# Chapter 1: Introducing the Research

## 1.0 Introduction

This qualitative research involved a group of twenty children (10 boys and 10 girls, aged 9-11 years); the study used an asset mapping process and the lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy' to gain insight into children's wellbeing. From the earliest planning stage, the enormous contribution that children can make to research was recognised - every effort was made to ensure that appropriate methodologies were selected and that the focus of the study facilitated children's engagement. As a consequence, the research drew upon an ethnographic approach and a photo elicitation method that provided participants with the opportunity to take their own photographs and then discuss these within a one-to-one, face-to-face interview.

This chapter will initially introduce the context of the study before presenting the theoretical framework that underpinned it. The justification for undertaking the research is offered and this is followed by presentation of the overall research aim, associated objectives and the definitions of key terms.

## 1.1 Introducing the context of the study: The promotion of health

> *"Health in childhood determines health throughout life and into the next generation…..Ill health or harmful lifestyle choices in childhood can lead to ill health throughout life, which creates health, financial and social burdens for countries today and tomorrow."* (World Health Organization [WHO], 2005: ix)

The above quote confirms that the promotion of children's health and wellbeing is of paramount importance, both now and for the future; this is something that has been widely recognised and has received considerable government attention (for example, Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2004; DfES and Department of Health [DH], 2004; Department of Children Schools and

Families [DCSF], 2007a; DCSF and DH, 2009; DH, 2010a, b, c; Department for Education [DfE], 2011a).

The factors underpinning and driving health promotion have changed over the last century. At the beginning of the 1900s, there was a focus on the environment and the eradication of diseases; in the latter half of the twentieth century, attention moved to also include the changing of individual behaviour with issues such as sexual health and diet receiving a higher profile (Naidoo and Wills, 2009). By the 1980s, Ewles and Simnett (2003: 13) suggest that a much *"broader approach of health promotion and public health"* emerged and that this embraced educational, political and social issues; as a result there was considerable debate about the role and purpose of health promotion (Catford and Nutbeam, 1984; Seymour, 1984; French, 1985; Speller, 1985; Tannahill, 1985); it could be argued that this debate continues today as alternative approaches are offered.

The World Health Organisation (1984: 4) suggests that:

> *"Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health."*

Robertson and Minkler (1994: 296) highlight the breadth of the concept by identifying key aspects (Table 1.1):

| |
|---|
| • A broad definition of health and its determinants which embraces social and economic contexts. |
| • Movement beyond earlier emphasis on individual lifestyle strategies to broader social and political strategies. This would include working with groups and communities as well as individuals. |
| • Embracement of the concept of empowerment - individual and collective - as a key health- promoting strategy. That is, enabling others to make their own decisions, equipping them with resources to determine their health circumstances. |
| • Advocating participation of communities in identifying health problems and in the development of strategies to address these perceived problems. |

Table 1.1:        Key aspects of health promotion (Robertson and Minkler, 1994)

The view that individuals are not only able to make choices about their health and wellbeing, but are also able to take control of the decision-making process, has been widely accepted for many years as being central and fundamental

component of health promotion (Saan, 1986; Whitehead, 1989; Tones, 1990; Dines and Cribb, 1993; Downie et al, 2002).

Whilst the government has demonstrated its commitment to the promotion of health, the stance that has been taken has frequently focused on a deficit driven approach – in other words, there has been a tendency to wait for a problem to develop, rather than working towards the general enhancement of health and wellbeing - this is illustrated by the range of Public Service Agreements [PSAs] that have been formulated (for example, HM Treasury, 2002; HM Government, 2007).

In summary, attention has been given to people's health needs, particularly areas that have the potential to be resource intensive (Morgan and Ziglio, 2006). Morgan and Ziglio (2007) argue that this leads to emphasis being placed upon people to avoid illness instead of their ability to *"sustain and create health"* (page 18). Edwards et al (2007) make the point that it is currently necessary for children to 'fail' before interventions are implemented, and whilst it could be argued that there are some advantages to deficit driven health promotion strategies, Morgan and Ziglio (2007) advocate that this needs to be balanced with an 'asset' approach.

### 1.1.1  An innovative approach: Health assets and asset mapping

Morgan (2006: 31) states that:

> *"Asset models tend to accentuate positive ability, capability and capacity to identify problems and activate solutions which promote the self-esteem of individuals and communities leading to less reliance on professional services"*

Morgan (2006) continues by saying that health assets are resources that people have that can be used to promote health and protect against ill health.

Although the term *'health assets'* has evolved in recent years, the underpinning ethos is not new. Barlow (1985) discussed The Peckham Experiment, an

initiative that he was involved in, but one which was instigated by Doctors George Williamson and Innes Pearse in 1926 in London. The project aimed to *"understand how ability could be developed to advantage; and, where….disease could be avoided"* (Barlow, 1985: 266). The term positive health was used and there was an intention to move beyond the usual medical model (Barlow, 1985). Although the project was extremely successful and widely publicised, the inception of the National Health Service [NHS] in 1948 meant that the approach was abandoned due to political pressure. Barlow (1985: 270) suggested that since then, the *"demand for sickness services has steadily increased"*; it could be argued that this demand is continuing into the twenty-first century.

In more recent years, there has been an enormous growth in the literature that has focussed upon assets, in other words emphasising positive attributes; these include children and young people's developmental assets (Search Institute, 2006), community asset mapping (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993) and public health (Morgan and Ziglio, 2007; 2010). The development of health assets, particularly within a public health arena has been influenced by salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987, 1996[1]). Antonovsky (1979) coined the term *'salutogenesis'*, deriving it from the Latin *'salus'* meaning health, safety, wellbeing, and the Greek work *'genesis'* meaning origin – in other words the *"origins of health"* (Antonovsky, 1996: 13). Antonovsky (1996: 11) thought of salutogenesis as a *"more viable paradigm for health promotion research and practice"* than the "*disease orientation"* since it focuses upon *"moving people in the direction of the health end of a healthy/dis-ease continuum"* (page 14). Salutogenesis has, in recent years, been considered within asset based literature (for example, Morgan and Ziglio, 2007; 2010; Eriksson and Lindström, 2010; Improvement and Development Agency [IDeA], 2010) and it has been suggested that it could provide a theoretical basis for health assets (Morgan and Ziglio, 2007; 2010; Eriksson and Lindström, 2010); however, it is important to recognise that this was not the original intention of Antonovsky (1987; 1996)

---

[1] Antonovsky died in 1994, this paper reproduces a presentation that he gave at the WHO seminar: "Theory in health promotion: Research and practice", Copenhagen in September 1992

and that this work is still evolving. Developmental assets, community asset mapping and salutogenesis have each generated a wealth of valuable literature in their own right (this is critically discussed in Chapter 2).

