role?	Theme 1: Practitioners enact ethical care in the belief that they are improving lives.
	Theme 2: Practitioners have affection for the children in their care, with some staff displaying subversive behaviours.
	Theme 3: Practitioners regulate their emotions in workplace interactions to serve a moral commitment, and protect the self.
2. What are the consequences of their emotional labour?	Theme 4: Practitioners may experience both negative and positive consequences of their emotional labour.
3. How effective are current models of supervision and professional reflection?	Theme 5: Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour.
	Theme 6: Staff support and workforce development needs to be promoted.

Table 9. Subsidiary research questions and complementary themes.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and evaluate the findings from my study, and to consider the implications. The chapter is structured under the following section headings: 'Relationships and potential conflict between themes'; 'Responses to

the subsidiary questions'; 'Implications'; 'Limitations and reflexivity'; and 'Chapter conclusion'.

5.2 Relationships and potential conflict between themes

This section discusses the process of working across the themes, comparing themes to each other, to test coherence (Rubin & Rubin, 1995); consideration is given to relationships between themes, including endorsement or support for each other, and evaluation of potential conflict between themes.

5.2.1 Relationships and potential conflict between Themes 1, 2 and 3

The first three themes describe how emotional labour is lived and experienced, as reported through focus groups and individual interviews with a diverse group of study participants working in a wide range of ECEC settings. These themes have been grouped to respond to the first subsidiary question: How do early years practitioners deploy and/or regulate their emotions in performance of their role? I noted that comparison of the code labels within the themes could suggest conflict. That is, if morality is viewed through the lens of Kantian moral correctness one might question whether Theme 2 'subversion', apparent in the subordinate coding as staff engagement in 'rule bending' and 'fulfilling own attachment needs', accords with the Theme 1 and Theme 3 statements containing the terms 'ethical' and 'moral' respectively. An alternative perspective on morality is offered by *ethics of care theory* rooted in the moral psychology work of Gilligan (1982). Gilligan (1982), writing on feminist constructions within ethical dilemmas, expresses how morality for women is typically

situated and emotional: she defines morality as 'a network of connection, a web of relationships that is sustained by a process of communication' (Gilligan, 1982, p.29). Therefore, actions are seen as ethical in the sense of being relational. Care is ethical in terms that extend beyond providing protective supervision and care routines (Davis & Degotardi, 2015); the emotional work, carried out by compassionate professionals, is caring which is sensitive to the physical, psychological, cultural and spiritual needs of both the individual and their family (Vanlaere & Gastmans, 2011): care is ethical in terms of involving cognitive, emotional, and action strategies set within a moral relationship between individuals (Tronto, 1993). An ethic of care may be described in terms of the carer being committed, empathetic, intuitive, loving, relational and compassionate (Sevenhuijsen, 1998). The three following examples are considered in terms of whether the 'subversion' (Theme 2) reinforces the notion that the practitioners' enact 'ethical care' (Theme 1) and 'moral commitment' (Theme 3).

Example 1: Abigail

The first example supports a view that the requirement for the key person to have a close and responsive relationship with the children may be at odds with requirements to adhere to some workplace rules. In the following extract, Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) explains how close bonding with the children may make it difficult to follow some management-set rules:

> I think that boundaries can sometimes be crossed when [practitioners] are attached to the child (.) and I mean I have been in that situation myself with key children and because we have such a good bond (.) you might not want to put certain rules in place which becomes difficult... keeping them on your lap ermm and letting them have things... [fidgets with her clothing hem].

Abigail's 'rule bending' and 'fulfilling own attachment needs' are set within a moral relationship (Tronto, 1993); her caring could be described as relational and responsive, with her both 'caring about' and 'taking care of' the child (Tronto, 1993, p.165). On one hand, Abigail is expressing a depth of feeling that characterises practitioner-child attachments; and on the other hand, she is acknowledging the tension that is created from having this deep affection. Abigail appears to be uncomfortable with her admission of transgressing from the setting's rules, as evident in the way she pauses and 'fidgets with her clothing hem'. Abigail has to negotiate a fine line between when, or to what extent, to push ethical boundaries, demonstrating the intense moral demands of the caring situation. This example demonstrates how practitioners make use of attachment relationships in order to provide responsive care, while also being positioned within them. Paradoxically, the 'subversion' (Theme 2) demonstrated by Abigail reinforces the notion that her care is 'ethical' (Theme 1), and demonstrates a 'moral commitment' (Theme 3) to the child as opposed to rigid adherence to management-set rules.

Example 2: Eva

The second example is provided by Eva (employed in a private day nursery, working with under-2s. Eva reports that a colleague's own need for affection influences the amount of physical contact she has with her key child. Similarly, in her study with nursery workers Osgood (2012b) identifies unfulfilled emotional needs in some practitioners or perceived shortcomings in their own childhoods. Without having discussed the situation directly with Eva's colleague, there is no evidence to confirm this as the motivation for the colleague's behaviour. Eva's theory on the underlying motivation for her colleague's behaviour appears to contrast with Bowlby's (1969)

proposal that a caregiver's own attachment security should facilitate responsive caregiving, whereas insecurity would impede it. Eva advises how she has 'told the practitioner not to *give in* to [the child]', indicating her belief that the frequent demonstrations of physical affection are likely to have negative implications for the child. Page (2016, p.87) recognises that sometimes practitioners may be concerned that a child will become 'spoiled' if 'too much' attention is given to them; Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) and developments in neuroscience (Gerhardt, 2014; Graham, 2008) suggest the contrary. That is, optimal experiences of caregiver responsiveness within an attachment relationship (Bowlby, 1969) encode infants' neural systems for cognition and lifelong relating (Gerhardt, 2014; Graham, 2008). Close practitioner-child relationships are recorded by members of Focus Group 3 as being exemplified by 'outward expressions of love'; a standpoint reflected by Elfer *et al.* (2012, p.62) in their assertion that: 'babies and young children need holding, cuddling and lap time, all of which are the very essence of being in a relationship'. Klein (1952) theorises how babies' experience extremes of emotional states: an adult may not appreciate the intensity of a baby's anxiety as understood by Klein, seeing a baby crying as 'a baby being a baby' (Elfer, 2016, p.71); whereas an adult who is more attuned to the child's emotional state will provide the appropriate comfort and soothe the child to the return of feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. If one makes an assumption that Eva's own practice reflects her reservations about giving too frequent physical affection, then Eva could fail to respond to a child's need for physical comfort if she feels that the child had already had 'too much' cuddling (Page, 2016, p.87). Nevertheless, Eva's colleague's 'subversive' (Theme 2) responsiveness to the child by providing frequent physical demonstrations of her affection could be seen as enactment of 'ethical care' (Theme 1), and a demonstration of her 'moral commitment' (Theme 3) to the child.

Example 3: Gertrude

Gertrude's (self-employed childminder) 'subversive' behaviours are also set within a close attachment relationship. This example lends credence to the notion that the practitioner-child attachment relationship provides mutual benefits, even though these benefits may not be equal. For example, Noddings (1984, p.67) proposes that even though there is a 'generous inequality' acknowledged as existing between them, both the one-caring and the one cared-for benefit from their relationship. Gertrude explains how receiving verbal and physical expressions of affection from a child makes her 'feel just so warm and needed'. Like Abigail, Gertrude admits that her frequent demonstrations of physical affection contravene the setting's display rules, but nevertheless, they support the child's emotional wellbeing. Reinders (2010) acknowledges a tension between adhering to settings' rule requirements and acting upon situated practical knowledge of how to care for a child effectively. Gertrude expresses her concern for children's emotional development in her explanation of how 'you have to wean them off because they have to go to school where no one is going to touch them (.) no one is even going to give them a little hug'. Gertrude's empathetic declaration indicates self-reflection, and the capacity for self-regulation in support of her ethical care of the child. Gertrude explains that 'it gives [her] pleasure in being able to satisfy that child's emotional needs'. In comparison to the accounts of Abigail and Eva, Gertrude demonstrates use of the attachment relationship in a more deliberate and purposeful way as she prepares children for transition. Gertrude concerns herself with meeting the immediate emotional needs of the child by holding and cuddling, while simultaneously supporting the child's emotional development by nurturing independence and resilience in response to meeting their future needs. Gertrude's

account demonstrates that staff engagement in 'subversion' as described by Theme 2, can accord with the Theme 1 and Theme 3 statements containing the terms 'ethical' and 'moral' respectively.

Morality is subjective, and the subjective nature of ethical care intensifies the moral demands experienced by practitioners. Examples provided by Abigail, Eva and Gertrude demonstrate how workplaces set ethical boundaries to reflect the values and principles they wish to promote. In the UK, issues around child protection have dominated, with close adult-child relationships coming under extreme levels of scrutiny (Page, 2017). A discourse of child protection has added to the complexity of practitioners' close relationships with children (Elfer *et al.*, 2012), supporting a more traditional rule-based ethics in early years settings. However, care ethics (Gilligan, 1982) support a care pedagogy which challenges formal boundaries of practice; underpinning ethical practice that values an understanding of the child gained through responsiveness and attentiveness within a close attachment relationship. Experiencing ethics as subjective makes practitioners feel more under pressure morally. There is an expectation for early years practitioners to acknowledge the uniqueness of each child and respond accordingly (DfE, 2017). On one hand, practitioners are being set ethical boundaries reflecting workplace values and principles which they feel morally obliged to adhere to; while on the other hand, they feel morally committed to care ethically, in terms of responsively, for the children even if it contravenes workplace rule-based ethics. The examples provided by Abigail, Eva and Gertrude support an argument for workforce education and training to provide opportunities for developing 'a *professional* disposition to care' (Taggart & Elsey, 2013, p.1), with professional training addressing 'an explicit *Attachment Pedagogy* which informs and structures

practitioners' behaviours with children in terms of a Modern Attachment Theory' (Page, 2016, p.88). My literature review revealed a deficit of published debate and guidance for educators and trainers of the ECEC workforce on developing professional programmes to explore conceptualisations of care, and to apply theory and research pertinent to providing empathetic care; lending weight to my argument for a need to author a briefing paper for workforce educators and trainers as an output of my research.

5.2.2 Relationship between Theme 5 and Theme 6

Theme 5 and Theme 6 have been grouped in response to the third subsidiary question: How effective are current models of supervision and professional reflection? Theme 5 reports that 'Management behaviours may have positive or negative influences on emotional labour', while Theme 6 reports that 'Staff support and workforce development strategies need to be promoted'. There is a causal relationship between the two themes: the variation in emotional climates in different early years workplaces supports a recommendation for promoting more consistent staff support strategies and workforce development. Zinsser *et al.* (2016), in a small-scale US study with twelve current and former early childhood centre managers, reported that a model emerged of the way in which managers 'socialise' the emotional climate of their early years settings. The socialising processes reported by Zinsser *et al.* (2016) include the provision of professional development training and an emotionally sensitive approach to staff evaluation and supervision. Although limited in terms of generalising, this model concurs with Byrd (2012) that a nurturing management style helps to establish a

positive emotional climate for improved staff retention and team stability. The identification of a causal relationship between the emotional climate of a setting and models of supervision endorses the analytical decision to group Theme 5 and Theme 6. The aggregated response to the third subsidiary question describes inconsistency in the emotional climates of early years workplaces in terms of their staff support and professional development opportunities, and recommends the promotion of more consistence in strategies across settings. The grouped responses from analysis of the empirical data reflect the deficit of published debate and guidance for ECEC workforce educators and trainers to support them in developing professional programmes to consider: the requirement and purpose for supervision; the place of professional reflection in supervision meetings; and a range of models of supervision informed by an understanding of the professional needs and employability of the ECEC workforce. Thereby, supporting my argument for the need to author a briefing paper for workforce educators and trainers as an output of my research.

5.3 Responses to the subsidiary questions

5.3.1 Deploying and regulating emotions in ECEC

A unanimous view expressed in my empirical study proposes that building attachments between practitioners and children is key to supporting the children's development and wellbeing. This position accords with literature contending that early years practitioner-child bonding supports children's holistic development (see David *et al.,* 2003; Elfer & Selleck, 1999; Elfer *et al.,* 2012). Furthermore, ethical care is articulated in connection with practitioners' perceptions of having a duty to bond with

the child in order to meet their holistic needs. For example, Fiona (room leader in a private Montessori nursery) asserts that 'because of that healthy attachment you are able to work with them and extend their learning'. This view is in agreement with insights from Dunkel and Weihrich (2013, p.108) who highlight how emotions are not just the 'objects' but also 'the means of emotional labour'; they explain that 'working with feeling' is a necessity to gain insight into the emotional state of others, or empathy, in order to produce the required outcomes. Further support is provided from literature relating to how practitioners' moral emotions of compassion, empathy, kindness, patience, affection, love, support, collaboration and care are enacted through an emotional connection with the children, and deployed in the interests of providing protection and better outcomes for the child (see Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2016; Elfer *et al.*, 2003; Held, 2006; Moyles, 2001; Osgood, 2004; Taggart, 2016). However, such close relationships are not always natural or easy; they require effort on the part of the key person. For example, Mary (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) observes that 'there are always going to be some children you are more attached to but you just have to be professional'. Fiona (room leader in a private Montessori nursery) also expresses that if 'you don't have that *natural bond* with them so [you] just have to spend more time with them to create that'. These extracts reflect a flexible and individualised approach to key person practice, and support the notion that emotional labour through an ethic of care is integral to ECEC professionalism (Taggart, 2014).

My study participants' unanimous view that challenges presented by their emotional labour have a moral worthiness concurs with literature (see Colley, 2006; Vincent & Braun, 2013). Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) described her emotional labour as supporting better outcomes for children and their

families and also 'helping the nation to thrive'; while Gertrude (self-employed childminder) perceives her role as 'going to make us a better society (.) we can help those who have not had a great opportunity'; these examples convey a sense of having a personal stake in the economic future of the country and rebalancing societal inequalities. These perceptions reflect how care has become a hegemonic discourse to meet societal needs for labour and equality; promoting a discursive construct of 'care' as a safe environment for children while their parents work, and 'attachment' as the root of social equality. However, literature draws our attention to the emotional capital accrued by the practitioners: 'the occupational demands of nursery work amount to more than the mere execution of a set of preordained competencies' (Osgood, 2012b, p.113); and these 'struggled-for skills' should not only be viewed in terms of value for the children, their families, the setting, and wider community (Andrew, 2015a).

My participants unanimously described having feelings of affection for the children in their care. For example, Wendy (supernumerary owner/manager of private preschool) discloses: '…I say 'I love you too' (.) because I genuinely do'; while members of Focus Group 1 recorded having feelings of 'deep affection' that are 'distinctive and separate from intimate love' and 'different from parental love'. Some participants displayed caution about openly using the term 'love' in a professional context. For example, Lisa (placement in a baby room at a Children's Centre) explains that 'using the word *love* is loaded'. This display of caution is in accordance with previous published research (Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2016; Page, 2015). In the UK, the term 'love' is bound to a child protection discourse (Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2016). Love is not easily defined or discussed, however, not talking about love implies that the topic is somehow taboo. Therefore, it is important to theorise the terms 'love' and 'care'

(Page, 2011).   Orla (employed at a charity-run preschool) asserts: 'I want not call it 'Professional Love' (.) it's about care and it's about duty'.   Orla's phraseology suggests familiarity with the work of Page (2011, p.312) who theorises the related constructs of love, intimacy and care; proposing a concept of 'Professional Love'.   Orla suggests a dichotomy between love and care; this position contrasting with the view of Page *et al.* (2015): Page *et al.* (2015) contend that love and care 'cannot be compartmentalised' and 'it can be difficult to distinguish these concepts from one another within professional early years practices' (p.14).   This discord supports Taggart and Elsey's (2013) argument for professional development to provide opportunities for articulating and exploring 'the emotional vocabulary surrounding a *professional* disposition to care, based on developments in attachment theory' (p.1); while Cousins (2015, p.128) argues that 'initial training should include content about the importance of loving children and showing them that they are loved'.

In research conducted by Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2015) the concepts of love, compassion, affection, and care are grouped, and convey 'a more restricted form of love - a safer option' (p.320); reflecting constraints on the emotional aspects of early years practice in the UK.   All the participants in my study present themselves as being emotionally bound to the children in their care; aspiring to support the children's development, protect them, and meet their individual emotional needs.   Use of a range of terms, including 'attunement', 'commitment', 'compassion', 'empathy', 'patience' and 'responsibility', were used to describe deployment of emotion in the ethical care of the children.   Furthermore, all eighteen individually interviewed participants reported being attuned to the children and having empathy with them; reflecting emotions bound with good early years practice (see Elfer *et al.*, 2012; Moyles, 2001; Osgood, 2004;

Page, 2011; Taggart, 2011). Restraint is apparent in the reluctance of some of my participants' in describing their emotions as 'love'. For example, Tegan (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) stresses how her affection is restrained and purposeful: 'it's just that little bit of a love thing that I feel to have a bond'. In a Western individualist culture child-rearing is the private responsibility of the main social unit, the family, rather than the tribe or the community. Similarly, displays of affection for children may be felt to be the private domain of relatives. However, Small (2002, p.220) identifies that the care of young children is increasingly being handed over to paid non-relatives; explaining that:

> These professional caretakers, who we know are clearly not paid enough, are functioning as community members; if they stay at their jobs for years, they become familiars, like relatives.

A tension in caring for non-relative children after having been raised with cultural beliefs around affection being 'private' between relatives is demonstrated by Nicole (manager of two preschools based in independent schools) when she asserts: 'whatever I express for them I do in front of the parents and the parents have no objection'. Nicole is expressing a need to gain the parents' 'permission to love them' (Page, 2011, p.319).

The work of Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2015) demonstrates how 'unconditional love' is important to child-centred early years practice in Hungary. However, it is acknowledged by Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2015) that translation proves problematic due to contextual and cultural differences. Rhonda (SENCo at a charity-run preschool) describes her feelings for the children as 'love', and qualifies her love as being 'unconditional'; the use of these same terms by Rhonda, also Eastern European and having worked with children in Poland, may provide some insight into the influence of

culture on how affection and care are expressed. The notion of 'unconditional love' reflects an idealistic attitude associated with a classic Romantic perspective of love such as that endorsed and perpetuated by Western individualistic societies (Karandashev, 2015). Use of the word 'unconditional' suggests a lack of boundaries, although, Rhonda makes it clear that her expressions of love for the children are contained within *professional* boundaries: 'I can't take it to a personal level (.) I have to stay professional'. Orla (employed at a charity-run preschool) describes her ethnic identity as British Indian, and draws upon a classic Romantic perspective of love to justify why her feelings for the children 'cannot be love (.) because love cannot be restrained it cannot have boundaries put upon it'. Levels of individualism and collectivism are influenced by situational context (Karandashev, 2015): nevertheless, Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2016) agree that there is cultural variation between emotions felt by ECEC practitioners, how they are felt, and how they are enacted. Hence, acknowledgement of cultural influence is significant when planning professional development content for the ECEC workforce; lending weight to an argument for investigations into the influence of culture on concepts of care to be included in education and training in preparation for entry into the sector.

There may be blurred boundaries between many forms of professional caring and the practitioners' experiences of personal caring, such as looking after sick or elderly relatives. However, caring in early years practice has the potential to involve the attachment needs of practitioners more directly because of the direct relationship with parenting. Furthermore, practitioners may perceive an expectation for them to have maternal feelings for the children. Close to half of the female individually interviewed participants, eight of the eighteen, likened their work in ECEC to being a

mother. However, a mother's emotional work is informal, private and unpaid unlike the emotional labour of the key person. Historically 'women have been the mothers' (Ruddick, 1990, p.44). However, Ruddick (1990) does not restrict 'mothering' to a biological mother or to women. This view is echoed by Uwin (2015) who also argues that despite women being exclusively designed biologically for childbirth, 'mothering' is not a purely feminine practice, nor is it exclusive to the woman who has given birth to the child. Mothering is defined as the act of taking on responsibility for consistently caring for a child (Ruddick, 1990). Uwin (2015, p. 18) also argues that 'the recognition of nurture as implicit in mothering is significant'. A distinction is made between mothering and maternal work: 'maternal practice' is defined as responding to the child's 'universal demands' for protection, nurture and socialisation (Ruddick, 1990, p.57). Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) describes the role of key person as characterised by 'maternal' care; while Danielle (employed deputy manager for a charity-run preschool) describes the key person and key child relationship as being 'like your own children but not born to you… like a second mother'. These participants' likening of the emotional labour of the key person role to maternal work reflects both a requirement for reason and an intense emotional connection (Ruddick, 1990). Characterisation of the emotional attachment of a key person as a mother-child relationship, first proposes that the early years practitioner demonstrates mother-like behaviours, that is, she 'takes care of' (Tronto, 1993, p.165) the child like a mother would care for her own child; and secondly, it also suggests expectations for the practitioner to be 'caring about' (Tronto, 1993, p.165) the child as a mother would. It could be argued that the participants may be using the notion of motherly love as a *gold standard* in order to express their depth of feeling; reflecting, although controversially, the maxim claiming that there is no greater love than that of a

mother for her child. Nevertheless, a 'mother substitute' model (Osgood, 2012b, p.11) encourages denigration of early years roles by supporting the unhelpful notion that 'there can be no need for training, nor indeed for any of the paraphernalia of professionalism' in working with young children' (Miller, 1996, p.101).

Perceptions of early years work as being low-skilled and requiring lower qualifications was apparent in some of the participants' contributions. Katie (large chain day nursery placement, under-2s) asserts a need for raising public perceptions of early years work beyond the working class and feminised image expressed to her: 'somebody said to me that when girls come out of college they decide on early care or hairdressing'. This perceived low status may also be echoed within the workforce itself, as illustrated by Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s), who explains that 'some of them [early years staff] are just doing it because they believe they can't do anything else'. Furthermore, Lisa (placement in a baby room at a Children's Centre) suggests a reticence in graduate staff to tell other staff of their qualification level: 'I wouldn't make it explicit completely… I do sometimes get a little bit embarrassed'. This reticence is particularly pronounced where practitioners are more highly qualified than their seniors, and also when feeling a need to induce a sense of comaraderie when working alongside other less qualified room staff: these behaviours signal a need for concepts of professionalism to be addressed in professional development education and training programmes. Furthermore, I argue that perceptions of professionalism and status of the ECEC workforce may be enhanced by drawing parallels between early years professional practice and the work in other caring professions, particularly the graduate professions of nursing and social work.

During the focus group debriefing, a member of Focus Group 4 shared a brief insight into how emotional labour is experienced by him as a male practitioner:

> I'm the sole male in early years in a school (.) I have the stress of feeling I'm not trusted not accepted with the other adults in school…and know I am the same about feelings

This example indicates a tension between being male and working with young children, while simultaneously expressing recognition of experiencing similar emotions in performance of his role as his female peers. This finding is inconsistent with a view that men are unlikely to have the *natural* propensity of women who work with children (Miller, 1996). This single example of a male practitioner's experiences of emotional labour does not enable us to determine whether this is characteristic of male experiences of the phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, there is a dearth of literature exploring emotional labour in early years work, and furthermore, there were no specific studies relating to male experiences of the phenomenon unearthed during the literature review to compare my finding with. This position suggests that engagement in research with numerically subordinate male practitioners may benefit the sector as a whole: promoting employment for males in early years weakens a gendered image of ECEC as 'women's work' (Barkham, 2008), thereby raising perceptions of status and challenging a view of early years work not as requiring the 'paraphernalia of professionalism' (Miller, 1996). Furthermore, the development of effective workforce education and training is informed by understanding the professional needs and employability of the workforce as a whole.

My study describes how managed emotions are incorporated into the early years practitioner's professional performance: all the individually interviewed participants reported that they act to some extent in performance of their ECEC role. Furthermore,

members of Focus Group 1 recorded 'not being able to express own feelings during work time' as 'feelings are picked up by the children so [practitioners] have to show [the children] the *right* emotions'. This view echoes the responses of the participants in Osgood's (2012b, p.113) study in three inner London nurseries in England, where the staff spoke of having to 'manage a caring self and emotionality 'in the right way'': this finding concurs with the proposal that care work requires highly sophisticated and skilful management of emotional capital in order to produce agentic emotional labour (Bolton, 2001). Orla (employed at a charity-run preschool) describes how she smiles without feeling happiness beneath her smile to meet the requirements of her role with the children:

> …if you are asked to be plastic or unnatural all the time then it
> is going to reflect on (.) you would never know when the person
> is actually feeling (.) is that person genuinely listening to the
> child or not listening to the child?

Orla also emphasises the need for practitioners to deploy their emotion in order to be responsive to children. The masking of non-agentic felt emotion, while simultaneously deploying moral emotion, amounts to continually maintaining this dualism in creative tension. A comment recorded by members of Focus Group 3 posits 'relentlessly working with fake or real emotions' as an ECEC role requirement. The use of the term 'relentlessly' acknowledges that the emotional labour is purposeful, and that practitioners are unwavering in performance of their duty to care for the children. The choice of this term also connotes the intensity of the emotional demands experienced by practitioners working in ECEC; this portrayal of ECEC concurs with Page and Elfer's (2013) assertion that long periods of emotionally close interactions with very young children place high emotional demands on staff. My study findings reveal that emotions may be manifested as the exaggeration of felt emotions in support of the

children's learning and development. Masking or exaggerating felt emotion fits with Hochschild's (2003, p.33) description of 'surface acting', where *real* emotions are consciously suppressed or altered. It is inevitable that Hochschild's (2003) resulting 'emotive dissonance' will occur in some social interactions whether they are experienced in work or private life. However, my study participants do not report negative outcomes from the discrepancy between the felt and displayed emotion. There are differences in the underlying motivations for regulating outward displays of emotion between the participants in my study and Hochschild's (2003) cabin crew: skilled early years practitioners with longer term relationships with the children and their families demonstrate deeper commitment to moral goals. It could be argued that the uncomfortable dissonance experienced by Hochschild's (2003) participants is a product of surface acting from within a subservient position; whereas, caring professionals labour from a position of strength, influence and agency, and experience surface acting as a moral technique for helping those who are more vulnerable. The early years practitioner is voluntarily suspending their spontaneous self-expression in the interests of the other: the practitioner enacts a moral commitment to the children when they continue caring even though they do not feel like it. This proposal is in agreement with the work of Brotheridge and Lee (2003): instead of being the undesirable product of emotion management mechanisms, dissonance is a driving force behind practitioners' agentic self-regulation that produces emotional displays 'in the right way' (Osgood, 2012b, p.113).

There is some evidence in my findings of practitioners emotionally preparing in advance for interactions with adults within the setting: Julia (employed in a nursery at a Children's Centre), who previously pursued an acting career, explained how she

regulates and deploys her emotions in terms of surface acting and deep acting. In concurrence with Hochschild (2003), Julia draws upon Konstantin Stanislavski's concept of *method acting* to differentiate between the two mechanisms. Julia describes the deep acting mechanism she employs with parents and other staff in the setting by explaining that 'to make them believe you need to believe (.) and there is a different way to behaving according to the audience' and 'I believe so much in what I'm doing (.) so I transfer into real feelings'. Julia differentiates between how she manages her emotions with adults and children: 'the children are different audience to the staff so I am acting in a different way'. Julia describes surface acting with the children as exaggeration of her felt emotion. Danielle (employed deputy manager for a charity-run preschool) proposes a more subtle mechanism for inducing her professional self: 'I don't psych myself up… because of course we go in to set up everything just before we open the door you get into 'work you''.

My study finds that practitioners may conceal anxieties associated with their private life when entering the workplace; five of the ten participants specifically spoke of *leaving them at the door*. This practice is normally associated with Weberian ideas, where emotion is deemed likely to get in the way of sound judgement in the workplace (Grandey, 2000). However, a more subtle interpretation would be that use of this expression reflects the practitioner's need to adopt a professional persona on entry to the workplace in order to be able to sensitively and responsively care for the children. Osgood (2004, p.19) writes that women bring their experiences as 'caring mothers' to early years work. Uwin (2015) also observed how mother practitioners blend their personal experiences of caring for their own children with professional knowledge and understanding. Therefore, on one hand these practitioners are striving to demarcate

their private life from their work life, and on the other hand, they are simultaneously drawing upon their private life experiences to inform their caring practice. This position concurs with Osgood's (2012b) observation that ECEC workers draw upon subjective private life experiences to influence their practice, whilst simultaneously striving to demarcate their private life from work life. Maintaining this duality in creative tension heightens the emotional demands on the practitioner. This argument supports a case for concepts of care, theory and evidence-based strategies to be investigated in ECEC education and training, in order to develop practitioners' capacity to care (Taggart, 2015).

Surface acting during interactions with children's families is described by thirteen of the eighteen individually interviewed participants: two participants demonstrate concealment of feelings to preserve positive practitioner-parent relationships, while three participants speak of managing their outward display of emotions to mitigate concerns families may have about the care of their children. Eva (employed in a private day nursery, working with under-2s) discloses: 'I mean I always put a mask on when I meet parents because I'm in charge of their children and I don't want them to have any worries'. Similarly, this notion of 'mask-wearing' is evident when Fiona (room leader in a private Montessori nursery) explains: 'with parents I'm not myself (.) I put on a whole different acting kind of persona'. In accordance with the Classical origins of the term 'persona', Fiona presents her professional self as a professional performance. Furthermore, Danielle (employed deputy manager for a charity-run preschool) describes supporting parents through scripted 'expressions of empathy' (Hochschild, 2003):

> I knew that the parent needed support and I was here doing stuff
> for the child and that but I also had to give this level of support
> to the parent and it was sort of hard to sit there and listen to the
> parent (.) but you can't you just have to go 'Well okay I'm here
> if you need to talk' (.) stuff like that and I think it's always very
> hard

Rhonda (SENCo at a charity-run preschool) describes her empathetic interactions with the parents of children with special educational needs:

> …you just sometimes says the things that the parents want to
> hear because you don't want to hurt the parents' feelings
> (.) empathy (.) you are understanding how they might be
> feeling and you're responding to that (.) in the same way that
> you respond to the children

Rhonda demonstrates how she sensitively cares for the parent alongside the care she provides for the child. Brooker (2010) cites Hohman's (2007) concept of 'The Triangle of Care' to describe practice where the key person is responsive and attentive to both the parent and the child: the practitioner enacts patient listening to promote the development of 'a respectful reciprocity' (Brooker, 2010, p.182). In consonance, Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2015, p.326) write of nurturing 'a love triangle between [practitioners], the parent, and the child'. However, the familiarity nurtured through these relationships places the onus upon the practitioner to continually remember to maintain the professional distance. Parents may view themselves as the 'professionals' in the care of their child, and see a practitioner's professional qualifications as having little value (Brooker, 2010). Brooker (2010) identifies differentials of power within practitioner-parent relationships, and how these can affect roles, agency and identity. Furthermore, there is a risk of either party adopting defences to manage difficult feelings of 'not knowing' what would be 'best' for a child (Elfer, 2016, p.71). Elfer (2016) reflects on Freud's psychoanalytical conceptualisation of a continued struggle

between love and hate, with an associated unconscious anxiety of either side of this binary gaining a stronger position:

> It is helpful for early years professionals to be aware of how ordinary helpful defences (this is being neither overly 'thick skinned' / insensitive, nor too 'thin skinned' / overly sensitive) may change into 'defensiveness' or defensive behaviour (p.70)

Fiona (room leader in a private Montessori nursery) explains how she feels 'a need to impress [the parents] in some way' through her own knowledge or the child's achievements in the setting. In contrast, she discloses not wanting to 'deal with' any negative issues with parents. There is a strong argument for practitioner-parent partnerships to be explored and reflected upon in professional development and training; practitioners need to develop the skills to form nurturing, and mutually beneficial partnerships with children's families (Andrew, 2015b; Brooker, 2010).

In summary, this subsection has considered how early years professionals skilfully manage outward displays of emotion in performance of their intensely emotional roles, deploying moral emotion in their interactions with children and adults. My literature review revealed a dearth of published debate or research on how emotion is deployed and regulated in early years settings. Furthermore, there is no current guidance for educators and trainers of the ECEC workforce on developing professional programmes to: explore concepts of love, care and intimacy in early years practice; examine the influence of culture on caring for children; and consider emotional labour as a demonstration of professionalism in care work. Consideration of these deficits supports my argument for authoring educator guidance on the inclusion of learning in concepts of care and professionalism in workforce professional training and education.