Whilst a few studies have considered assets within both an adult (Rütten et al, 2008; 2009) and child health context (Baker et al, 2007; Hufford et al, 2009), these are very limited and have not been undertaken within the United Kingdom [UK]. The studies by Baker et al (2007) and Hufford et al (2009) drew upon community asset mapping (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993) and have both made important contributions to asset focussed research; however, neither involved the mapping of children's assets at an individual level – this has not previously been documented. This study has addressed this deficit by drawing upon a constant comparative data analysis approach, guided by a definition of wellbeing (White, 2008; 2010), to facilitate the mapping of children's assets.

In summary, this doctoral work has recognised the already existing literature relating to assets and asset mapping; however, the study sought to specifically contribute to contemporary debates by providing innovative insights, from both a theoretical and practical perspective.

## 1.2    Introducing the theoretical framework for the study

Anfara and Mertz (2006: xxvii) suggest that phenomena can be viewed through *"lenses"*; it was felt that this conceptual approach would facilitate the undertaking of this research with the *'lens'* of 'Activities that I Enjoy' providing an opportunity to gain insight and understanding of children's wellbeing from their perspective. Creswell (1998: 86) suggests that within ethnography, the researcher brings a *"strong orienting framework"* influenced by previous experiences; this comment is acknowledged and it is recognised that my professional background as a children's nurse will have impacted upon the development of the study's theoretical framework. Figure 1.1 provides a diagrammatic representation of the framework that was used to guide this

research and shape its overall aim. However, in line with qualitative research and inductive thinking (Creswell, 1994), the children's assets that emerged as a result of the asset mapping process, formed a model in its own right and this has the potential to be drawn upon by others undertaking future studies (please refer to Chapters 4, 5 and 6). The initial theoretical framework (Figure 1.1) is now explained in more detail.
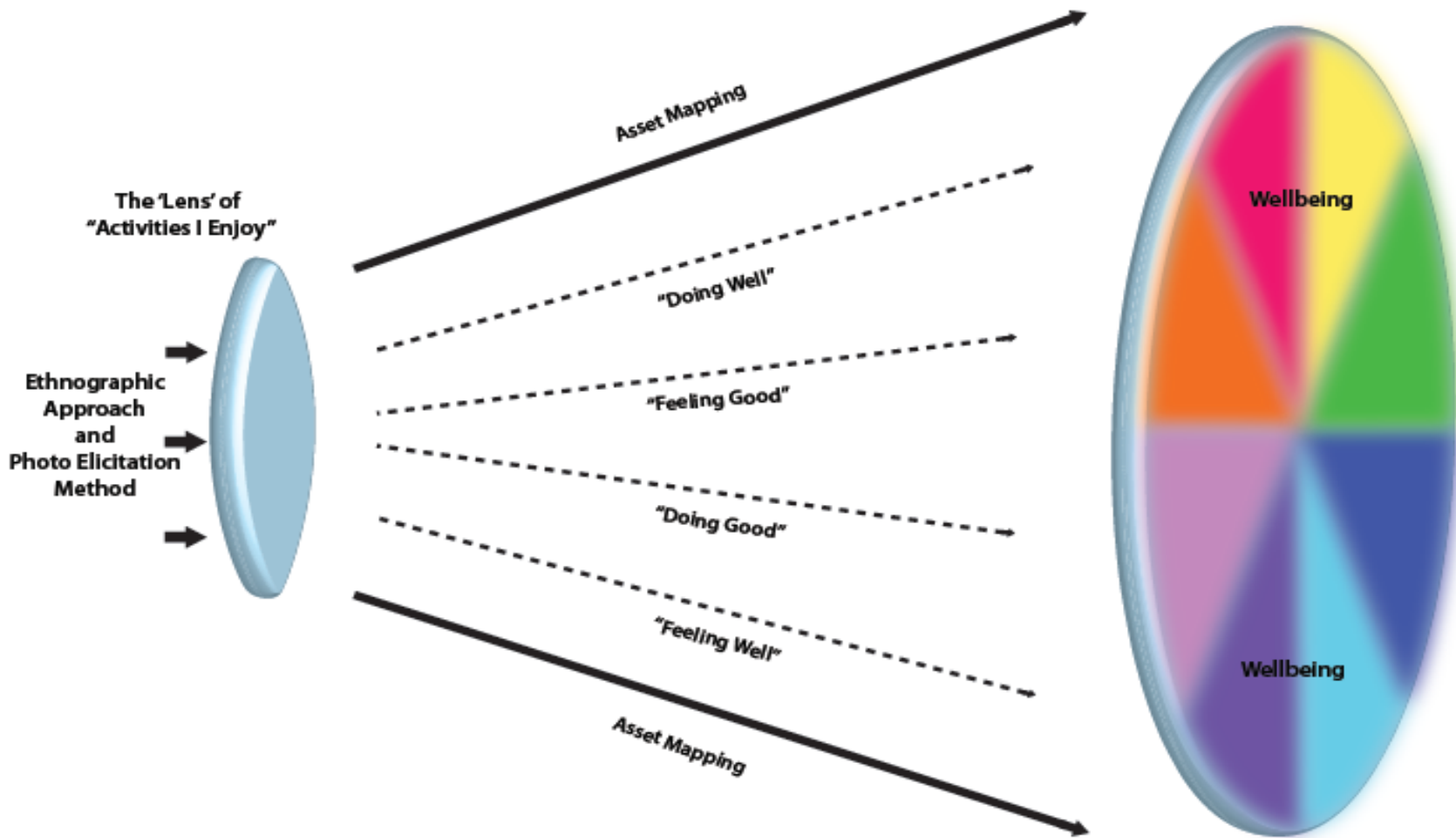
The 'Lens' of "Activities I Enjoy"

Ethnographic Approach and Photo Elicitation Method

Asset Mapping

"Doing Well"

"Feeling Good"

"Doing Good"

"Feeling Well"