5.3.2 Consequences of emotional labour in ECEC

Positive consequences of care workers' emotional labour is a little researched or reported area. My study participants unanimously expressed enjoyment in working with children. Similarly, in reporting findings from her UK study with a group of trainee nursery nurses, Colley (2006) writes how in the early days of work placement her participants displayed real pleasure in working with children. Colley (2006) also reported feelings of fatigue and exhaustion in her participants from their long days of caring for children; similar experiences were presented by members of all my focus groups, and twelve individually interviewed participants. These findings also concur with Page and Elfer's (2013) acknowledgement that caring for young children is emotionally exhausting. Furthermore, Imogen (employed in a Reception class in a primary school) explains that '…it's more a joy than a burden…and that's why I want to work in early years'; this sentiment echoes Lynch and Walsh's (2009, p.38) claim that early years work 'is often seen as hard work; it can be pleasurable and burdensome even at the same time'. Enjoyment of working in ECEC is linked to feelings of pride in children's specific achievements and their overall development, which may lead to positive perceptions of practitioners' own wellbeing. Bonnie (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) describes her feelings using the terms 'happy', 'joyful', and 'proud', when able to 'see the effects' of her labour. This position aligns with Seligman's (2012) work attributing wellbeing to experiencing positive emotion and relationships, and identifies the importance of private and work life satisfaction, positive self-image, experiencing a sense of meaning, achievement in individual pursuits, and perceptions of control over bringing about positive outcomes.

Additional positive consequences were reported by my participants. For example, nine of the individually interviewed participants reported raised self-awareness as a consequence of their emotional labour. Grant and Kinman (2013) indicate that self-awareness is an attribute associated with resilient individuals working in the caring professionals. Katie (large chain day nursery placement, working with under-2s) also links self-awareness with 'maintaining your personal emotional health'. Furthermore, working closely with children was reported as a positive distraction from negative thoughts relating to the private life by nine of the eighteen individual interviewees. For example, Mary (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) describes how 'you take yourself away from the situation' by immersing yourself in thinking about the children. Close working with children induces a positive mood and provides respite from private life anxieties for these practitioners: this finding concurs with Midlarsky's (1991) proposal that giver wellbeing is enhanced by experiencing a distraction from their own problems.

The complexity of relationships between early years practitioners, the child, and the child's parents, means that staff must balance their emotional involvement and responsiveness to the children and their families, with the maintenance of professional distance and boundaries (Miller & Cable, 2012). In all eighteen individual interviews the participants shared experiences of feeling anxious over a child's difficult circumstances and feeling powerless to respond to the causes. Findings from Hopkins' (1988, p.106) study with practitioners caring for disadvantaged infants in nurseries in London in England, revealed that increased affection for the infants heightened staff anxiety over inadequate parenting. Hopkins (1988) writes of two young practitioners spending sleepless nights of anxiety over the wellbeing of 'their' babies; while Andrew

(2015b) reports participants being reduced to tears and even dreaming about children's difficult situations. Similarly, five of my participants disclosed taking feelings of anxiety into their private life. Elfer *et al.* (2003, p.27) describe the complexity of balancing professional intimacy with professional distance in performance of the key person role:

> Maintaining an appropriate professional intimacy, which every child needs in order to feel special, while keeping an appropriate professional distance, requires emotional work of the highest calibre.

Colley (2006) also reports that her trainee nursery nurse participants mostly accepted that their ECEC role required that they could, and should, be warm and positive towards all the children all of the time, without getting too attached to individuals. Close emotional relationships, although providing positive support for the child's wellbeing, may subject practitioners to the risk of introjection and experiencing the children's negative feelings. Ten of the eighteen individually interviewed participants in my study shared experiences of anxiety while working with a child displaying challenging behaviours. Elfer (2016, p.73) acknowledges that early years practitioners ''receive' much raw distress and misery'. Furthermore, work by Elfer (2013) explores the complementary themes of transference (redirection of feelings to a new individual) and projection ('pushing' painful feelings onto another), and how transference and projection may be deepened amongst early years practitioners through the key person system. Andrew (2015b) advocates an empathetic approach to protecting the self, placing emphasis on seeking understanding of what the child needs and trialling different approaches and activities to help the child to be 'productive and happy' (p.358). This approach is demonstrated by Fiona (room leader in a private Montessori setting) when she explains: 'we tried so many different methods with him and strategies

(.) if anyone named the strategy we would literally try'. Furthermore, Mary (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) made a 'special resource' for a child with a difficult home life to shift her focus from her own feelings to thinking about how to support the child. This situation concurs with a view presented by Page *et al.* (2015) that the ability to 'de-centre' (p.14) supports positive outcomes for the child while simultaneously helping to protect the self as presented by:

> …practitioners [who] are able to 'de-centre' and to see the world from the view of 'the other' then they are less likely to become 'too attached' because they will be thinking about and responding to the needs of 'the other' as opposed to thinking only about their own needs (p.14).

In summary, this subsection has considered how the close practitioner-child relationships presented in my study have complex and interconnected consequences for the practitioner and the children. Previously under-researched positive consequences of emotional labour in the caring professions have been reported. Early years practitioners are presented as also experiencing some negative consequences as a result of their emotional involvement with the children and their families. The literature review presents a paucity of published debate and guidance for ECEC workforce educators and trainers to develop professional programmes to consider theories underpinning emotion in early years professional close interactions; lending further support to my argument for authoring educator guidance as an output of my research.

5.3.3 Supervision and professional reflection in ECEC

Elfer (2012, p.140) asserts that: 'critical reflection on practice cannot be a panacea for structural weaknesses'. Furthermore, Elfer (2016, p.74) highlights the

importance of management support for practitioners 'through well worked out policies' in addition to providing 'thoughtful supervisory support'. The role of management in ECEC settings is important in nurturing a positive emotional climate (Zinsser *et al.*, 2016): in consonance, Byrd (2012) examines the emotional climate in early years settings and highlights how a nurturing management style contributes to a more positive emotional climate, improving staff retention and team stability. Abigail (private day nursery placement, working with under-2s) describes, by way of contrast, the impact of a negative emotional climate:

> ...I try several times when the room leader wasn't there because she is very strict and everyone (.) I said to them 'Why don't we do this?...they were like 'How do you think we can do this?' ...this is a 50 year old women and a 22 year old women (.) they just feel really anxious and spend their weekends looking for jobs

Abigail's account describes mature trained staff made powerless to make professional decisions by the rigid enforcement of the management's own decisions on when and how the play environment is to be used. The extract demonstrates negative consequences for staff, including diminished self-efficacy and lowering of commitment to the profession (Sumsion, 2003). However, there is variation in managers' approaches, as demonstrated by the following extract from the interview with Eva (employed in a private day nursery, working with under-2s):

> ...my manager always says if there is anything on your mind the door is always open to talk about things (.) so she is supportive my new manager definitely ermm (.) but in my old place my boss would say whatever is happening outside you need to leave it at the door

Eva's account illustrates a divide between two opposing managerial attitudes to the place of emotion in the workplace. On one hand managers may present a repressive orientation towards emotion in the workplace reflecting Weberian ideas of workers'

personal emotion getting in the way of efficiency (Grandey, 2000). On the other hand managers may present a more facilitative orientation by seeking to understand and assimilate practitioners' personal emotion into practice, and helping them to become more empathic towards the children. Consequently, there is variation between the focus and content of supervision meetings. All eighteen individually interviewed participants in my study reported that meetings between individual members of staff and managers, termed 'Professional Supervision', were conducted in their settings. However, variation in focus is demonstrated in the following accounts: Katie (large chain day nursery placement, working with under-2s) describes supervision as 'meetings about the targets that I need to achieve'; Julia (employed in a nursery at a Children's Centre) explains that her supervisor 'will offer me strategies'; while Hermione (deputy manager of a preschool in an independent infant school) describes her supervision meetings as being 'about other staff and the children and me and my feelings'. The variance in these examples may also reflect the status of the participants in the setting and the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee in each case. For example, Hermione confides that 'my manager and I are quite close (.) there are often times we have meetings that we're in there for far too long because we are going off topic'. However, further explanation for the variance in focus and content of supervision meetings is provided by Elfer's (2012) identification of confusion amongst managers about the purposes of supervision itself. Furthermore, some of my participants' suggested they perceived a need to regulate their emotion with management in supervision meetings in order to be seen as competent and *professional*; demonstrating that a discourse of professionalism can become a disciplinary mechanism affirming 'appropriate' work identities and conducts (Fournier, 2001). Members of Focus Group 3 also raised concerns over managers keeping records of their supervision

conversations; indicating confusion on the part of the supervisee over the purpose of the professional discussion, and fundamentally, the purpose of professional supervision.

My study demonstrates that there may be tensions relating to supervisory relationships. Elfer (2012, p.136) observes how 'professional roles and personal relationships easily became intertwined' in early years settings; this situation is demonstrated by Hermione (deputy manager of preschool in independent infant school) who reports that she is managed by someone she is 'close' to. Furthermore, Heller and Gilkerston (2009) consider difficulties in fractured supervisory relationships and in combining the roles of reflective supervisor and administrative supervisor. This tension is demonstrated by Eva, (employed in a private day nursery, working with under-2s):

> …me and my manager didn't really have a very good relationship ermm I felt she was quite unapproachable (.) so even when I did say things it was difficult to even just say it let alone saying like it's making me unhappy

Imogen (employed in a Reception class in a primary school) reported tensions over the waiver of the supervision duty as may occur in schools, explaining that 'a lot of the EYFS rules or regulations are bent' and 'overruled by all the systems that are in place for the rest of the school'. This example agrees with the writing of Noble and MacFarlane (2005) who acknowledge that ECEC staff in primary schools may experience pressure for a more formal approach to the early years; reflecting a narrowing of concepts where 'education' is synonymous with 'learning', and where ''care' is subordinate or even 'inferior' to learning' (Van Laere *et al.*, 2012, p.535). This denigration of care is also reflected in differences between the kinds of professional status associated with care and education in England. This may be demonstrated by statutory planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time allotted to

school teachers, when there is no similar statutory requirement for 'non-contact time' in early years settings. Members of Focus Group 3 recorded a call for parity through the setting out of statutory requirements for PPA time for the early years workforce. Tensions for early years professionals working in schools may also arise from a reduced likelihood of head teachers having a strong background in early years philosophy or pedagogy; this deficit will also limit the senior managers' ability to provide effective mentoring to early years staff working in schools (Noble & MacFarlane, 2005). A lack of senior managers' confidence and skills in staff development is not only a problem in schools; a concern over managers not possessing the required skills to support professional reflection is also demonstrated in the findings from research in nurseries (see Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Page & Elfer, 2013), and signals a need for professional development training in supervision practices.

Regardless of whether or not professional reflection is encouraged within the setting, seven of my eighteen individually interviewed participants described their experiences of the process of reflection as predominantly individualistic, and as a personal exercise, in consonance with the writing of Reynolds and Vince (2004). Furthermore, my empirical study reflects Finlay's (2008b) observation that even within dialogical contexts, such as supervision sessions, the onus is principally placed upon the practitioner to reflect upon and evaluate their own practice, although a mutual, reciprocal, and shared process may be more fruitful. Appraisal and debriefing discussions following my focus group activity provided an opportunity for members of all four focus groups to reflect upon the value of participating in the group discussions on supervision practices and strategies for supporting staff emotions. Professional and personal benefits of the group discussions were described by members of all four focus

groups. For example, a member of Focus Group 3 described how 'This will impact on our practice as managers and there are positive outcomes from taking part'. This approach is supported by the notion that reflection is bound to 'the relational aspects of how understandings of practice are constructed through discussion of, and observation of, others in practice' (Campbell Barr *et al.*, 2016, p.9). Furthermore, Elfer and Dearnley (2007) describe group reflection as a form of *containment* which can also be used between adults to support the emotional wellbeing of early years staff.   In this context the process is more than just providing a sympathetic ear; it is concerned with enabling practitioners to talk and reflect on anxiety-provoking circumstances with a trusted other who listens and encourages reframing with a focus on positive action. However, Elfer (2012, p.139) acknowledges difficulties surrounding group reflection:

> In a political and social policy climate where priority is given to measurable outcomes and immediate efficiencies achieved through sharp competition, it appears very difficult to foster collaboration or openness about difficulties faced or failures experienced.

To promote practitioners' openness and receptiveness during group reflection, the group dynamics and manager's support must be acknowledged as key features of influence on the group professional reflection (Soni, 2013). Tegan (private day nursery placement, working with 3-5s) discloses having perceptions of a power struggle with her colleagues; she tells of 'practitioners who cuddle mine to make me feel jealous'. Group dynamics and manager's support are critical considerations if practitioners, such as Tegan, are themselves to feel *contained* within group reflection (Elfer, 2016). Furthermore, this extract demonstrates the assumption that the key person system intends relationships between key persons and their key children to be exclusive (Albon & Rosen, 2014); lending weight to an argument that misconceptions such as this should

be addressed in workforce preparation training to nurture trainees' capacity to care (Taggart, 2015).

In summary, this subsection has considered how my study findings present inconsistency in how early years management 'socialise' (Zinsser *et al.*, 2016) the emotional climate of their setting, implement supervision practices, and provide emotional support for staff. These findings reflect the paucity of published debate and guidance for ECEC workforce educators and trainers to develop professional programmes to consider the following: the requirement and purpose for supervision; the place of professional reflection in supervision meetings; and a range of models of supervision informed by an understanding of the professional needs and employability of the early years workforce. Furthermore the findings support my argument for authoring a briefing paper for workforce educators and trainers as an output of my research to address this deficit.

5.4 Limitations and reflexivity

This section provides critical appraisal and interpretation of characteristics of my research design and methodology that may be seen to have impacted or influenced interpretation of the study findings.

5.4.1 The 'quiet' male voice

This subsection considers the comparatively low numbers of males participating in my study. A sample of twenty participants was selected to engage in the focus group

activity from the twenty-nine consenting volunteers; the sample being composed of eighteen females and two males. However, in the second phase of my research all eighteen individually interviewed participants were female. The high ratio of female to male practitioners selected as participants in my study reflects the numerically dominant position of women in early years education (EOC, 2006): males comprise only 2% of the workforce in UK group day-care settings for children aged 0-5 years (Nutbrown, 2011). Nevertheless, the seemingly *quiet* voice of the already under-represented male practitioners may be seen as a limitation. The sampling strategy has already been discussed at length and justified within the 'Methodology' chapter of this thesis. Additionally, it is noteworthy that males represented 10% of the sample participating in the focus group activities; thereby, male voices provide a significant contribution to the first phase of my research notwithstanding their absence in the second phase. Proportionally, there is greater representation of male practitioners in my research study than males working in the early years sector.

5.4.2 Learning within EYITT

This subsection considers potential influences of selecting participants enrolled on EYITT programmes with cognate teaching and learning relating to supervision in early years professional practice. A teaching session slideshow titled 'Leading teams through the supervision process in the early years' is included as Appendix xiii. (p.270). Furthermore, tutors model supervision practice in their academic and pastoral care of the students enrolled on the participating university's EYITT programme. The EYITT programme at the participating university provides opportunities to share practice experiences, learn about legislative and theoretical underpinning, and build conceptual

frames of good practice in professional supervision within early years. Furthermore, examples from the individual interviews demonstrate how enrolment in the EYITT programme has promoted deeper insight into the topic than may be typical across the sector. For example, Fiona (room leader in a private Montessori nursery) describes her learning within the EYITT programme: 'I think I've got more of an understanding of what supervision is because before I thought it was a general chat'. Furthermore, Eva (employed in a private day nursery, working with under-2s) explicitly referred to her learning from an EYITT teaching session when she asks:

> Was it [tutor's name] who was leading a session about having
> supervision? (.) was about not with your boss because it's then
> easier to talk about things

This example reflects the content of Slide 5 in the 'Leading teams through the supervision process in the early years' teaching session slideshow (Appendix xiii., p.270); this slide directs students to discuss the following questions with their peers: 'Who might be the most appropriate person/people within your organisation to conduct supervision for practitioners?', and, 'Could there be a conflict of interest if this person also has managerial responsibilities?'