Asset Mapping

Wellbeing

Wellbeing

**Figure 1.1 The Theoretical Framework**

### 1.2.1  Facilitating the gaze through the lens

Ethnography has been used for some considerable time to study children and childhood; however, it is important to recognise that early research predominately focussed upon observational fieldwork (for example, Kidd, 1906; Mead, 1968; Le Vine, at al, 1994) and that researchers were not concerned with the child's individual perspective (James, 2001). More recently, ethnography has evolved and is now a term that describes a range of research tools that aim to discover the social world from the participants' viewpoint (Denzin, 1970); as such, it is now acknowledged that *"ethnographic work with children is largely concerned to explore children's everyday social lives"* (James, 2001: 250) and that it *"is a particularly useful methodology for the study of childhood"* since *"it allows children a more direct voice"* (Prout and James, 1997: 8). Ethnography has now been successfully and effectively used in a range of studies that have involved children and sought their perspective (for example, Corsaro and Molinari, 2000; Barker and Horton, 2008; Cross, 2009; Brewer and Sparkes, 2011; Lambert et al, 2011), confirming its value as a research approach.

It was felt that drawing upon ethnography would appropriately underpin this research for two key reasons; firstly, it offered the opportunity to build an individual and personal rapport with the children (Buchbinder et al, 2006) which would value their contribution as well as facilitating insight into the child's world and their perception of it (James, 1996; Corsaro and Molinari, 2000). Secondly, it was felt that the rich, descriptive data that emerges from ethnographic studies would enhance understanding of children's lives and facilitate the mapping of the assets that underpin their wellbeing.

It has been suggested that one of the key principles of ethnography is that the researcher should be open to a range of potential research methods; those that facilitate the most insight and understanding of the participants' lives can then be chosen (Whitehead, 2005). In addition, there is a recognised need to use research methods that are appropriate and relevant to children's skills (Punch, 2002) particularly as they may have limited vocabulary and a shorter attention span (Boyden and Ennew, 1997). Careful thought was therefore given to

ensure that the chosen research methods were developmentally appropriate, stimulating and also facilitated the achievement of the study's overall aim.

There is recognition that visual methods can be very appropriate when conducting research with children, especially as children feel an affinity with this medium (Thomson, 2008). It is also acknowledged that visual research with children can facilitate the communication of their thoughts and emotions (Leitch and Mitchell, 2007) and that it frequently provides an additional and valuable perspective to methods that purely focus upon either the spoken or written word (for example, Burke and Grosvenor, 2004; Kaplan and Howes, 2004; Veale, 2005). Perhaps, most importantly, visual methods provide satisfaction for children and give the opportunity of *"getting something"* out of the experience (Thomson, 2008: 11).

The potential that visual methods have in relation to informing ethnographic approaches has been recognised (Pink, 2001); several research studies have now been undertaken that have combined the use of photography by participants (Oliffe and Bottorff, 2007; Erdner et al, 2009; Roberts, 2009; Graham and Kilpatrick, 2010) with an ethnographic approach, therefore confirming its feasibility and practical application.

After careful consideration that focussed upon the developmental needs of the children, as well as the study aim, it was decided that an ethnographic approach and a photo elicitation method were appropriate research strategies to facilitate the gaze through the lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy'.


### 1.2.2 The lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy'

James et al (1998) comment that it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that they engage with children whilst Hill (1997: 180) states that there is a need to:

> *"maximise children's ability to express themselves at the point of data-gathering; enhancing their willingness to communicate the richness of findings."*

However, it is also essential to acknowledge that children are *"competent problem solvers and learners"* (Richards, 2009: 4). The children who participated in this study were 9-11 years of age; they were therefore developing a degree of independence and autonomy which was important to recognise. Much thought and consideration was given to the development of a data collection method that was both engaging but which was also empowering and provided freedom of choice - it was felt that this was imperative if a true insight into children's wellbeing was to be gained. As a result, it was decided to use the lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy' as this would reflect the positivity that underpins asset based approaches, value the contributions of all children (whatever their interests), and provide the opportunity for individual, independent decision-making. Asking children to only take photographs of specific activities had the potential to be:

- prescriptive and restrictive

- not fully valuing of an asset based approach

In view of this, the research was described and presented to the children as 'Activities that I Enjoy'.

### 1.2.3 Health assets[2] and asset mapping

Morrow and Mayall (2009: 218), in a paper that focused upon children's wellbeing, commented that:

> *"Children have traditionally been studied through what might be termed a 'deficit-model' lens"*

They continue by advocating for:

---

[2] 'Health assets' is used as an umbrella term that incorporates wellbeing, please see section 2.3.1

*"Research that incorporates children's experiences from their viewpoints, and which emphasises what they value, as well as their positive 'assets', rather than their deficiencies (Morgan and Ziglio, 2007). This concurs with what children themselves seem to demand, and would be one way to respect their rights, in research terms, not to be stigmatised and demonised."* (Page 227)

This research sought to address this need by mapping children's assets at an individual level, thus providing further insight and understanding of their wellbeing.


### 1.2.4 Children's wellbeing

The concept of health as being more than the mere absence of disease has long been acknowledged. The focus within the twenty-first century has moved towards the inclusion of wellbeing and what it means to have a sense of purpose, to be able to build meaningful relationships with others and to fulfil one's potential (Ryff and Singer, 1998).

Although the concept of wellbeing can be traced back to both Aristotle and Epicurus (Ryff et al, 2004), it has undoubtedly reached greater prominence in recent years with the WHO's (1948) definition ensuring that wellbeing was perceived as being central to health (Cameron et al, 2006). The term has now not only been widely used within a health context (for example, DCSF, 2007a, b; DCSF and DH, 2009; DH, 2010a, b, c) but also within a range of other disciplines, most notably psychology (Waterman, 1993; Ryan and Deci, 2001; Keyes et al, 2002). Wellbeing is now firmly at the forefront of the public domain.

Research that focuses on wellbeing is now beginning to develop rapidly, with the examination of different perspectives and dimensions. Several definitions have been offered which provide details of what constitutes 'wellbeing' (for example, Andrews et al, 2002; Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project, 2008; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] and National Statistics, 2010). Despite the increasing wealth of literature, White (2008: 3) suggests that wellbeing is actually *"notoriously difficult to define"*; the

definition that she offers is at the *"intuitive level"*, suggesting that it embraces the terms *"Doing well"; "Feeling good"; "Doing good"; "Feeling well"*. Although there are a diversity of definitions, positivity is central to them all; this positivity is a common underpinning aspect of both wellbeing and asset mapping - the use of asset mapping to gain insight into children's wellbeing is therefore particularly appropriate.

Despite the growing interest in children's wellbeing, there remains an emphasis upon quantitative data with little qualitative research having been undertaken, exceptions to this being important contributions such as Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith (2006); Fattore et al (2007) and Parry et al (2010) – none of which were conducted in England. Whilst a very small number of studies have involved English children and their families, these have either focussed upon specific aspects of children's wellbeing (Ipsos Mori and Nairn, 2011), or have been limited in terms of the child's perspective (Counterpoint Research, 2008). Morrow and Mayall, (2009: 227) suggest that whilst the development of wellbeing indicators are necessary, it is important to balance this with studies that explore children's experiences, embracing their perspectives - this study responded to this need by focussing upon wellbeing at the intuitive level (White, 2008) and seeking to map the assets that were central to the lives of children.

Previous work has alluded to the fact that children may find it difficult to discuss issues at a conceptual level; for example, Fattore et al (2007: 16) commented that asking children (8-15 years of age) about wellbeing *"initially caused some confusion"*; Backett-Milburn et al (2003: 619) support this by suggesting that children in their study (9-12 years of age) were *"uncomfortable with abstract questions"* and were more talkative in relation to matters that were of immediate personal concern. Similarly, Counterpoint Research (2008) in their study of wellbeing found that none of the participants (both adult and children) understood the term. It was therefore important to establish a developmentally appropriate mechanism for engaging with children and facilitating their discussions – the lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy' was chosen for this purpose.

### 1.2.5 Summary: Justifying the study and the theoretical framework

A thorough and comprehensive literature search and critique (Chapter 2) indicated that there was a growing wealth of literature that focussed upon children's wellbeing; however, the lack of subjective qualitative studies conducted within the UK highlighted that there was a need to further consider this from the child's perspective. In addition, whilst research which is underpinned by asset mapping within a health context is beginning to emerge, there have been no previous studies that have involved children and which have mapped their assets at an individual level – this study has addressed this need. At the same time, it was acknowledged that it was necessary to view children's wellbeing through a 'lens' as this would facilitate their engagement – 'Activities I Enjoy' was chosen for this purpose.

Finally, but most importantly, it is only children themselves who can provide personal insight into their lives; conducting research '*about'* children would have been failing to respect and value their contribution. It was therefore essential that appropriate research methodologies were selected and that the focus of the study facilitated children's engagement; as a result, this research drew upon an ethnographic approach that used a photo elicitation method that provided children with the opportunity to take pictures of the activities that they enjoyed.

The framework (Figure 1.1) that guided the study is summarised below:

- The lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy' was used as a conduit to gain insight into children's wellbeing

- An ethnographic approach and photo elicitation method was drawn upon to enable the gaze through the lens.

- The process of asset mapping was drawn upon to facilitate the emergence of children's assets.

- Wellbeing was defined at an intuitive level, embracing the terms "*Doing well"; "Feeling good"; "Doing good"; "Feeling well"* (White, 2008: 3-4); this definition was used to underpin the asset mapping procedure.

- The assets provided insight into children's wellbeing and facilitated the development of a model in its own right.

## 1.3 The aim of the study:

*"To use asset mapping, and the lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy', to gain an insight into children's wellbeing"*

## 1.4 Objectives:

- To utilise an ethnographic approach and a photo elicitation method to facilitate the identification of activities that children enjoy

- To enhance insight and understanding of children's wellbeing through the development a data analysis process that facilitates the mapping and identification of children's assets

## 1.5 Operational definitions:

Key terms are defined below to provide clarity and avoid any misinterpretation (Vivar et al, 2007). For the purpose of this study:

### 1.5.1 Child

A child refers to a person who is aged between nine and eleven years at the time of their involvement in the research. Each child consented to their participation in the study.

### 1.5.2 Parent

A parent refers to a person who has parental responsibility for the child that is someone who has:

*"all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property." (Children Act, 1989, Part I, Section 3)*

This definition includes genetic, foster or step parents, as well as social services and those who have secured a residential order for a child. A parent of each child consented to their involvement in the research.

### 1.5.3 'Activities that I Enjoy'

A lens through which to view wellbeing; it incorporates all the activities that children enjoy as perceived and identified by them.

### 1.5.4 Wellbeing

Wellbeing is defined at an intuitive level and embraces the terms "*Doing well*"; "*Feeling good*"; "*Doing good*"; "*Feeling well*" (White, 2008: 3-4); please refer to Table 1.2 for further details.

| Term | Definition (White, 2008: 3-4; White, 2010: 160) | Interpretation for this Study |
|---|---|---|
| **Doing well** | *"'Doing well' conveys the material dimension of welfare or standard of living, suggesting a foundation in economic prosperity, though it need not be limited to this."* | Children's access to material resources. |
| **Feeling good** | *"'Feeling good' expresses the 'subjective' dimension of personal perceptions and levels of satisfaction."* | Children's subjective and personal perceptions of aspects of their lives. |
| **Doing good** | *"This adds an important collective dimension to subjective perceptions: they reflect not simply individual preferences but values grounded in a broader, shared understanding of how the world is and should be."* | Children's perceptions and understandings of their environment (human and physical). |
| **Feeling well** | *"At face value, the final phrase, 'feeling well' indicates the importance of health to wellbeing. However, it goes beyond this to an again moral sense about feeling at ease with one's place in the world – which is critically associated with how one is in relationship to others."* | Children's ability to undertake activities that they enjoy. Children's relationships with others. |

**Table 1.2:**      Defining 'wellbeing'

### 1.5.5 Asset

Any factor identified by the children that they perceive makes a positive contribution to their lives. The term 'individual level' is used to denote assets that are identified by one or more individuals.

### 1.5.6 Asset mapping

The data analysis process used to facilitate the identification of children's assets.