Selection of participants enrolled on an EYITT programme is justified as it afforded access to the lived experiences of a variety of individuals working in diverse professional situations within early years practice. Furthermore, enrolment on the EYITT programme suggests that these individuals have the potential for future employment as early years leaders and managers, if they are not already employed in these positions. Therefore, selection of these EYITT students as the participants facilitated understanding emotional labour and the role of supervision in early years

settings from the perspectives of individuals who were, or would be, the policymakers in settings and owners of organisational approaches to professional supervision.

5.4.3 Authentic reflection

My adherence to authentic reflection and reflexivity is analysed and evaluated in this subsection. Van Manen's (2016) characteristics of phenomenological research advocate openness, reflection and reflectivity; where emotion and sensation are of concern as opposed to pure intellectuality. Openness is demonstrated through reflection on my coming to know, and makes my preconceptions about the phenomenon transparent. Heidegger's concept of *authentic reflection* is defined as a knowing and transparency of the researcher's personal assumptions about a phenomenon (Heidegger, 1927/1998); an awareness and self-consciousness of how the researcher's personal beliefs and experiences are integrated into the research. Essentially, the explication of the phenomenon is characterised by the intimately interconnected frames of reference between the researcher and the participants (Finlay, 2013).

There are a number of commonalities between myself and the participants whom I interviewed; common features include gender, engagement in academic study, and shared experiences of working in the ECEC sector. These commonalities induced a sense of 'insideness' (Albon & Rosen, 2014) and equality. The resulting intimacy encouraged openness and honesty in the descriptions of the participants' feelings, experiences and practice in their settings. Furthermore, their honesty deepened the *phenomenological attitude*, whereby I experienced feelings of curiosity and openness to their telling of the phenomenon as experienced by them (Finlay, 2011). I felt a deep

connection with the participants; empathising with these highly qualified female early years practitioners. I accept that we all have different frames of reference: I could never know exactly how the participants felt as our culture, background, gender and past, inescapably influence the way we experience the world (Heidegger in Husserl & Heidegger, 1927). Nevertheless, this empathy with them was a dynamic cognitive and affective process of 'connected knowing' relating to the phenomenon (Belenky *et al.*, 1997, p.121).

I have reflected on how my personal assumptions about the phenomenon may have been apparent in my word choices, phrasing of questions, silences, facial expression and body language during the data analysis process. I searched for implicit meanings within the posing of the questions in addition to meanings within the responses. I considered whether it would have made any difference to the outcome if I had used different vocabulary, changed the emphasis on particular words, or the manner in which they were delivered. For example, by asking if participants felt that being a key person has any detriments or drawbacks, I may have inadvertently conveyed an assumption from personal experiences that the role does have some negative consequences associated with it. Furthermore, I am aware that periods of my sustained silence during portions of individual interviews encouraged sustained narration of experiences by the participants which I felt demonstrated the phenomenon well. Furthermore, my silence also facilitated some straying from direct relevance to my research questions: my management of interviews, in order to refocus participants' contributions, resulted in some closed questions being posed in quick succession and with a more formal delivery. Reflection on implicit meanings in the posing of some questions makes reflexivity transparent. On reflection upon the following example, I

acknowledge that my tone and phraseology may be interpreted as contributing to the *Ofsted Ready* response received: the manager's replies may reflect her perception of a) what is necessary for statutory compliance, and b) my assumptions of *good* ECEC management in relation to supervision as an early years professional:

> *Researcher*: And are there regular supervision sessions?
> *Wendy*: Every 6 to 8 weeks
> *Researcher*: Do you initiate these or does the member of staff?
> *Wendy*: Well I have to initiate them because that is a requirement

Demonstration of self-awareness and honesty relating to my personal assumptions about the management of professional supervision demonstrates enactment of Heidegger's concept of authentic reflection (Heidegger, 1927/1998). Engagement in authentic reflection conveys an acceptance that it is inevitable for the researcher's personal beliefs to impact upon the research process despite the taking of any actions to mitigate influence. Furthermore, in phenomenological research the researcher's own experiences contribute to the integration of multiple frames of reference to develop holistic understanding of a phenomenon (Finlay, 2013). Therefore, in seeking holistic interpretation of meaning, all the participants' experiences are integrated into the findings, including my own experiences to at least some extent.

5.5 Implications

5.5.1 Research

This subsection sets out how my study responds to the dearth of debate and research on emotional labour and supervision in ECEC professional practice; my

research explores and reinforces current thinking and provides new insights into the hugely under-researched emotional experiences of early years practitioners and staff support. This 'Discussion' chapter has presented previously unpublished insights into emotional labour and supervision practices as experienced within a wide range of early years settings; these contributions to knowledge are drawn together, and their significance interpreted, in the 'Conclusion' chapter of this thesis under the heading titled 'Contributions to knowledge and practice', and subheading: 'New knowledge on emotional labour and supervision'.

My study responds to the paucity of debate and research on emotional labour and supervision in ECEC professional practice by reporting detailed methodology in support of greater use of phenomenological research to explore emotional labour and management practices in ECEC; while my findings also simultaneously raise thought-provoking issues for future research and debate. During the course of conducting my empirical study new questions emerged which were not considered initially; research into these critical issues is beyond the scope of this study, however, they serve as recommendations for future research. These new research questions are presented in the section titled 'Future research' in the 'Conclusion' chapter of this thesis.

5.5.2 Practice

This subsection sets out how my study findings are of direct practical relevance to ECEC workforce educators and trainers; demonstrating that my study has the potential to improve ECEC workforce wellbeing and retention, with the subsequent positive impact on outcomes for children and their families. The paucity of published

work or guidance relating to the emotional labour and supervision as experienced in early years settings is reflected in the inconsistencies of workplace display rules (Hochschild, 2003) and supervision practices, as indicated by my study findings. Grant and Kinman (2013) have produced a briefing paper with evidence-based strategies to help educators of other caring professionals to develop curricula to foster emotional resilience in students, as preparation for working in their emotionally demanding care sector. There is no similar published resource for workforce educators for the similarly emotionally demanding ECEC sector. Publications on supervision systems, which are aimed at early childhood leaders, are available for use in the workplace (Heller & Gilkerston, 2009; Sturt & Wonnacott, 2016). However, there is no single guidance aimed at ECEC workforce educators and trainers to support with developing curricula to prepare students for working in early years practice and engaging in supported professional reflection. My thesis supports an argument for developing workforce educator guidance to encourage inclusion of exploration of concepts of caring to foster responsiveness, emotional regulation and resilience in pre-entry and continuing professional development training: in response to this argument I have authored a briefing document for ECEC workforce educators and trainers which reflects the findings of my empirical study and review of literature, as a research output; the curriculum content and pedagogical approach proposed by this briefing document is discussed further in the 'Conclusion' chapter of this thesis under the heading titled 'Contributions to knowledge and practice', and subheading: 'The Emotion Curriculum for the Early Years Workforce'.

5.6 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the research questions have been responded to through discussion of the findings of the empirical study and literature review. Readers' understandings of the phenomena have been moved forward by discussion of my study findings in relation to their congruence or dissimilarity to published and unpublished literature. Potential limitations of the empirical study, relationships between analytical themes, and potential conflicts between themes, have been evaluated and justified. Furthermore, the impact of my influence as the researcher has been acknowledged, and the chapter has discussed how at least to some extent my professional experiences have been integrated into the holistic interpretation of meaning. Furthermore, implications of my study in relation to research and practice have been considered; new knowledge and potential positive impact on practice is further discussed in the next chapter of this thesis under the heading titled 'Contributions to knowledge and practice'.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter refers back to previous chapters to evaluate how far the purpose of my study has been achieved: the chapter draws together and interprets the significance of new insights and understandings arising from the research. This chapter also points forward to frame recommendations for research and practice. In the first section, I restate my research aims and identify gaps in published knowledge and practice guidance. The subsequent two subsections present the construction of new knowledge and the direct practical relevance of new insights. Recommendations are proposed for future research which is beyond the scope of the current study. Finally, I bring the thesis to a close with my reflections on professionalism in ECEC, and the personal and professional impact of conducting the empirical research.

6.2 How the study aims and objectives support construction of new knowledge

My study was initiated by reflecting on the high emotional demands of working with young children who may experience distress and difficult situations. This reflection led to the following aims: to deepen my understanding of how emotional labour is experienced in ECEC; to examine how emotional labour might have positive consequences for practitioners in addition to the positives experienced by the children;

to explore how the actions of staff and management might mitigate negative consequences. From the outset of my study I considered the potential implications of my research and formulated three objectives for impact:

1. Contribute to an under-researched area, providing detailed research methodology so that other researchers can replicate the study in other contexts.

2. Raise awareness of how emotional labour is experienced by early years practitioners, and how supervision is enacted in early years provision; highlighting connections between the key persons role, emotional labour, the supervision duty, and support in developing emotional resilience.

3. Develop a briefing paper for educators and trainers of the ECEC workforce to support in the development of curricula to: a) foster professional caring dispositions; b) promote emotional resilience; and c) develop competencies to support the organisation, delivery and monitoring of professional supervision in early years settings.

In response to the research aims and objectives, I formulated research questions, reviewed literature relating to emotional labour and supervision, and conducted a small scale empirical study. The review of literature revealed a paucity of published work on emotional labour and supervision in ECEC: little has been written on how emotional labour is experienced in early years settings and the impact of emotional labour on early years practitioners. My literature review also demonstrated how little guidance is available on supervision practices in ECEC compared to the greater volume produced for other caring professions. Furthermore, there is an absence of published guidance for ECEC workforce educators and trainers to develop curricula responsive to the

emotional demands of early years practice. In short, my research aims have supported the identification of gaps in literature relating to emotional labour and supervision in ECEC, while simultaneously making a contribution to research and practice. My research has supported reinforcement of existing knowledge on emotional labour and supervision in ECEC, while also leading to new insights into how emotional labour and supervision are experienced in ECEC. Furthermore, the planned research output, a briefing document for workforce educators and trainers to support curricula development for the ECEC workforce, has a strong potential to positively impact early years practice, and the wellbeing of practitioners and the children. The next section further considers these contributions to research and practice.

6.3 Contributions to knowledge and practice

Congruence with the existing work of others makes a contribution by reinforcing current thinking, while dissimilarities and the identification of gaps in the literature have the potential to extend knowledge. This section identifies contributions to knowledge by both corroborating current knowledge, and presenting new insights into emotional labour and supervision in ECEC. Furthermore, it explicates the direct practical relevance of these understandings.

6.3.1 New knowledge on emotional labour and supervision

Contributions to knowledge are presented in this subsection under the following subheadings: Tensions around attachment relationships; Perceptions of early years work;

Duality in emotion regulation; Balancing the consequences of emotional labour; Differing levels of emotional support; Subsection summary.

6.3.1.1 Tensions around attachment relationships

My study findings describe early years practitioners' deliberate deployment and regulation of emotions as a flexible and individualised approach to key person practice. Support is lent to published knowledge on how early years practitioner-child bonding promotes children's holistic development (see David *et al.,* 2003; Elfer & Selleck, 1999; Elfer *et al.,* 2012). Practitioners' perceptions of having a duty to bond with the children in order to meet their holistic needs are aligned with, and reinforce, current thinking that enactment of the moral emotions of compassion, empathy, kindness, patience, affection, love, support, collaboration and care are bound with good early years practice (see Elfer *et al.*, 2012; Moyles, 2001; Osgood, 2004; Page, 2011; Taggart, 2011). My findings support the notion that practitioners enact moral emotion through an emotional connection with the children in the interests of providing protection and better outcomes (see Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2016; Elfer *et al.*, 2003; Held, 2006; Moyles, 2001; Osgood, 2004; Taggart, 2016). My study also extends current thinking by providing new insights into how such close relationships are not always natural or easy and may require *effort* on the part of the key person. Moreover, my findings have highlighted that the requirement for the key person to have a close relationship with the children, and the expectation for early years practitioners to acknowledge the uniqueness of each child and respond accordingly (DfE, 2017), may be at odds with requirements to adhere to some workplace rules. On one hand, practitioners are being set ethical boundaries reflecting workplace values and principles

which they feel morally obliged to adhere to; while on the other hand, they feel morally committed to care responsively for the children even if it contravenes workplace rule-based ethics. I propose that a parallel may be drawn with the 'responsible subversion' reported as characteristic of emotional labour in nursing (Hutchinson, 1990). Furthermore, my study demonstrates that practitioners make use of attachment relationships in order to provide responsive care, while also being positioned within them; their own needs for affection may influence the amount of physical contact a key person has with her key child. Hence, early years practitioners are required to negotiate a fine line between when, or to what extent, to push ethical boundaries, demonstrating the intense moral demands of the caring situation: my study finds that experiencing ethics as subjective may make practitioners feel morally more under pressure.

The practitioners in my study presented themselves as having feelings of affection for the children in their care, while displaying caution about openly using the term 'love' in a professional context; this position aligns with previous published knowledge (Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2016; Page, 2015) reflecting how in the UK the term 'love' is bound to a child protection discourse. My study also provides new insights into how characterisation of the key person's emotional attachment as a mother-child relationship, first proposes that the early years practitioner demonstrates mother-like behaviours, and secondly suggests expectations for the practitioner to have feelings for the child as a mother would. My study highlights how caring in early years practice has the potential to involve the attachment needs of practitioners more directly than other forms of professional care work because of the direct relationship with parenting, inducing perceptions of an expectation for early years practitioners to have maternal feelings for the children. Additionally, my study finds tension in practitioners' care for

non-relative children after having been raised with cultural beliefs around affection being 'private' between relatives. This finding reinforces a claim by Campbell-Barr *et al.* (2016) that there is cultural variation between emotions felt by ECEC practitioners, how they are felt, and how they are enacted. Hence, acknowledgement of cultural influence is significant when planning professional development content for the ECEC workforce; lending weight to an argument for investigations into concepts of care and the influence of culture to be included in education and training programmes in preparation for entry into the early years sector and in continuing professional development.

6.3.1.2 Duality in emotion regulation

My study describes how managed emotions are incorporated into the early years practitioner's professional performance; these findings reinforce current thinking that care work requires highly sophisticated and skilful management of emotional capital in order to produce agentic emotional labour (Bolton, 2001; Osgood, 2012b). Additionally, my findings present new insights into how practitioners manage their emotions in order to be responsive to children. Early years practitioners mask their non-agentic felt emotion while simultaneously exaggerating other felt emotion in support of the children's learning and development, amounting to continually maintaining a dualism in creative tension. This insight lends support to the drawing of a parallel between emotion management in early years practice and the characterisation of nurses as 'emotional jugglers' (Bolton, 2001). I argue that the uncomfortable 'emotive dissonance' experienced by Hochschild's (2003) low-skilled customer service workers is a product of surface acting from within a subservient position; whereas, early

years workers labour from a position of strength, influence and agency, and experience surface acting as a moral technique for helping those who are more vulnerable. The early years practitioner voluntarily suspends their spontaneous self-expression in the interests of the other. A parallel may be drawn with the repression of negative emotion in nursing to enable the sensitive care of patients as reported in published research (Bolton, 2001; de Castro, 2004; Smith & Gray, 2000). Furthermore, in contrast to how emotive dissonance is experienced in Hochschild's (2003) study, negative feelings are the drivers of the self-regulation required for ethical care in early years practice; this interpretation reinforces Brotheridge and Lee's (2003) claim that instead of being the undesirable product of emotion management mechanisms, emotive dissonance is a driving force behind presenting the desired emotions.

Practitioners in my study employ surface acting during interactions with children's families, concealing feelings to preserve positive practitioner-parent relationships: the practitioner sensitively and attentively cares for the parent alongside their care of the child. Reporting this practice accords with, and reinforces published concepts of the need for 'a love triangle' (Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2015) or 'The Triangle of Care' (Hohman, 2007) between the practitioner, parent, and child. In concurrence with literature, this finding highlights that practitioners need to develop the skills to form nurturing and mutually beneficial partnerships with children's families (Andrew, 2015b; Brooker, 2010), while maintaining a professional distance and boundaries (Miller & Cable, 2012). Additionally, my study draws attention to how the familiarity nurtured through these relationships places the onus upon the practitioner to continually remember to maintain the professional distance; acknowledgement of the demands placed on the practitioner to hold familiarity and professional distance in creative

tension supports an argument for emotional labour within practitioner-parent partnerships to be explored in education and training programmes in preparation for entry to the sector and in continuing professional development.

6.3.1.3 Perceptions of early years work

My study findings reinforce published knowledge that early years practitioners view their emotional labour as having a moral worthiness (see Colley, 2006; Vincent & Braun, 2013), while society perceives ECEC work as being of low status and low-skilled (Andrew, 2015; Miller, 1996; Osgood, 2012b). These perceptions reflect how care has become a hegemonic discourse to meet societal needs for labour and equality; promoting a discursive construct of 'care' as a safe environment for children while their parents work, and 'attachment' as the root of social equality. My study provides new insights into a tension relating to perceptions of the status of early years work: on one hand low societal perceptions are echoed within the workforce itself, while on the other hand practitioner's perceive their emotional labour to have far-reaching societal benefits.

Little research has explored the emotional labour of men (see Hochschild, 2003). My findings present an insight into how a male early years practitioner experiences similar emotions in performance of their role as their female colleagues. This finding is inconsistent with a view that men are unlikely to have the *natural* propensity of women for work with children (Miller, 1996). It is acknowledged that this single example of a male practitioner's experiences of emotional labour does not enable determination of whether this is a general characteristic of male experiences of

the phenomenon. Hence, I call for more research into the emotional experiences of both women and men working in early years settings to further knowledge on emotional labour, and to inform the development of education and training to meet the needs of the whole workforce. Furthermore, promoting employment and retention of males in early years roles acts to weaken the gendered image of ECEC as 'women's work' (Barkham, 2008); challenging a view of early years work as not requiring the 'paraphernalia of professionalism' (Miller, 1996); and promoting raised perceptions of the status of ECEC work. Furthermore, I contend that the status of early years work may be raised by drawing parallels between early years professional practice and work in other caring professions, particularly the graduate professions of nursing and social work.

6.3.1.4 Balancing the consequences of emotional labour

In addition to how emotional labour in ECEC is a hugely under-explored area in comparison with emotional experiences in other care contexts, positive consequences of care workers' emotional labour is little researched or reported compared to negative impacts. My study finds that working closely with children acts as a positive distraction from negative thoughts relating to the private life; this finding concurs with Midlarsky's (1991) proposal that giver wellbeing is enhanced by experiencing a distraction from own problems. However, Midlarsky's claim is not specific to care work and relates to benevolence as a wider concept. This insight into how close working with children induces a positive mood and provides respite from private life anxieties for early years practitioners reinforces the theorising of Page *et al.* (2015, p.14) on how the ability to 'de-centre' helps to protect the self. My study findings also

reinforce existing knowledge that practitioners express enjoyment in working with children, while also contending that the care of young children is emotionally exhausting (Colley, 2006; Lynch & Walsh, 2009; Page & Elfer, 2013). Furthermore, my study finds positive perceptions of raised self-awareness and self-efficacy as consequences of practitioners' emotional labour; this finding supporting claims in literature for the building of embodied capital (Andrew, 2015a; Bourdieu, 1986; Osgood, 2012b). My study also reinforces existing published knowledge by reporting that close bonding and affection for the children intensifies early years practitioners' anxiety and feelings of powerless to respond to causes of children's distress and difficult circumstances (Andrew, 2015b; Elfer, 2013, 2016; Hopkins, 1988). I contend that my research also provides new insights into how close practitioner-child relationships have complex and interconnected consequences for the practitioner and the children: my findings present inter-related tensions between positive and negative consequences of emotional labour in ECEC. For example, the benefit of the enjoyment of working with children and having pride in the children's achievements, which support high self-efficacy and self-esteem, have to be balanced against anxiety and lowered self-efficacy when dealing with children's difficult circumstances. Furthermore, immersion in their work with the children may provide beneficial distractions from private life stresses for practitioners. However, this benefit also has to be balanced against the fatigue caused by maintaining long periods of attentiveness, and anxiety arising from concerns and feelings of powerlessness over children's negative situations, both of which may be carried over into the private life. These new insights support a case for concepts of care, theory and evidence-based strategies to be investigated in ECEC education and training, in order to develop practitioners' capacity to care (Taggart, 2015).

6.3.1.5 Differing levels of emotional support

My research finds inconsistency in how early years management 'socialise' (Zinsser *et al.*, 2016) the emotional climates of early years settings, implement supervision practices, and provide emotional support for staff. My study presents new insights into supervision meetings between individual members of early years staff and managers, finding that there is variation in managers' approaches. Some managers may present a repressive orientation towards practitioners' felt emotion in the workplace, while others may have a more facilitative orientation by seeking to understand and assimilate practitioners' personal emotion into practice, helping them to become more empathic towards the children. The variation between the focus and content of supervision meetings was explained by Tickell (2011) and Elfer (2012) as not all members of early years staff being aware of the purpose of supervision; this observation which was made prior to raising the status of supervision for the early years workforce to a legal requirement (DfE, 2014) may still be the case. My findings present practitioners as perceiving a need to regulate their emotion with management in order to be seen as competent and *professional*, and having concerns over managers keeping records of their supervision conversations; these insights could suggest a lack of understanding relating to the purpose of supervision, while also corroborating Fournier's (2001) published work on how a discourse of professionalism can become a disciplinary mechanism affirming 'appropriate' work identities and conducts. Nevertheless, these findings also reflect the paucity of published debate and guidance for ECEC workforce educators and trainers to develop professional programmes to consider the requirement and purpose for supervision, the place of professional

reflection in supervision meetings, and a range of models of supervision informed by an understanding of the professional needs and employability of the early years workforce.

6.3.1.6 Subsection summary

In agreement with current published knowledge relating to emotional labour in ECEC, the practitioners in my study present themselves as deploying and regulating their emotions in enactment of ethical responsive care of the children. Congruence with the existing work of others (for example: Goouch & Powell, 2012; Osgood, 2012b; Page & Elfer, 2013; Taggart, 2011) demonstrates a contribution to current knowledge through reinforcing current thinking on emotion in early years work. Additionally, my thesis identifies gaps in the existing literature and provides new insights into the phenomena to extend current thinking. My findings inform understanding of the emotional demands of caring for babies and young children in a wide range of ECEC settings; practitioners in my study present themselves as enacting responsive care through deployment of emotion aligned to workplace rules, and also through subversion; interconnected positive and negative consequences of emotional labour in early years work are reported alongside differing levels of emotional support provided by the workplace emotional climate and supervision practices. Furthermore, discussion of comparable experiences in other care sectors to those present in ECEC practice also has value beyond extending the published knowledge on emotional labour and supervision; these insights also inform on the relevance and value of theory and guidance constructed in other care contexts to ECEC research and practice. The new knowledge constructed by this research has been made available to feed into developing

and reshaping professional and education training in preparation for work in the ECEC sector and continuing professional development as discussed in the next subsection.

6.3.2 The Emotion Curriculum for the Early Years Workforce

My study has given voice to participant recommendations for implementing professional development training in nurturing attachments and supporting children's emotional, social and behavioural development; these recommendations concur with the argument for professional development opportunities articulating and exploring 'the emotional vocabulary surrounding a *professional* disposition to care, based on developments in attachment theory' (Taggart & Elsey, 2013, p.1). Taggart (2015, p.382) positions emotional labour in ECEC as 'a simultaneous site of practitioner stress and political resistance'; commenting on the ambiguity of a hegemonic discourse of 'schoolification' while the EYTS standards (NCTL, 2013) are calling for practitioners to 'understand attachment theory' and 'communicate effectively' to provide opportunities for enactment of the moral emotions of love, care and attunement to children's needs. A narrowing of concepts where 'education' is synonymous with 'learning', and where ''care' is subordinate or even 'inferior' to learning' (Van Laere *et al.*, 2012, p.535) fails to acknowledge the relationship between children's personal, social and emotional development, and their learning; ECEC training programmes may reflect this way of thinking by concepts of care not being investigated as preparation for working in the sector. Workforce educators need to deliver a curriculum which specifically explores concepts of care and emotional labour in the ECEC context from the outset. Therefore, I propose three questions influenced by Campbell-Barr (2017) to frame the development of emotion curriculum guidance for workforce educators:

1. What do we know about caring and emotional labour in ECEC?

2. What do we want practitioners to know?

3. How will practitioners come to know?

This first question has been responded to through literature review and empirical phenomenological research. The second question supports a proposal for the development of a curriculum to foster responsiveness, emotional regulation and resilience in early years students during their training, to prepare them for the challenges of practice with babies and young children. Findings from my study support the premise that practitioners need to know, understand and be able to apply theory and research pertinent to empathetic care and emotional labour in ECEC; Modern Attachment Theory (see Page, 2016) and aspects of psychoanalytical theory (see Elfer, 2016) underpin emotion in professional close interactions in early years and, therefore, they should be explored in professional programmes. There is a need for learning in supporting children's personal, social and emotional development, and exploration of the relationship with children's learning. Practitioners may need support in developing their ability to attune to children's needs, while training in mindfulness would support attunement and own stress management (see Jennings, 2015; Taggart, 2015; Tremmel, l993). Introduction to the Pedagogy in Care and Wellbeing model (McMullen *et al.,* 2016) would support development of caring practices with children, and care of staff wellbeing. Furthermore, exploration of psychoanalytic infant observation (Tavistock Observation Method) would support the sensitising of practitioners to learn about the children's emotions and also their own emotion processes as evoked during observing the children (Elfer, 2016, 2017). Acknowledgement of cultural influence is significant when planning professional development content for the ECEC workforce, therefore,

there is a need for including investigations into practitioner-parent relationships and the influence of culture on concepts of care (Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2015).

It is important for practitioners to be familiar with the requirements, strategies and best practices in supervision and professional reflection to dispel any confusion over purpose. Professional development in the form of participation in group reflection sessions, such as through supported and structured debates (Goouch & Powell, 2012) and the Work Discussion Groups framework (Elfer, 2016; Elfer & Dearnley, 2007) would benefit practitioners. This learning links to the response to the third question: my study findings support a pedagogical approach to workforce education and training where group discussion is the primary mode of delivery. There is a need for an emphasis on reflection and reflexivity, with the sharing of experiences (see Bolton, 2010). Furthermore, the pedagogical approach should encourage practitioners to question their assumptions about commonly used terms in early years practice, and explore whether there are shared understandings of critical concepts. For example, practitioners need to be encouraged to question: What do we mean by *Reflective Practice*? Practitioners need to ask questions such as: What does *emotional wellbeing* look like in both children and adults? Practice improvements result from acknowledging uncertainty; encouraging practitioners to be critically reflexive in the classroom supports positive change in the workplace. Colley (2006, p. 21) writes that learning *how to feel* is currently part of a hidden curriculum within early years workforce training and education.

> Alongside this prescribed curriculum, and the unwritten curriculum of emotional bonding, a further 'hidden' curriculum emerged as students talked about what they had learned as they participated in their work placements. Their narratives centered on coping with the emotional demands of the job, and revealed a vocational culture of detachment in the workplace which

contrasts somewhat with the nurturing ideal that is officially promoted.

An output of this research is a guidance document which draws from the literature review, and responds to the voices of the participants in my study; a briefing paper for ECEC workforce educators has been produced to support the development of an overt emotion curriculum. This guidance has been titled: The Emotion Curriculum for the Early Years Workforce (Appendix xiv., p.273).

6.4 Future research

During the course of conducting the empirical study I identified four new questions for future empirical research:

1. Do early years practitioners experience similar emotional labour to that experienced by workers in other caring professions?

2. Do male ECEC practitioners experience similar emotional labour to their female colleagues?

3. How are existing programmes reshaping early childhood degrees to include a focus upon emotional labour and care?

4. What are the sector views on a) introducing statutory PPA time for key persons in line with entitlement in teaching, and b) implementing a statutory key person to key child ratio within the existing statutory adult to child ratios?

Research into these critical issues is beyond the scope of this study: research into the first three problems requires additional participant recruitment from other care sectors, male practitioners, and workforce educators and trainers. Furthermore, the fourth

problem lends itself to investigation through a much larger scale research project in order to elicit the opinions of all sector stakeholders.

6.5 Final reflection

Emotional labour and supervision in ECEC has been hugely under-researched in comparison to similar experiences in other caring professions. Furthermore, the wealth of guidance relating to professional reflection and supervision produced for other caring professionals is in stark contrast to the dearth of guidance for ECEC practitioners. This position may be seen as part of an argument centred on professionalism, and the status of early years work (see Moyles, 2001; Osgood, 2012a, 2012b): the structuring and regulation of the early year worker's emotional life may be seen as part of a class-based argument, where socialisation into becoming an early years practitioner for many women is about channelling one's energies into becoming 'respectable' and achieving class mobility (see Colley, 2006; Osgood, 2012b; Skeggs, 1997; Vincent & Braun, 2013). Whilst the cultivation of a professional persona in all fields of professional work involves the separation between private feeling and public display (Hochschild, 2003), this process requires more of an *effort* for early years workers as the key person role is characterised by the forming of long term personal relationships with the child's family (Elfer *et al.*, 2012). Unlike in many other professions, such as in the *traditional* profession of medicine, the *client* in early years practice is on first name terms with the *professional* indicating informality and parity within the relationship. Historically, a characteristic of a profession was for the clientele to recognise the authority and integrity of the profession (Kelly, 2015). However, childcare is generally accepted by the public as something that anyone can do, and framed as *natural* instincts (Barkham,

2008; Miller, 1996). Furthermore, socialisation into some traditional professions may make it easier for professionals to separate their personal and work lives: training in the traditional professions is more than acquiring knowledge; it is also about adapting to the established professional identity the work requires and which clients expect. However, training for early years practice does not offer an established professional identity in the same way. Entrants into the ECEC sector are required to learn how to *be* through *doing* in the workplace: trainees learn in the workplace which feelings are the appropriate emotions to express, and when and how to express them (Colley, 2006).

Phenomenological research (Husserl & Heidegger, 1927) seeks to describe a world which is experienced, and as such, a world that is lived. *Lifeworld* status is described as being both personal and inter-subjective, and as such, constructed of individual and shared experiences. Thereby, the experience of each practitioner was interpreted individually but not seen purely as an individual circumstance; the shared experiences of the participants enabled deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the capture and description of the participant's lifeworlds was conducted by an individual with shared lived experiences of the phenomenon. Finlay (2011) describes researcher *bracketing*, as proposed in phenomenological studies, as an act of openness and connection. By striving for connectivity with the participants, and inducing a state of sensitive receptivity to both the individual and the description of their experiences, I rendered myself vulnerable to mirroring the emotion experienced by the other. I exerted a sustained conscious effort to remain receptive to nuanced contributions and behaviours, heightening my personal identification with the emotions and experiences of the participants. I acknowledged during the design process how a phenomenological methodology promotes the development of consciousness and

introspection on the part of the participants and the researcher. Ethical concerns relating to the data collection had been rightly focused on care of the participants and included participant debriefing. However, I had not fully appreciated the inevitability of a redirecting of emotion on to the self, or how the retelling of the participants' experiences might rekindle emotions linked to my own earlier experiences. I reflected on the power of the psychoanalytical process of counter-transference, and the potential emotional impact of a deeply reflexive methodology on the practitioner researcher; sharing these reflections with my thesis supervisors served as a personal debriefing. During some interviews I found myself so deeply identifying with either the participant's retelling of upset or joy that I *felt* their emotion. My connections were deepened by the participants' openness and generosity in sharing their lived experiences. I feel highly privileged to be able to present such rich description while also feeling a deep sense of responsibility to do justice to the rich data collected. Inclusion of lengthy swathes of quotation allows the voices of the early years practitioners be heard as they were delivered, making visible their individual and shared lived experiences. It is invisibility that is troubling as it is visibility leads to improvement (Goouch & Powell, 2017): it is the disclosed lifeworlds of practitioners which are reflected in the specialist emotion curriculum to support positive consequences for early years practitioners and the children. In ECEC *professional* practice 'we don't leave our emotions at the nursery door' (Eva, employed in a private day nursery, working with under-2s), therefore, workforce professional training and continuing professional development must reflect this position.

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APPENDICES

Appendix i. Real life scenario used with the focus groups

When asked "Have you all had a good week?", one particular senior nursery practitioner responded by describing how her team had been left feeling "emotionally exhausted" from long day shifts of providing "loving care" for a large number of new children who had been experiencing varying degrees of separation anxiety. This senior practitioner described how she viewed the preparation of meals and snacks as "emotional breaks", enabling her to manage the "emotional demands of the key person role".