## 1.6 The professional doctorate

This study was conducted as part of the Doctorate in Health Research [DHRes] programme at the University of Hertfordshire [UH]; according to the UK Economic Social Research Council [ESRC] professional doctorates provide the opportunity for students to:

> *"make a contribution to both theory and practice in their field, and to develop professional practice by making a contribution to (professional) knowledge"* (*http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk*)

In addition, the DHRes structure has facilitated the acquisition of a comprehensive generic research knowledge base within a collegial environment; the undertaking of a range of Guided Learning Units provided opportunities for critical analysis and reflection, therefore facilitating a sound knowledge base and justification for each aspect of this doctoral research. Finally, the DHRes has allowed me to apply my learning to my professional practice as a lecturer; however, and perhaps most importantly, it has encouraged me to critically reflect upon the enhancement of children's wellbeing from an academically informed professional and practical perspective. The DHRes programme has offered an excellent opportunity to develop my knowledge and skills; my learning, both in depth and breadth, has been immense and has formed the 'bedrock' to my research.

## 1.7    Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the aim and focus of the study that was undertaken. This dissertation consists of 6 further chapters together with a detailed reference list and a comprehensive series of appendices. The chapters in the main body of the text provide a comprehensive overview of each stage of the research process, ending with a discussion of the findings and a conclusion:

Chapter 2: Provides an overview of the literature searching strategies that were undertaken; this is followed by a critical review of relevant literature relating to the concept of childhood, health assets/asset mapping and children's wellbeing.

Chapter 3: Identifies and examines the research approach and methods that were used in the study to facilitate the gaze through the lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy'; this is followed by a comprehensive account of the processes that were undertaken to recruit the children who participated in the research as well as the data collection procedures that were used. The chapter concludes by considering the ethical issues that related to the study and how these were addressed.

Chapter 4:  Provides a detailed account of the asset mapping approach that was undertaken – this drew upon a constant comparative analysis technique. The issue of trustworthiness in qualitative research is also considered in the latter part of the chapter.

Chapter 5: Presents the assets that emerged from the constant comparative data analysis and asset mapping process. This chapter is illustrated by the children's words and photographs. This section concludes by returning to the theoretical framework that guided the study (Figure 1.1) and presenting the *'I'm Good': Children's Asset Wheel* (Figure 5.33) that emerged as a consequence of the research and which also became an integral component of the theoretical framework (Figure 5.32).

Chapter 6: Focuses upon a critical discussion of the theoretical framework and its key components (Figures 1.1; 5.32; 5.33), a range of previously published literature is drawn upon to facilitate analysis.

Chapter 7: This chapter concludes the dissertation by considering the contribution to knowledge that the research has made, the dissemination of findings, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research. Finally, closing comments are offered.

**Chapter 2:    Reviewing the Literature**

**2.0        Introduction**

The literature review for this study examined the key areas encapsulated in the theoretical framework (Figure 1.1) that was presented in Chapter 1 (valuing children in the research process, health assets/asset mapping and children's wellbeing[3]). This chapter will initially provide an overview of the strategies that were undertaken to ensure that a comprehensive and thorough search was conducted that facilitated the retrieval of relevant literature. This will be followed by a critical discussion of each key area.

**2.1        Literature searching strategies:**

This doctorate was undertaken on a part-time basis; as a result, material was retrieved and analysed over a period of years, enabling the literature review to progress simultaneously with the undertaking of data collection and analysis. Every effort was, however, made to ensure that all stages of the study remained true to the data as well as the underpinning research methodology.

**2.1.1  Database searching**

A number of authors (Fink, 1998; Hek et al, 2000; Playle, 2000) advocate the use of computerised database searches as these are one of the most efficient methods of retrieving literature; to optimise this process, it was important that a number of databases were drawn upon (Appendix 1).

A decision was made not to limit the search for literature to a particular span of years. The rationale underpinning this was that there was a lack of available material in some areas (such as 'health assets') and therefore it was important that as much literature as possible was accessed and reviewed. Ideally,

---

[3] Photo elicitation and ethnography are considered in Chapter 3

literature from all languages should be sought – this maximises retrieval and minimises publication bias (Egger et al, 1997). However, it is important to acknowledge that time and financial restrictions may not allow for this process (Meade and Richardson, 1998); as a result, only literature written in the English language was considered.

Identifying key terms simplifies the data searching process (Holmes, 1996), but it is important to utilise a structured approach - to facilitate this, the framework offered by McSweeney (1990) was used (Appendix 1). It is also essential to recognise that the indexing of databases is complex and therefore important literature can be missed (Sindhu and Dickson, 1997) if this is relied upon as the sole search tool; to overcome this, a range of other additional strategies were utilised.

### 2.1.2  Supplementary literature searching strategies:

Firstly, manual searching was employed and involved the identification of relevant journals and the electronic skimming of the contents pages to highlight material that may be relevant (Sindhu and Dickson, 1997); this approach facilitated the retrieval of literature not already identified as well as highlighting alternative synonyms for database searching.

Secondly, Bowling (2002) advocates that grey literature is sought in the literature searching process. Whilst grey literature is critical, since it helps to eliminate publication bias (Dickerson, 1990), it is acknowledged as being particularly difficult to retrieve (Hek, 1996); Appendix 1 provides an overview of websites and strategies that were utilised in order to facilitate this process; a large range of material was accessed using these routes, although this was, in the main, reports and expert opinion rather than primary research.

Finally, the reference lists of all the literature retrieved were examined for further relevant material. Greenhalgh & Peacock (2005) highlighted that only 30% of their sources were accessed via electronic database searches and

hand searching; the remainder of their literature was acquired using a 'snowballing' technique of seeking references from published literature (51%) and by personal contact (24%); as a result these approaches were integrated into the search strategy underpinning this study and proved to be very beneficial.

Although it is impossible to ever ensure that all relevant literature has been retrieved, Hek et al (2000) suggest that the researcher re-run the electronic databases to identify any new or missed material. This approach was followed with literature searching continuing until July 2011. Appendix 1 provides a more detailed overview of the acquisition and retrieval of literature, including the number of documents that were scrutinised.

## 2.2 Valuing Children

The invaluable contribution made by the children who participated in this doctoral work is acknowledged throughout this document - there is examination and discussion in relation to each aspect of the children's participation in every chapter. However, this section introduces the concept of childhood with consideration being given to the meaning and evolvement of childhood over the years and the *"emergence of 'children's voice'"* (Prout and Hallett, 2003: 1). Finally, the section concludes by addressing the value of involving children in decisions that impact upon them.

### 2.2.1  The concept of childhood

The dictionary provides a rudimentary definition of childhood:

> *"The condition of being a child; the period of life before puberty."* (Collins Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2000: 195)

Prout and James (1997: 8) offer more clarification and suggest that childhood is not simply about the organic maturation of children, but that it is a *"specific*

*structural and cultural component of many societies."* Importantly, Frønes (1993: 1) states that:

> *"There is not one childhood, but many, formed at the intersection of different cultural, social and economic systems, natural and man-made physical environments. Different positions in society produce different childhoods, boys and girls experience different childhoods within the same family."*

This raises an important point, if children are solely referred to collectively within the term 'childhood', there is a danger that differences (for example, gender, age and ethnicity) will be lost (James and Prout, 1997). Frønes, (1993) acknowledges the impact of society on the evolution of childhood, but also alludes to the personal experience and this perspective must surely be recognised.

There can be no doubt that the perception, understanding and recognition of childhood has changed considerably over the centuries. Authors (for example, Ariès, 1962; Cunningham, 2006) have considered the development of childhood from the Middles Ages to more recent years, recognising that it has been influenced by a number of factors; for example the impact of Christianity in the eighteenth century meant that the child was often viewed as needing spiritual salvation from evil (Hendrick, 1997); in the Victorian era, as a result of the work of a range of reformists, there was a more overt drive to protect children (Cunningham, 2006). At the same time, there has been a recurrent theme over the years of viewing children in terms of purity and innocence (Cunningham, 2006), something which Holt (1975: 23) suggests has not been present in all areas of childhood - he refers to the falsehood of the *"happy, safe, protected, innocent childhood."*

In more recent years, there has been a stronger focus on the protection of children with a variety of both legal and policy documents being published (for example, Children Act, 1989, 2004; DfES and DH, 2004; DfES, 2004; Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, 2010); in addition, there is now a wealth of literature that focuses upon protecting children from a whole range of life events (for example, environmental tobacco smoke [Botelho and Fiscella,

2005]; sun protection [Gritz, 2005]; travel risks [Mathur and Kamat, 2005]; the internet [Pogue, 2005] and divorce [Vélez et al, 2011]). It has been suggested that some aspects of protection could lead to reduced opportunities for children to socially interact, with the main conduits only existing within controlled settings such as schools and clubs (Smith, 2000). In support of this point, Palmer (2006) comments upon the 'toxic' environment and the influence that this is having upon childhood in the twenty-first century.

Children's lives and the nature of their childhood (at both a societal and individual level) is different to that of previous generations; however, it could be argued that generational differences are not new and have existed for centuries. The most important issue is that the child's perspective is sought so that insights reflect children's current everyday lives.

It is generally acknowledged that childhood spans four key phases – infancy and toddlerhood, early years, middle childhood and adolescence (Hutchison, 2011). This doctoral study focused upon work with 9-11 year old children, in other words those who were in middle childhood. Charlesworth et al (2011) provide a comprehensive overview of the child within this phase of their lives, identifying key areas of development – physical, emotional and social (including, peer; friendship; team play; gender identity and roles). In addition psychologists, such as Erikson (1950); Piaget (1952) and Kohlberg (1984) have all considered cognitive development within middle childhood. The importance of the child's development will be considered at relevant points throughout this document.

### 2.2.2  Involving children

Whilst research has, for many years, demonstrated a strong interest in the lives of children across the age ranges, studies have primarily focussed upon the adult perspective, rather than valuing the voice and contribution of the child (Prout and James, 1997). Prout and James (1997) have offered a new paradigm for childhood that has six key features (Table 2.1):

| |
|---|
| • Childhood is a framework for the contextualisation of children's lives. |
| • Childhood cannot be separated from other variables in society, for example, gender and ethnicity. |
| • Children's social interactions should be studied and remain independent of the adult perspective. |
| • Children should be actively involved in decisions that may impact upon their lives. |
| • Ethnography can be a valuable research approach for the study of childhood. |
| • A new paradigm of childhood necessitates the reconstruction of childhood. |

**Table 2.1: Key features of the paradigm of childhood (Prout and James, 1997: 8)**

The work of James and Prout (1997) has been invaluable in raising the profile of children as participants who are capable of being involved in decisions that may impact upon their lives. As a consequence, in the last decade, there has been a wealth of literature that has focussed upon and debated children's contribution and participation in research (for example, Christensen and James, 2000; Fraser et al, 2004; Greene and Hogan, 2005; Alderson and Morrow, 2011).

The *"emergence of 'children's voice'"* (Prout and Hallett, 2003:1), and the need to involve children in a range of issues, has grown in acceptance (Sinclair, 2004). It is now widely established that the views and experiences of children should be taken into account wherever possible, with a range of key documents advocating their involvement (for example, The Children Act, 1989, 2004; The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC], 1989; DfES and DH, 2004).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the value of involving children in research studies should not be underestimated – a range of eminent organisations and authors have vocalised the range of benefits to children/young people, research, organisations and society (Kirby and Bryson, 2002; Kirby, 2004; Participation Works, 2007; The National Youth Agency, 2007; Carnegie UK Trust, 2008) - Appendix 2 provides an overview of these.

### 2.2.3 Summary

There is a growing body of research that recognises children's ability to make a valuable contribution to studies, particularly those that directly impact upon them (for example, Christensen, 2002; Goodenough et al, 2003; Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2006; Coad and Coad, 2008; Fattore et al, 2009; Gibson et al, 2010). Whilst there are some challenges in relation to the involvement of children (Whiting, 2009 – Appendix 3), this study has made every effort to facilitate their participation so that their *"authentic voices"* can be heard (Dyson and Meagher, 2001: 67).

### 2.3    A critical examination of health assets

This research sought to gain insight into children's wellbeing by developing an asset mapping approach that revealed the assets that were central to children's lives. An extensive literature search revealed that there is a growing body of work in this area; it is therefore important to critically examine the different areas underpinning and influencing its development, in particular, salutogenesis, community asset mapping and developmental assets. Initially key definitions will be offered, this will be followed by background information to provide context to the discussions. A comprehensive range of literature will be drawn upon to facilitate the examination of assets and their relevance to health and wellbeing in the UK.