Appendix ii. Individual interview questions

Theme: Key Person Duty

Q1. What are the consequences of being a key person?

- Do you have key children? If so, please give details.
- Describe your understanding of the key person role, and what this means in terms of forming and maintaining emotional relationships with individual children.
- Do you feel that being a key person affords any benefits to your role, or rewards?
- Do you feel that being a key person has any detriments or drawbacks?
- How would you describe the feelings that you have when working with individual children/your key children?

Theme: Superficial Emotion

Q2. What are the consequences of displaying emotions which are not felt, in performance of your role?

- Do you ever 'act' certain emotions? For example, smiling when you are not feeling calm inside? Can you give any examples?
- What effect does this have on your relationship with the child?
- Are there situations when 'acting' feelings is the 'right' thing to do?
- Do you see this 'acting' as a positive or negative experience? For the child/you personally? Explain why?
- Can you think of any positive or negative consequences that have come from you 'acting' feelings? For the child/you personally?

Theme: Felt Emotion

Q3. What are the consequences of experiencing emotion in performance of your role?

- Do you feel emotion when working with a child? For example, joy or sadness? Can you give examples?
- Are there certain specific situations when you have feelings? Can you name these? Are they fleeting moments? Or more lasting experiences?
- Where do these feelings come from? Are they spontaneous? Do they require any conscious effort on your part? Do you draw from your own experiences or memories?
- Do you see experiencing emotions in your work as positive or negative? For the child/you personally? Can you explain why?
- Can you think of any positive or negative consequences that have come from having feelings? For the child/you personally?

Theme: Feeling Rules

Q4. Does the performance of your role dictate how you feel?

- Are there 'rules' relating to your feelings, and how to display or suppress them? Can you explain these? How do you know of these?
- What does the term 'professional emotion' mean to you? Do you use 'professional emotion' in your practice?
- To what extent do you show the emotions you think are expected by your role, rather than what you actually feel?
- Who is benefiting from the way you manage and display your emotions? Children, parents, colleagues, employer, the UK?

Theme: Supervision and Training

Q5. How well supported are you through professional supervision and training?

- Have you received any training on how to control/display your emotions? Whom from?
- Have you had support in managing your feelings from anyone in your setting?
- Does how you are managing your own feelings ever get discussed in meetings with any senior staff? With colleagues or family?
- What do you understand the terms 'supervision' and 'professional reflection' to mean, in terms of understanding or managing your feelings? Do you use this in your practice?
- Do you think that 'professional reflection' on your feelings affords any benefits or rewards? Can you explain these?
- Do you think that 'professional reflection' has any detriments or drawbacks? Can you explain these?
- Do you feel well supported by your setting? Is there anything that could be done to make you feel better supported?

Interview 1 - Abigail

I: I have already asked you whether you are a key person, and you have told me that you are not a key person (.) so how would you describe a key person role? (2)

R: A key person is err (1) a person who has responsibility for a child and develops a special attachment to this child (.) and they produce motivations and they have a special relationship with (.) they work in partnership with parents and they try to be (.) I don't know (.) like an maternal errr (1) figure (.) how do you say like maternal person who will take care of the child like mainly take care of the child

I: Fantastic answer (.) okay do you think that it's beneficial to the practitioner to be a key person? (.) Do you see it (.) as a good thing?

R: My opinion?

Body shows tension at first – wants to give 'correct' answers – relaxes when told 'opinions' are welcomed

I: Yes I just want your opinion (2) you're totally anonymous remember

R: Okay so (.) for me I'm Italian I think children should have a key person but I think that a key person should be err (.) monitored (.) not quite sure if monitored is the right word

I: I understand what you are saying

R: I think that there should be a little bit more (2) err (.) going on and should be from everyone not just the senior practitioner but *all* the practitioners observing everyone (.) just to give feedbacks (.) even anonymously but really kind ones (1) in order to have

I: Are you talking about coaching?

R: But even in an informal if you have like a meeting and everyone is saying like (.) 'Oh [a practitioner's name] should be a little bit less with this girl' and (.) because some children because in this setting in here is legal to be a babysitter even if you work in a nursery which is you know (.) not good (.) it should be illegal because in my setting I can see that some children (.) and they are babies (.) or the room leaders get mood (.) you know swings (.) sometimes she's really (.) she's not nasty (.) she's a good woman but she vent problems with babies and because she is the room leader nobody is allowed to say anything

I: Okay?

R: Yeah loads of politics and so it will be better to have a little bit of feedback on your job (.) because otherwise you don't know

I: Yeah great that's good (.) How would you describe your feelings for the children when you're working with the children?

R: Errm (1) well now I'm good but before I wasn't because (.) errm (.) I had a bit of anxiety working with babies (.) because errm (1) let's say I'm really sensitive and I tend to be a little bit anxious sometimes and when I was working with them I they (.) I don't know (.) something was triggered and I felt really they shouldn't be there and I felt well they were kind of lost or abandoned and empathising with them (.) maybe a little too much and so

I: How would you describe that emotion?

R: Maybe the word could be (1) with feelings for them (.) empathy

I: Very good

R: I'm not sure if I was working very well at the time

I: Can I move on to the next question? (.) Do you ever feel that you are acting sometimes? Pretending emotions that you don't have?

R: Errm (3) I had to pretend ermm (1) but I think it's draining me physically

I: Okay can you give me an example? (.) example I have here is 'smiling when you're not really feeling smiley'

R: Errm no (.) I feel like smiling because I'm with them and I enjoy very much being with them and it's more when there are sometimes children that are very (.) trying to think of a word (.) challenging?

I: Yes?

> Facial expressions mirror emotions being verbalised

R: Exactly (.) in that case I have to pretend a little bit (.) just to start to be (.) and this can be draining if there is no help (.) I think in this case with a challenging child a little more team working

I: So is there something else that maybe (.) maybe would be helpful to you?

R: Hmm yes (.) I actually contacted my counsellor before because she was a teacher as well (.) she gave me really good tips (.) but I think there should be really some more support for your emotions

I: Okay so that you can discuss that child's behaviour and how you feel about it?

R: Yeah because otherwise (.) you feel completely lost

I: Really well answered (1) How would you describe your attachment to specific children?

R: Errm really glad they are not mine

I: Okay yes (4) yes?

R: I'm enjoying it because of that (.) I'm not the first carer I'm really aware of this (.) so there are professional boundaries

I: Okay tell me a bit about those (.) What *are* the professional boundaries?

R: Errm I can be with them and I can feel very happy to be with them (.) there is the child's side in myself with can be really enjoying this (.) so it makes working with my creativity (.) *being* with them in the moment with them errm at the same time I'm really pleased that they have parents (.) they have someone who are responsible for them (.) I'm responsible but within the setting (.) I don't know if it was my child I would probably be very anxious (.) I would be checking if they were breathing (.) of course it would be like this but now I know that I am a professional and because of that (.) I don't know (.) in my family everyone is a teacher everybody is a teacher I kind of knew since I was a child when my mum was being a teacher or my aunty or anyone (.) I know how she was with me and she was with other children (.) so I probably mime or imitate this kind of behaviour and I don't feel ermm (.) too much problem but

at some points I am very empathetic and very informal but sometimes I say to myself this is not your child (.) so I had a child at a previous placement that was abused and I was really concerned (.) but I had to let it go and just talk to the centre and the social worker and everyone (.) and I just report the whole situation and I had to let go because it wasn't my child

I: Do you think there is a place for love in your professional work or is that just the domain of the parents?

R: No no (.) there is love definitely (.) it's not just the same love (.) it's not just the same love (.) I love my friends I love my husband nephew to bits (.) my love for my nephew in Sardinia because is don't see him (.) it's like a spectrum and it has different shades

I: Is there anything positive about that?

> Clasps hands to chest over her heart when talking about 'love', and stretches legs

R: Yeah (.) there are lots of positives (.) like just the fact that you can be with children (.) you feel like you're doing something errm that's is actually bettering people's lives (.) helping parents to work (.) it's helping the nation to thrive (.) it's a good thing yeah?

I: Excellent really really good

R: I think that boundaries can sometimes be crossed when are attached to the child (.) and I mean I have been in that situation myself with key children and because we have such a good bond (.) you might not want to put certain rules in place which becomes difficult keeping them on your lap ermm and letting them have things

I: Are there rules about how you should act with a child?

> Fidgets with her clothing hem

R: Rules?

I: Like putting children on your lap or (.) you're in babies so (.) giving them a kiss?

R: Ermm I think that in my nursery (.) I don't know about anyone else's (.) this nursery particularly you are forced to be liked by children and if you are too much liked then there is competition so

I: Competition between whom?

R: Ermm between children because they (.) they (.) you can hug them you can try to find a way to make them feel loved at the same time but between practitioners yes (.) so sometimes you feel like putting them because you don't want to be (.) I don't know (.) you can hold them if they are crying and the room leader comes in and says don't hold him because he is going to cry again and then you're not going to be here (.) even the attachment theory I am really sceptical about how it is done in there because I developed a very nice attachment to a child they said was very challenging but she wasn't she was really nice and very very shy (.) so slowly slowly slowly I allowed her to settle in and that's it (.) now that she is settled when she cries when I leave but this is normal because nobody was working in a team

I: No?

R: So everybody was taking care of their own key children (.) and this child when I'm not in feels a little bit unsettled (.) and they don't work like a team so the child is just left attached to you and that's really bad (.) and I'm trying to send the child to a different person but they are like 'No this is not my key child' (1) so I don't understand how this works really and I'm really confused I have been in another nursery and it is completely different but they were not babies

I: How did it work?

R: In Italy we don't have a key person (.) every teacher is responsible and they try to and you have just the teacher for all the children there is no this ratio at all

I: And that's right down to babies?

R: Babies were umm (.) I was with babies as well but in Italy it was completely different because they don't stay long and the transition is not three days it's like a month or a month and a half so plenty of time to get used to it (.) you have a relationship with the babies which is a little bit less there are teachers coming and going and they are very caring but in (.) I can't err

I: It's in a different way?

R: Yes it is different (.) culturally different

I: Culturally different (.) yeah that is really interesting

R: Oh definitely that's why I am trying in this nursery to say I can play with your child and you can play with my child (.) but they think that I'm just being (.) I don't know ermm (.) smart trying to be smart and so it's (.) I find it very difficult to apply the key person system in this nursery but I don't know

I: That is so interesting

R: I don't know maybe another nursery will be different (.) here in England it depends on the manager and the room leader (.) they set the ethos for the place sometimes (.) the setting but in Italy it's a standard (.) which if you don't follow you can be shut down (.) I have been in a school in a lot of times (.) but that was reception but there is no baby form because in Italy we have school (.) as in nurseries for babies

I: My last bit that I am going to ask you about is about supervision and training (1) So how are they supporting you?

R: No support for your emotions (.) like just being told to be more confident which is true but at the same time some people like in the nursery they don't feel good

I: Do you feel like you can tell your line manager how you are feeling?

R: No you can tell the manager how you feel and maybe she will give you some replies but the room leader or other practitioners errr no (.) there are cameras and you need to be really really aware of what you are doing (.) because I feel like big brother is watching standing in and when I am in the corner doing an observation I feel like I am not with the children playing

I: Okay?

Face mirrors concern

R: No it doesn't it just errm (.) the manager probably out of the setting she will be very nice and I think that I feel that (.) but she has been with me at times there is a point at which you have to show that you are strong that you are (.) that you will go do your stuff (.) that you are resilient

I: Okay but then you are doing more acting (.) but not just for the children but for the staff this time?

R: Yeah but everybody is acting because of their feelings (.) because it is our (.) there is no as I said (.) there is loads of standards for children (.) there is nothing for practitioners (.) that is why

I wanted to do a project about being particularly (.) like a work project about what being a practitioner's about

I: What do we need to do? (1) What do you recommend?

R: Higher (.) the first thing is to have a normal salary (.) like proper pay for fine people (.) and raising the bar of qualification (.) so like in Italy you can't do anything unless you have a degree (.) I know here that it is really expensive but maybe if there was like a magic wand

I: What difference do you think it would make if the staff were more highly qualified?

R: The difference is amazing because if more people (.) because if you have to go through a degree you have to study you have to be resilient you have to prove yourself (.) like studying is not just studying it's about developing yourself as well (.) and here you see many practitioners are good even though they have just NVQ3 but some of them are just doing it because they believe they can't do anything else (.) so sometimes their roles are like parking

I: Can you explain that a bit more?

Face continues to mirror concern

R: Yes (.) like yesterday we had a very bad episode with the room leader (.) like I don't like to upset people and children so I don't talk too much (.) now I am but (.) these practitioners were very very serious and really really sad (.) and I was trying to sing softly because I didn't want to bother anyone but they were in their own thoughts (.) they were very sad (.) nobody was thinking about the place nobody was really there and the babies could feel that (.) so they came all to me because I was singing softly and doing an activity (.) everybody is leaving in the five or six months (.) so I think that it will be really beneficial to increase the self-esteem of people working there and have respect for what they are doing and try to abolish the hierarchy as much as you can (.) because you don't need a room leader you need an experienced practitioner or even that you need someone (.) what occurs to me in England is too much safeguarding policy and too much policy about everything (.) and the routines are actually (.) how do you say (.) impeding?

I: Yes?

R: Yes everyone feels like this (.) so how can you have like a really free creative environment and how can you feel yourself?

I: So what do you think would change the emotions of these practitioners?

R: I try several times when the room leader wasn't there because she is very strict and everyone (.) I said to them 'Why don't we do this? Why don't we try this? Why don't we try to go outside and do this? (.) because in Italy it is much more happy and we go outside (1) they were like 'How do you think we can do this?' and I thought 'Oh my god this is a 50 year old women and a 22 year old women' (.) they just feel really anxious and they spend their weekends looking for other jobs (3)

I: Thank you that's all I have (.) if you want to talk more we can

R: Really nice to talk thank you and it's good

Changes to nodding and smiling

Appendix iv. Example of annotation on a transcript

Interview 1 - Abigail

[Handwritten annotation left margin: Attachment "Special Relationship" Maternal ↓ Mothering AFFECTION]

I: I have already asked you whether you are a key person, and you have told me that you are not a key person (.) so how would you describe a key person role? (2)

[Handwritten: Responsibility]

[Handwritten right margin: TAILORED CARE]

[Handwritten right margin: Relationship with child + parents]

R: A key person is err (1) a person who has responsibility for a child 5 and develops a special attachment to this child (.) and they produce motivations and they have a special relationship with (.) they work in partnership with parents and they try to be (.) I don't know (.) like an maternal errr (1) figure (.) how do you say like <u>maternal person who will take care of the child</u> like <u>mainly take care of the child</u>

[Handwritten right margin: Feelings or behaviours caring for or love of a mother]

10 **I:** Fantastic answer (.) okay do you think that it's beneficial to the practitioner to be a key person? (.) Do you see it (.) as a good thing?

R: My opinion? | Body shows tension at first – wants to give 'correct' answers – relaxes when told 'opinions' are welcomed |

[Handwritten right margin: → trust – start of building bonds.]

I: Yes I just want your opinion (2) you're totally anonymous remember

[Handwritten left margin: Cultural difference]

15 **R:** Okay so (.) for me I'm Italian I think children should have a key person but I think that a key person should be err (.) monitored (.) not quite sure if monitored is the right word

[Handwritten right margin: Links practice to culture.]

I: I understand what you are saying

[Handwritten left margin: Mentoring and Coaching. Mentoring. Coaching.]

R: I think that there should be a little bit more (2) err (.) going on and 20 should be from everyone not just the senior practitioner but *all* the practitioners observing everyone (.) just to give feedbacks (.) even anonymously but really kind ones (1) in order to have

[Handwritten right margin: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT]

I: Are you talking about coaching?

[Handwritten left margin: Influence of Managers.]

R: But even in an informal if you have like a meeting and everyone is 25 saying like (.) 'Oh [a practitioner's name] should be a little bit less with this girl' and (.) because some children because in this setting in here is legal to be a babysitter even if you work in a nursery which is you know (.) not good (.) it should be illegal because in my setting I can see that some children (.) and they are babies (.) or the room 30 leaders get mood (.) you know swings (.) sometimes she's really (.) she's not nasty (.) she's a good woman but she vent problems with babies and because she is the room leader nobody is allowed to say anything

[Handwritten right margin: EMOTIONAL CLIMATE]

[Handwritten: Senior's influence is negative. Negative emotional climate]

I: Okay?