### 2.3.1   Defining assets

The Collins Dictionary (2010) describes an asset as *"a thing or person that is valuable or useful"*, whilst this is a generic definition, it highlights the positivity of the concept. The term has been used in a number of contexts, for example, educational (Howard et al, 1999), financial (Sullivan & Sheffrin, 2003); environmental (Goodin, 1983); religious (Abbott et al, 1990; Cochrane, 2006); child development (Search Institute, 2006), career development (Goldman and

Schmalz, 2009), and most significantly for the focus of this research, health (Morgan and Ziglio, 2007, 2010; Hufford et al, 2009; Rotegård et al, 2010).

Although there are few specific definitions of health assets, some authors have offered their views (Table 2.2). Morgan and Ziglio (2007) argue that the maximization of health assets can improve health outcomes. Other authors concur with this (for example, Fuller et al, 2002; Baker et al, 2007) also suggesting that assets can be individually, group or community focussed and may include a range of environmental, financial, human or physical resources (Morgan and Ziglio, 2007).

| Definitions | Author | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| *"Health assets are the constituents of good health or of limited bad health, and health liabilities are those of poor health, disability, disease, early death, and costs of cure or prevention."* | Kolm (2002: 10) | This definition adopts a medical perspective; the emotional and wellbeing aspects of health are not overtly considered. In addition, the level or types of assets are not alluded to; this limits the application of the definition. |
| *"A health asset can be defined as any factor (or resource) which enhances the ability of individuals, groups, communities, populations, social systems and/or institutions to maintain health and well-being and to help to reduce health inequalities."* | Morgan and Ziglio (2007: 18) | A broad definition that incorporates the type and level of assets; it acknowledges that assets can include all aspects of peoples lives and that these can enhance health. This definition may therefore have broader application. |
| *"Health assets are the repertoire of potentials – internal and external strength qualities in the individual's possession, both innate and acquired – that mobilize positive health behaviours and optimal/wellness outcomes."* | Rotegård et al, (2010: 514) | This definition recognises that assets may be either external or internal; it focuses on the individual level and does not allude to the wider community; application of this definition may therefore be appropriate when a person-centred asset based approach is being utilised. |

**Table 2.2:**        **Definitions of 'health assets'**

Whilst Morgan and Ziglio (2007) make particular reference to wellbeing (Table 2.2), the literature search did not reveal any specific definitions of 'wellbeing assets'. Since wellbeing has been considered to be an aspect of health (for example, WHO, 1948; DH, 2010b), it is perhaps not altogether surprising that

there has been no explicit distinction between the terms; this research therefore views health assets as an umbrella phrase that encapsulates wellbeing.

### 2.3.2  Background

Whilst definitions have emerged in more recent years, the use of assets within a health context is not new. One of the earliest uses was by Beiser (1971) - he commented in his paper that *"a list of personality attributes is presented which we consider personal assets"* (1971: 244).

Beiser (1971) and his colleagues were psychiatrists who conducted a 5 year study (from 1962 until 1968) with 123 adults (59 were healthy and 64 had a mental health problem). The participants were aged between 18-81 years of age and all lived in a rural community of Stirling County, North America. Unstructured interviews were conducted in the home and focussed upon a range of issues including "*aspects of positive functioning*" (page 246). In addition, the researchers met regularly and used the panel members as case studies – this facilitated the drawing up of a list of *"personality assets"* (page 246). Beiser's (1971) work was also concerned with the relevance of the identified assets to positive mental health; he and his colleagues assessed the psychiatric symptoms present in the panel members and allocated each one a *"symptom score"* and a *"total asset score"* (page 251). This revealed that the lower the person's symptom score, the higher the asset score (and vice versa).

Whilst this study provides an important insight into the early use of assets within a health context, information about the conduction of the research is limited. Beiser (1971) did consider the importance of reliability and used additional psychiatrists with a subset of 25 panel members to assess inter-rater reliability, however, this was low and it was suggested that this may have been due to unfamiliarity with the material. Other areas of the study are not discussed, for example, the overall methodological approach, recruitment process, sampling strategies, interview questions and ethical approval; without this detail, it is not feasible to fully critique the study and draw conclusions about the findings and

their application to practice. However, one of Beiser's (1971: 253) concluding remarks was that the study was able to "*persuade a group of psychiatrics to think positively*" – arguably the fundamental underpinning philosophy of asset based approaches.

Whilst Beiser (1971) referred to assets, he didn't actually use the term 'health asset'; however, in 1975 Schlotfeldt (1975) presented a nursing model which focussed upon two key concepts – *"the person"* and *"health"*. Glazer and Pressler (1989: 245) in their discussion of Schlotfelt's work, comment that:

> *"The person is conceptualized in terms of health assets that are composed of health seeking behaviours (acquired) and health seeking mechanisms (inherent)."*

A few years later, Barkauskas (1983) conducted research on the efficacy of home visits undertaken by public health nurses; her findings revealed that there were major differences in the health assets of black and white mothers and their infants. More recent work relating to health assets has also emerged from the nursing profession; Rotegård and Ruland (2009) undertook an investigation of whether the underpinning concepts of health assets were included in the International Classification of Nursing Practice [ICNP]. They reported that many of the terms were found; however, there were areas that were not fully represented (for example, 'satisfaction') and others that were missing (for example, 'optimism' and 'courage'). The authors suggested that work was required to further populate the ICNP. In addition, they recommended the undertaking of more research to *"uncover patients' experiences with their health assets"* (page 318).

Finally, Rotegård et al (2010) conducted a concept analysis of health assets using Rodgers (2000) evolutionary method. An extensive literature search was undertaken to allow the authors to offer:

> *"a definition and conceptual model of health assets, describing the concept's core attributes, antecedents, consequences and relationships".* (Page 514)

However, Beckwith et al (2008) comment upon some of the challenges associated with concept analysis, in particular, it is not clear how Rodger's framework facilitates the identification of the themes underpinning the concept. In addition, the relevance and influence of other key areas, such as community asset mapping and developmental assets are not fully explored by Rotegård et al (2010).

In more recent years, usage of the term 'health assets' appears to have grown and it has been associated with a range of disciplines, for example social science (Kolm, 2002), psychology (Stephens et al, 1987 and Rogers et al, 2003) and public health (Wang and Pies, 2004; Friedli, 2005; Morgan and Ziglio, 2007), all of whom are developing a body of knowledge allied to their professions. There is a consensus amongst authors across a breadth of disciplines that positivity is central to assets; in other words, the assets approach considers that the glass is half full rather than half empty (Ammerman and Parks, 1998).