35 **R:** Yeah loads of politics and so it will be better to have a little bit of feedback on your job (.) because otherwise you don't know

[Handwritten right margin: Team building or Reflection e.g. Work discussion Groups]

I: Yeah great that's good (.) How would you describe your feelings for the children when you're working with the children?

R: Errm (1) well now I'm good but before I wasn't because (.) errm 40 (.) I had a bit of <u>anxiety</u> working with babies (.) because errm (1)

Appendix v. Ethical Approval form

University of Reading

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Ethical Approval Form A (version May 2015)

Tick one:

Staff project: _____   PhD _____   EdD ✓

Name of applicant (s): Lynette Morris

Title of project: Emotional labour and supervision in early years professional practice.

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr Geoffrey Taggart and Dr Helen Bilton

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

Please answer the following questions	YES	NO
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:	✓	
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	✓	
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	✓	
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	✓	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	✓	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	✓	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	✓	
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	✓	

h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	✓		
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email . If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	✓		
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	✓		
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: 'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	✓		
k) includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	✓		
Please answer the following questions			
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	✓		
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	✓		
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		✓	
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/Staffpages/imps-training.aspx)?	✓		
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	✓		
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	✓		

Please answer the following questions	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?			✓
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?	✓		

9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			✓
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[1], or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?	✓		
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?			✓
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?		✓	
12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?			✓
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?		✓	
13b) If the answer to question 13a is "yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.			✓
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		✓	
14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			✓
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			✓

Please complete **either** Section A **or** Section B and provide the details required in support of your application. Sign the form (Section C) then submit it with all relevant attachments (e.g. information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules) to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

---

[1] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)	✓

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.

Twenty students, aged 18+, enrolled on Early Years Teacher programmes.

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting:

1. title of project
2. purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. brief description of methods and measurements
4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then.
7. estimated start date and duration of project

<u>Emotional labour and supervision in early years professional practice</u>

Much debate and empirical enquiry relates to emotional labour and supervision within a range of health care settings (Mann, 2005), however, there has been little discourse relating to early years practice (Elfer, 2013). This study responds to this deficit and aims to make a contribution to practice guidance.

Data collection is via audio-recorded focus groups and individual interviews with twenty female Early Years Teacher trainees at Middlesex University. I lecture at this institution, however, not on this programme. To avoid any feelings of duress participant recruitment is via intranet/EYTS programme leader; it made clear that the research has no links to achievement on their programme of study. Reluctance to voice opinions on emerging topics is respected; following-up on sensitive issues is desisted; and interview questions are piloted to minimise risks of harm or discomfort. Focus groups and interviews last no longer than forty-five minutes each, and are conducted on campus during normal business hours on the participants' usual seminar attendance days.

Data is stored on a password protected personal computer until deletion after write-up. Pseudonyms and deliberately brief profiles preserve anonymity. Data collection will be conducted in February/March 2016; and the final write-up completed by September 2017.

<u>References:</u>

Elfer, P. (2013). Emotional Aspects of Nursery Policy and Practice – Progress and Prospect. European Early Childhood Research Journal. [Online] Retrieved from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1350293X.2013.798464#.VdMv_POFP4g

Mann, S. (2005) A health-care model of emotional labour. Journal of Health Organization and Management, 19, 4/5, pp. 304-317. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/14777260510615369

B: I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.	No

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words.

1. title of project
2. purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. brief description of methods and measurements
4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then.
7. estimated start date and duration of project

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: *LMorris*   Print Name: LYNETTE MORRIS   Date 7.1.16

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: Print Name ANDY KEMPE   Date 12.1.16

(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Appendix vi. Interview appraisal and debrief questionnaire

INTERVIEW APPRAISAL & DEBRIEF Adapted from Billingham (2007)	
Before or at the beginning of the interview	**Answer:Yes/No/Comments**
Did the interviewer provide you with information about the research project and what they were researching before commencing the interview?	
Did the interviewer explain the interview process to you before beginning?	
Did the interviewer request your permission to record the interview?	
Did you feel comfortable and ready to begin the interview?	
Was there any other information that you would have liked to receive before starting the interview?	
Was there anything that the interviewer could have done (or not done) to improve the pre-interview stage?	
The interview questions	
Did the opening questions ease you into the interview? Did they help you to feel comfortable or did you feel challenged by them?	
Were the questions clear? Did you need to clarify what was being asked?	
Did the interviewer effectively follow up on your answers?	
Did the questions used fully exhaust your knowledge or feelings about the subject? Do you feel that you could have given more information had more or different questions been asked?	
The interviewer	
Did you feel comfortable with the interviewer? Did the interviewer make you feel at ease?	
Did you feel that you could trust the interviewer with the information that you supplied?	
Did the interviewer provide you with sufficient time to answer the questions?	
Did you feel that the interviewer was listening to your responses and giving you their full attention during the interview?	
Was the interviewer in control of the interview?	

Closing the interview	
Was it made clear to you that the interview was finishing?	
Were you allowed the opportunity to add further comments or to raise any questions at the end of the interview?	
Do you give your consent to data relating to your ethnicity being included in the research report?	
Transcription of the interview	
Do you feel that the interview is fully represented in the written text?	
Were you allowed the opportunity to comment on or to raise any questions relating to the transcription? If so, did the interviewer effectively follow these up?	
Any other comments?	
Are there any other comments you would like to make about the interview experience as a whole?	
Signature:	**Date:**

Appendix vii. Individual interviews appraisal and debrief comments

Pseudonym	Any other comments?
Abigail	Very interesting experience.
Clodagh	Very comfortable and relaxed. It was very professional and made me feel listened to.
Eva	Felt comfortable. I hope my answers were helpful.
Gertrude	Great subject.
Imogen	No.
Katie	No.
Mary	I was made to feel very comfortable which made the process very pleasant.
Orla	Great!
Rhonda	It was amazing. I enjoyed the experience very much.
Tegan	Was a good conversation.
Wendy	It made me reflect on what is normal to my practice.
Bonnie	No.
Danielle	Everything was brilliant, felt comfortable throughout and didn't hesitate to be honest.
Fiona	Very therapeutic.
Hermine	No.
Julia	No.
Lisa	Very interesting.
Nicole	Was lovely to have such a heart-warming conversation.

Appendix viii. Focus groups appraisal and debrief comments

Group no.	Comments
Group 1	'It's just good to have the opportunity to talk about your feelings and know you are not being judged.' 'Yeah was good.' 'Good to know others feel same and you are not alone.' 'I really enjoyed the whole thing.' 'We [setting managers and leaders of practice] realised just how much personalities matter when it comes to coping with feelings and the children.'
Group 2	'Really enjoyed it.' 'It was a chance to think about ways to recharge yourselves.' 'Felt that I had benefitted from all the discussion.' 'Loved just talking about how I feel and and good practice with these people.' 'As a leader it gave me personally the opportunity to consider how my staff (.) and I know them (.) might feel and what support they need.'
Group 3	'As a leader it gave me an opportunity to reflect on differences between staff needs (.) relating to supporting them (.) no blanket intervention would work effectively.' 'This will impact on our practice as managers and there are positive outcomes from taking part.' 'I I liked taking part in the talk and understanding why I feel like this.' 'The activity was well organised and it was good.' 'It was nice and relaxed atmosphere.'
Group 4	'It was a positive experience.' 'It was easy to talk about how I feel and see everyone feels the same.' 'I'm the sole male in early years in a school (.) I have the stress of feeling I'm not trusted nor accepted with the other adults in school (.) I liked to talk and identify with the experiences and emotions of these [setting managers and leaders of practice] and know I am the same about feelings.' 'Yes it was very good and we should do it again about another topic to share what we know and help each other out to be better managers.' 'I learned that changing environment is the best way to get an immediate release from stress so go outside when it gets too much (.) take the children outside.'

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Supervisor: Dr Geoffrey Taggart and Dr Helen Bilton
Institute of Education, London Road Campus, RG1 5EX
Email: g.taggart@reading.ac.uk; h.o.bilton@reading.ac.uk
Phone: 0118 378 2680 and 0118 3782683

Student Information Sheet

Research Project: Emotional labour and supervision in early years professional practice.

Dear Student

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study relating to managing emotions in early years practice.

What is the study?

I am conducting this research as part of my own studies at the University of Reading in partial fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Education. The study explores how practitioners manage and display emotion in fulfilment of their early years role.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

The research is concerned with exploring the experiences of early years practitioners and, as an early years professional, you are being invited to reflect on your practice and share your experiences.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you give your permission to take part. You may also withdraw your consent at any time during the study by contacting my supervisors, Dr Geoffrey Taggart or Dr Helen Bilton, using the contact details above.

What will happen if I take part?

With your agreement, you would take part in both:

1. A focus group of four or five early years practitioners who are all students on your study programme. You will be read a short narrative describing the thoughts and feelings of an experienced senior practitioner leading the settling-in of a large number of children who are new to an early years setting. You will then be asked to discuss and comment on this scenario, and invited to share any personal experiences of managing emotions within your role, and discuss any related professional supervision you may have received.

2. An individual interview exploring your experiences and views on managing and displaying emotions in performance of your role. You will be asked five main questions which all relate to working with young children, and require you to reflect upon emotions felt in performance of your role, and also any rules relating to the display of 'professional' emotions. You will also be asked about any supervision or training that you may have received relating to the management of emotions when working with young children and their families.

You will not be required to carry out any additional written work; and the research activities will take place at the Hendon campus, and on your usual seminar attendance day.

The focus group and the individual interview will not exceed forty-five minutes each, and both offer opportunities for professional reflection and development.

Your participation in the research will not affect grading in your programme of study.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

A research report will be written from this project and related articles may also be published. Everything included in the report, will be presented anonymously: Nobody will be able to know who said what.

The findings of the study should be useful to you in understanding the personal and professional impact of supervision within early years practice. Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, or the university, to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. You will be given an alias and will be referred to by this in all records.

Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected computer and only the researcher will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, or after five years. The results of the study will be written up as a thesis and submitted to the University of Reading as partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Education. Findings will also be published within journal articles and at conferences. You will be able to contact me to request a copy of the thesis.

What happens if I change my mind?

This exercise is entirely voluntary. I very much hope that you will want to take part in this, but there is no obligation to do so. You can choose to withdraw at any time without explanation and without anything negative happening to you. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, I will discard the data.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact my supervisors, Dr Geoffrey Taggart or Dr Helen Bilton, using the contact details above. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact me, Lynette Morris, using the contact details above.

I hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me via email. Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Lynette Morris

Appendix x. Participant consent form

Researcher: Lynette Morris
Email: lynette.morris@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Geoffrey Taggart and Dr Helen Bilton
Institute of Education, London Road Campus, RG1 5EX
Email: g.taggart@reading.ac.uk; h.o.bilton@reading.ac.uk
Phone: 0118 378 2680 and 0118 3782683

Student Consent Form

Research Project: Emotional labour and supervision in early years professional practice.

I have read the Information Sheet about the study and received a copy of it. I understand what the purpose of the study is and what is required of me, including consenting to audio recording of the focus group and interview. All my questions have been answered.

Name of student: _____

Name of institution: _____

Please delete as appropriate:

I consent to participating in a focus group   YES/NO

I consent to the focus group being audio recorded   YES/NO

I consent to participating in an interview   YES/NO

I consent to the interview being audio recorded   YES/NO

I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in subsequent publications YES/NO

Signed:_____   Date:_____

Appendix xi. EYITT Programme Leader information sheet

Researcher: Lynette Morris
Email: lynette.morris@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Geoffrey Taggart and Dr Helen Bilton
Institute of Education, London Road Campus, RG1 5EX
Email: g.taggart@reading.ac.uk; h.o.bilton@reading.ac.uk
Phone: 0118 378 2680 and 0118 3782683

EYTS Programme Leader Information Sheet

Research Project: Emotional labour and supervision in early years professional practice.

Dear Programme Leader

I am writing to invite your programme to take part in a research study relating to managing emotions in early years practice.

What is the study?

I am conducting this research as part of my own studies at the University of Reading relating in partial fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Education. The study will explore how your students manage and display emotion in the performance of their early years role.

Why has this institution been chosen to take part?

The research is concerned with how emotional labour and supervision is experienced in early years settings. Middlesex University has been chosen because of their Early Years Teacher Status programme, with enrolment of practitioners from a wide range of early years settings.

Does the institution have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you give your permission for your students to take part. You may also withdraw your consent at any time during the study by contacting my supervisors, Dr Geoffrey Taggart or Dr Helen Bilton, using the contact details above.

What will happen if the institution takes part?

With your agreement, twenty of your students would take part in both:

1. A focus group of four or five early years practitioners who are all students on the EYTS study programme. The students will be read a short narrative describing the thoughts and feelings of an experienced senior practitioner leading the settling-in of a large number of children who are new to an early years setting. The students will then be asked to discuss and comment on this scenario, and invited to share any personal experiences of managing emotions within their role, and discuss any related professional supervision they may have received. The focus group discussion will last no longer than 45 minutes and it will be audio recorded to enable accurate transcription.

2. An individual interview exploring the students' experiences and views on managing and displaying emotions in performance of their roles. The students will be asked five main questions which all relate to working with young children, and require them to reflect upon genuine emotions felt in performance of their roles, and also any rules relating to the display of 'professional' emotions. The students will also be asked about any supervision or training that they may have received relating to the management of emotions when working with young children and their families. The interview will last no longer than 45 minutes and it will be audio recorded to enable accurate transcription.

The students will not be required to carry out any additional written work; and the research activities will take place at the Hendon campus, and on their usual seminar attendance day.

The focus groups and the individual interviews will not exceed forty-five minutes each, and both offer opportunities for professional reflection and development.

The students will be reassured that their participation in the research will not affect grading in their programme of study.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

A research report will be written from this project and related articles may also be published. Everything included in the report, will be presented anonymously: Nobody will be able to know who said what.

The findings of the study should be useful to you and your students in understanding the personal and professional impact of supervision within early years practice. Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, the students, or the university, to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. All will be given an alias and will be referred to by this in all records. Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected computer and only the researcher will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, or after five years. The results of the study will be written up as a thesis and submitted to the University of Reading as partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Education. Findings will also be published within journal articles and at conferences. You will be able to contact me to request a copy of the thesis.

What happens if I change my mind?

This exercise is entirely voluntary. I very much hope that you will want students to take part in this, but there is no obligation to do so. You can choose to withdraw at any time without explanation and without anything negative happening to you or the students. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, I will discard the data.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact my supervisors, Dr Geoffrey Taggart or Dr Helen Bilton, using the contact details above. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact me, Lynette Morris, using the contact details above.

I hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me via email. Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

Lynette Morris

Appendix xii. EYITT Programme Leader consent form

Researcher: Lynette Morris
Email: lynette.morris@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Geoffrey Taggart and Dr Helen Bilton
Institute of Education, London Road Campus, RG1 5EX
Email: g.taggart@reading.ac.uk; h.o.bilton@reading.ac.uk
Phone: 0118 378 2680 and 0118 3782683

EYTS Programme Leader Consent Form

Research Project: Emotional labour and supervision in early years professional practice.

I have read the Information Sheet about the study and received a copy of it.

I understand what the purpose of the study is and what is required of my students, including consenting to audio-recording of student focus groups and interviews.

All my questions have been answered.

Name of EYTS Programme Leader: _____

Name of institution: _____

Please delete as appropriate:

I consent to the involvement of my institution and students in the study as outlined in the Information Sheet.   YES/NO

Signed:_____   Date:_____

Appendix xiii. EYITT programme supervision session slides

EYFS and Supervision.

3.21.
Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Department for Education (2014) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.*

EYFS and Supervision (contd.).

3.22.
Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:
- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being;
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise; and
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

Department for Education (2014) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.*

Effective Supervision.

- Provides opportunity for reflection.
- Avoids blaming – self, others, organisation.
- Offers opportunities to search for options – new ways of being or doing.
- Offers learning opportunities and supports professional development.
- Provides support for practitioners well- being.

Good and bad experiences.

Exercise 1
As a group we agree to keep all material discussed confidential.

Consider a time when you had a good or bad experience of supervision (Delivering or receiving). What contributed to this?

What were the helpful/ unhelpful qualities of the supervisor or supervisee ?

The Supervisor.

Exercise 2

- Who might be the most appropriate person/ people within your organisation to conduct supervision for practitioners?

- Could there be a conflict of interest if this person also has managerial responsibilities?

Some Barriers to effective supervision.

Exercise 3
As a group we agree to keep all material discussed confidential.

- Share some of the barriers you have experienced in delivering and / or receiving effective supervision. (These may be personal, within relationships or organisational challenges)

Some Barriers to effective supervision (contd).

- Time constraints
- Financial constraints
- Role constraints / conflicts
- Lack of appropriate space
- Lack of training or necessary skills
- Staff / organisational resistance

Group supervision – a possible solution?

- Benefits - beside the economies of cost, time and expertise there are other advantages to good group supervision e.g.
- The opportunity to learn from the work of others.
- To develop a shared understanding
- To receive group feedback
- To work as part of a wider team
- Provides a supportive atmosphere

Some possible disadvantages of group supervision.

- Less time for each person – some people might get lost or hide behind the group
- Dynamics can be problematic
- Pressure to conform can stifle creativity
- Time spent on some issues may not be of interest to everyone
- Confidentiality may be less secure

Role of the supervisor and supervisee in group supervision.

- Supervisor should be knowledgeable, able to give constructive feedback, responsible for maintaining boundaries and keeping focus, open and supportive.
- Within peer supervision it can often be helpful if this role is shared on a rotational basis.
- Supervisee should be open to feedback and challenge, able to work within agreed boundaries and arrived prepared for the supervision process.

Preparation and Record Keeping.

- Supervisees should be encouraged to prepare for supervision in advance. This encourages reflection and ensures that there is a clear focus for the session.
- Documentation should meet the needs of the supervisee and the requirements of the organisation.
- All records should maintain confidentiality and be securely stored.

A Cyclical Model of Supervision.
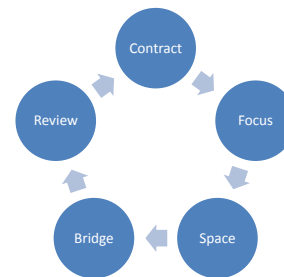
Model taken from Page & Wosket, (1994) *Supervising the Counsellor, A Cyclical Model*.

A Cyclical Model (contd).

- Stage 1 – Contract – this underpins the process and relationship. A contract is an agreement entered into by both parties that contains, supports, gives structure and provides direction and purpose to the work.
  (this should occur at the beginning)

- Stage 2 – Focus – This is the subject or material under discussion. Usually starts with supervisee presenting the work they wish to explore and encourages reflection.

A Cyclical Model (contd).

- Stage 3 – Space – The heart of the supervision process. The practitioner can be accepted, supported, appropriately challenged and affirmed in their work. It is the space where insight and movement can occur.

- Stage 4 – Bridge – A bridge provides a way back into the work so that supervision can be integrated and applied in practice.

A Cyclical Model (contd).

• Stage 5 – Review – This may take the form of an assessment of the practitioner's work. Training needs may be identified and discussed. Supervisor and Supervisee can stand back and evaluate the progress of their work.

Reflecting on the Experience.

• How did it feel to give feedback?

• How did it feel to receive feedback?

• How supportive did the presenter find this experience?

• What might have been done differently?

Supervision in Practice.

Exercise 4

• In groups of four identify one member of the group who will maintain timings and keep focus.
• As a group identify one or more issues for discussion, actively listen to the material presented and sensitively explore the situation presented. You may ask questions but avoid "telling" or providing direct guidance. Aim to support the supervisee to find their own answers.
• Each member of the group should aim to give feedback to the supervisee presenting.

Boundaries and Safeguarding.

• The contract agrees clear boundaries for the work including timings, frequency, confidentiality and exceptions to this.

• Always work within the agreed safeguarding protocols of your organisation. (This may require the use of an external supervisor where a practitioner can explore safeguarding issues and concerns.)

Reflecting on the Experience.

• How did it feel to give feedback?

• How did it feel to receive feedback?

• How supportive did the presenter find this experience?

• What might have been done differently?

Full References.

Department for Education (2014) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

Page, S. & Wosket, V. (1994) *Supervising the Counsellor, A Cyclical Model*. Routledge: London

Hawkins, P. and Shohet, R (1989) *Supervision in the Helping Professions.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

The Emotion Curriculum for the Early Years Workforce: curriculum content for inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care workforce education and training programmes	December 2017
Lynette Morris - Lecturer in Education and Early Childhood Studies www.l.morris@mdx.ac.uk	

Introduction

This briefing document provides an overview of research relevant to emotional labour, resilience and care in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector. More specifically there is a focus on how care is enacted in early years settings, models of supervision for ECEC staff, and the benefits of strategies for building emotional resilience for the wellbeing of the staff and children. It is relevant to those who educate early years professionals and the students that they teach. The briefing document introduces concepts of care, theories underpinning emotion in professional close interactions, and the requirement and purpose for supervision in ECEC. Furthermore, it documents evidence-based strategies to build competencies that have been associated with emotional resilience and employability in care work (such as reflective ability, appropriate empathy and social competence), and considers their potential to help early years professionals cope with the emotional demands inherent to their roles. This briefing presents curriculum content for inclusion in ECEC workforce education and training programmes.

The issue

Taggart (2015, p.382) positions emotional labour in ECEC as 'a simultaneous site of practitioner stress and political resistance'; commenting on the ambiguity of a hegemonic discourse of *schoolification*, while the EYTS standards (NCTL, 2013) call for practitioners to 'understand attachment theory' and 'communicate effectively'; thereby providing opportunities for enactment of the moral emotions of love, care and attunement to children's needs. A narrowing of concepts where education is synonymous with learning, and where ''care' is subordinate or even 'inferior' to learning' (Van Laere *et al.*, 2012, p.535), drives conceptualisations of the work in early years; current ECEC training programmes reflect this way of thinking, with concepts of care not being investigated as preparation for working in the sector. Colley (2006, p. 21) writes that learning *how to feel* is currently part of a hidden curriculum within early years workforce training and education:

> Alongside this prescribed curriculum, and the unwritten curriculum of emotional bonding, a further 'hidden' curriculum emerged as students talked about what they had learned as they participated in their work placements. Their narratives centered on coping with the emotional demands of the job, and revealed a vocational culture of detachment in the workplace which contrasts somewhat with the nurturing ideal that is officially promoted.

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There is a need for workforce educators and trainers to deliver an overt emotion curriculum from the outset to foster responsiveness, emotional regulation and resilience in early years students during their training, in preparation for the challenges of practice with babies and young children. Furthermore, ongoing professional development training should also reflect learning on emotion. Three questions influenced by the work of Campbell-Barr (2017) frame the development of an emotion curriculum for integration into existing programmes of education and training:

- What do we know about care and emotional labour in ECEC?
- What do we want practitioners to know?
- How will practitioners come to know?

The Emotion Curriculum for the Early Years Workforce

The Emotion Curriculum for the Early Years Workforce supports Taggart and Elsey's (2013, p.1) argument for professional development opportunities articulating and exploring 'the emotional vocabulary surrounding a *professional* disposition to care, based on developments in attachment theory'. The relational nature of care, and caring for babies and young children, is investigated within this curriculum (see Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2015; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Page, 2017; Taggart, 2016). Furthermore, the Emotion Curriculum for the Early Years Workforce acknowledges a need for practitioners to be familiar with, and able to apply, theory and research pertinent to empathetic care and emotional labour in ECEC; Modern Attachment Theory (see Page, 2016) and aspects of psychoanalytical theory which underpin emotion in professional close interactions in early years (see Elfer, 2016). This emotion curriculum engenders practitioners' ability to attune to children's needs and manage own stress through the practice of mindfulness (see Jennings, 2015; Taggart, 2015; Tremmel, 1993). Introduction to the Pedagogy in Care and Wellbeing model (McMullen *et al.*, 2016) supports development of caring practices with the children and the care of staff own wellbeing. Furthermore, exploration of psychoanalytic infant observation (Tavistock Observation Method) supports the sensitising of practitioners to learn about the children's emotions, and also their own emotion processes as these are evoked during observing the children (Elfer, 2016; 2017). Cultural influence is significant when planning professional development content for the ECEC workforce; relationships with families and the influence of culture on concepts of care (Campbell-Barr *et al*., 2015) are also explored for inclusion in ECEC education and training programmes.

The Emotion Curriculum for the Early Years Workforce encourages familiarity with statutory requirements and best practice in supervision and professional reflection. Furthermore, it encourages exploration of evidence-based strategies such as participation in group reflection sessions, such as supported and structured debates (Goouch & Powell, 2012) and the Work Discussion Groups framework (Elfer, 2016; Elfer & Dearnley, 2007). Similarly, the recommended pedagogical approach to delivering this emotion curriculum is through group discussion with an emphasis on reflection and reflexivity, and the sharing of experiences (see Bolton, 2010). Furthermore, students should be encouraged to question their assumptions about commonly used terms in early years practice, and explore whether there are shared understandings of these critical concepts: What do we mean by *Reflective Practice*? What does *emotional wellbeing* look like in both children and adults?

For clarity and ease of integration within existing ECEC education and training programmes, the educational aims and content for The Emotion Curriculum for the Early Years Workforce are presented within a matrix spanning the following three pages.

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The Emotion Curriculum for The Early Years Workforce

Topics	Aims	Activities	Sources
Concepts of Care	To know and understand a range of conceptualisations of care.	Considering the ethical and reciprocal nature of caring (see Noddings, 1984). Defining love, care and intimacy in early years practice (see Page, 2017) Exploring compassion in ECEC (see Taggart, 2016). Exploring the Key Person role (see Elfer *et al.,* 2012). Considering care of children and their families, and the influences of culture (see Campbell-Barr *et al.*, 2015).	Campbell-Barr, V.J.G., Georgeson, J. & Nagy Varga, A. (2015) Developing Professional Early Childhood Educators in England and Hungary: Where Has All the Love Gone? *European Education*, 47, 4, pp. 311-330. Elfer, P. Goldschmied, E. and Selleck , D. (2012) *Key Persons in the Nursery: 2nd Edition.* London, England: David Fulton Noddings, N. (1984) *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkeley: University of CA Press Page, J. (2017) Educators' Perspectives on Attachment and Professional Love in Early Years Settings in England. In White, E. & Dalli. C. (Eds) *Under-three Year Olds in Policy and Practice* (pp. 131-142). East Gateway, Singapore: Springer Singapore. Taggart, G. (2016) Compassionate pedagogy: the ethics of care in early childhood professionalism. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 24, 2, pp.173-185.
Theoretical Frameworks	To know, understand and be able to apply theory and research pertinent to empathetic care and emotional labour in ECEC.	Exploring theories underpinning emotion in early years professional close interactions, including Modern Attachment Theory (see Page, 2016) and aspects of psychoanalytical theory (see Elfer, 2016).	Elfer, P. (2016) Psychoanalytic theory, emotion and early years practice. In David, T., Goouch, K. & Powell, S. (Eds.) *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophies and Theories of Early Childhood Education and Care* (pp, 69-79). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. Page, J. (2016) The legacy of John Bowlby's Attachment Theory. In David, T., Goouch, K. & Powell, S. (Eds.) *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophies and Theories of Early Childhood Education and Care* (pp.80-90). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

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Topics	Aims	Activities	Sources
Supervision	To know the requirements and purpose for supervision in ECEC, and a range of supervision models and practices. To understand the place of professional reflection in supervision sessions.	Exploring the statutory duty in the EYFS. Defining professional reflection (see Page *et al.*, 2015). Considering a range of models of supervision, benefits, barriers and mitigation (see Bernstein & Edwards, 2012; Page & Elfer, 2013; Soni, 2013; Sturt & Wonnacott, 2016).	Bernstein, V.J. & Edwards, R.C. (2012) Supporting Early Childhood Practitioners through Relationship-Based, Reflective Supervision, *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field*, 15, 3, pp. 286-301 Page, J. & Elfer, P. (2013) The emotional complexity of attachment interactions in nursery. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 21, 4, pp.553-567 Soni, A. (2013) Group supervision: supporting practitioners in their work with children and families in Children's Centres. *Early Years*, 33, 2, pp. 146-160 Sturt, P. & Wonnacott, J. (2016) *Supervision for Early Years Workers: A Guide for Early Years Professionals about the Requirements of Supervision*. Hove: Pavillion.
Group Reflection	To know a range of collaborative models of reflection, and develop the ability to reflect on practice.	Investigating evidence-based strategies such as participation in group reflection sessions with supported and structured debates (Goouch & Powell, 2012) and the Work Discussion Groups framework (Elfer, 2016).	Elfer, P. (2016) Psychoanalytic theory, emotion and early years practice. In David, T., Goouch, K. & Powell, S. (Eds.) *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophies and Theories of Early Childhood Education and Care* (pp,69-79). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. Goouch, K. & Powell, S. (2012) Orchestrating professional development for baby room practitioners: Raising the stakes in new dialogic encounters, *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 11, 1, pp.78–92

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Topics	Aims	Activities	Sources
Mindfulness	To know strategies for developing caring practices with children, develop the ability to attune to children's needs, and manage own stress.	Introduction to practising mindfulness. Exploring the benefits of practising mindfulness for the children and staff (see Jennings, 2015; Taggart, 2015).	Jennings, P.A. (2015) Early Childhood Teachers' wellbeing, mindfulness, and self-compassion, in relation to classroom quality and attitudes towards challenging students. *Mindfullness*, 6, 4, pp. 732–743 Taggart, G. (2015) Sustaining care: cultivating mindful practice in early years professional development, *Early Years*, 35, 4, pp. 381-393
Pedagogy in Care and Well-being	To know strategies for developing caring practices with children, and caring for staff wellbeing.	Introduction to the Pedagogy in Care and Wellbeing model (see McMullen *et al.*, 2016)	McMullen, M.B., Buzzelli, C. & Yun, N.R. (2016) Pedagogy of care and well-being. In David, T., Goouch, K. & Powell, S. (Eds.) *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophies and Theories of Early Childhood Education and Care* (pp. 259-268). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
Psychoanalytic Infant Observation	To understand the value of learning about children's emotions, and own emotions as evoked during observing children.	Introduction to the Tavistock Observation Method. Exploring how the method values emotion, and consider how to manage the subjectivity (see Elfer, 2016; 2017).	Elfer, P. (2016) Psychoanalytic theory, emotion and early years practice. In David, T., Goouch, K. & Powell, S. (Eds.) *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophies and Theories of Early Childhood Education and Care* (pp,69-79). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. Elfer, P. (2017) Subtle emotional process in early childhood pedagogy: evaluating the contribution of the Tavistock Observation Method. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* [Online] Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com.

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Bernstein, V.J. & Edwards, R.C. (2012) Supporting Early Childhood Practitioners through Relationship-Based, Reflective Supervision, *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field*, 15, 3, pp. 286-301

Campbell-Barr, V.J.G., Georgeson, J. & Nagy Varga, A. (2015) Developing Professional Early Childhood Educators in England and Hungary: Where Has All the Love Gone? *European Education*, 47, 4, pp. 311-330

Colley, H. (2006) Learning to Labour with Feeling: Class, Gender and Emotion in Childcare Education and Training. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 7, 1, pp.15-29.

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Elfer, P. (2016) Psychoanalytic theory, emotion and early years practice. In David, T., Goouch, K. & Powell, S. (Eds.) *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophies and Theories of Early Childhood Education and Care* (pp, 69-79). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Elfer, P. (2017) Subtle emotional process in early childhood pedagogy: evaluating the contribution of the Tavistock Observation Method. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* [Online] Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com.

Gilligan, C. (1982) *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Goouch, K. & Powell, S. (2012) Orchestrating professional development for baby room practitioners: Raising the stakes in new dialogic encounters, *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 11, 1, pp.78–92

Jennings, P.A. (2015) Early Childhood Teachers' wellbeing, mindfulness and self-compassion, in relation to classroom quality and attitudes towards challenging students. *Mindfullness*, 6, 4, pp.732–743

McMullen, M.B., Buzzelli, C. & Yun, N.R. (2016) Pedagogy of care and well-being. In David, T., Goouch, K. & Powell, S. (Eds.) *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophies and Theories of Early Childhood Education and Care* (pp. 259-268). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

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