### 2.3.3  Types of health assets

In addition to offering definitions of assets, the literature has considered the differing forms. Morgan and Ziglio (2007), commenting from a public health perspective, suggest that there are three dimensions – individual; community and organisational (Table 2.3). However, it is interesting to note that Morgan, when working with colleagues (Rütten et al, 2009) and utilising an asset based approach to underpin a research study, interpreted types of assets differently (Table 2.3); in particular, Morgan and Ziglio (2007) describe individual level assets as personal internal factors such as self esteem; however, the research study (Rütten et al, 2009) identifies these assets as being specific individual people who are able to mobilise resources and influence policy. This different perspective highlights the multifaceted ways in which health assets may be interpreted (even by the same author). This lack of clarity within the literature resulted in a decision being made that this doctoral work would focus upon

29

assets at an individual level (in other words, those identified by individual children).

| Type of Asset | Interpretation (Morgan & Ziglio, 2007:18) | Interpretation (Rütten et al, 2009: 1669) |
|---|---|---|
| **Individual Level** | *"Social competence, resistance skills, commitment to learning, positive values, self esteem and a sense of purpose."* | *"these might be held by those who have control over the use of sports facilities in the community. Identifying these people and involving them in the policy-making process is critical to environmental approaches to community-based health promotion."* |
| **Community Level** | *"Family and friendship (supportive) networks, intergenerational solidarity, community cohesion, affinity groups (e.g. mutual aid), religious tolerance and harmony."* | Not identified. |
| **Organisational Level** | *"Environmental resources necessary for promoting physical, mental and social health, employment security and opportunities for voluntary service, safe and pleasant housing, political democracy and participation opportunities, social justice and enhancing equity."* | *"registered non-profit, for-profit, local government agencies, not registered associations or networks. Asset based organisations are those which have the structures and processes in place that allow its officers to engage appropriately with the local community to foster ownership in the development of new or revisions of existing programs, or services."* |
| **Infrastructure Level** | Not identified. | *"these assets may be identified by some mapping of the built environment, such as sports facilities, playgrounds, or recreational areas…"* |

**Table 2.3: Interpretation of asset levels (Morgan & Ziglio, 2007; Rütten et al, 2009)**

### 2.3.4 Areas influencing the development of health assets

Three areas have made an important contribution to the recent development of health assets:

- Salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1987)
- Developmental Assets (based upon those produced by the Search Institute, 2006)
- Community asset mapping (Krutzmann and McKnight, 1993)

Each of these will now examined.

### 2.3.4.1    Salutogenesis

Authors writing from a public health perspective (for example, Morgan and Ziglio, 2007; 2010) suggest that the development of health assets has been influenced by the work of Antonovsky[4] (1987; 1996). Antonovsky (1996) believed that there was the potential to enhance the health of *all* people, irrespective of their current health status; he suggested that the focus of health promotion should be on the whole person rather than their specific disease (or their risk of acquiring an illness).  Antonovsky (1996) recognised the huge contribution that has been made by more traditional disease preventative health promotion measures and suggested that his model:

*"derives from studying the strengths and weaknesses of promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative practices, it is a theory of the health of that complex system, the human being" (1996: 13)*

Antonovsky (1987: 13) commented that if he had to identify the most important aspect of salutogenesis, he would say that it:

*"not only opens the way for, but compels us to devote our energies to, the formulation and advance of a theory of coping."*

Antonovsky (1996) suggested that there are resources that are available for use by people to enable them to cope with stressful situations, he referred to these as general resistance resources (GRRs); they cover a range of biological, material (such as money) and psychosocial factors and were developed from his personal previous work as well as earlier research that he had undertaken with colleagues – in particular a study that investigated how women from different cultures coped with the stress of the menopause (Datan et al, 1981). It has been suggested that the GRRs *may* equate to health assets (Rotegård et al, 2010).

---

[4] Lindström and Eriksson (2005; 2006) offer a valuable contribution to the literature by explaining Antonovsky's underlying concepts and providing background information to the development of his theory

The identification of the GRRs led Antonovsky (1987) to propose the sense of coherence (SOC), which views the world as "*comprehensible", "manageable"* and "*meaningful"* (Antonovsky, 1996: 15; please refer to Table 2.4); Antonovsky (1987: 19) defined the SOC as:

> *"a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement"*

Antonovsky (1987) suggests that a SOC is a major determinant of maintaining one's position on the health/dis-ease continuum and of movement towards the healthy end of it. A strong SOC enables a person to respond flexibly to demands. According to Antonovsky (1987) the SOC develops during childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Antonovsky (1987) commented that even in the best possible scenario, the adolescent can only have developed a SOC that is tentatively strong – it is the beginning of adulthood in which the SOC becomes established, being more difficult to influence at a later stage. The development of a weak or strong SOC is dependent upon a range of factors including social circumstances, socialisation within the family, gender, genetics, ethnicity and chance (Antonovsky, 1996). It could therefore be argued that it is important to create an environment in which children and young people experience consistency, can recover from stress with appropriate support, and, can participate in decision-making processes (Bengel et al, 1999). It has been suggested that the SOC may be similar to the concept of mobilization that allows people to access available assets (Rotegård et al, 2010).

- **Comprehensibility:**
  "the extent to which one perceives the stimuli that confront one, deriving from the internal and external environments, as making cognitive sense, as information that is ordered, consistent, structured, and clear, rather than as noise - chaotic, disordered, random, accidental, inexplicable." (Antonovsky, 1987: 16-17). In other words, it is the extent to which sense/order can be drawn from the situation, ability to process both familiar and unfamiliar stimuli.
- **Manageability:**
  "the extent to which one perceives that resources are at one's disposal which are adequate to meet the demands posed by the stimuli that bombarded one" (Antonovsky, 1987: 17). Antonovsky (1987) explains that the resources may be multi-faceted and include friends, family, God and colleagues.
- **Meaningfulness:**
  "extent to which one feels that life makes sense emotionally, that at least some of the problems and demands posed by living are worth investing in, are worthy of commitment and engagement, are challenges that are 'welcome' rather than burdens that one would much rather do without" (Antonovsky, 1987: 18). If a person with a high degree of meaningfulness faces a difficulty, they may not be happy about it, but they are willing to face the challenge.

  In practical terms, the person with a strong sense of coherence will:
- Believe that the challenge is understood (comprehensibility).
- Believe that the resources to cope are available (manageability).
- Be motivated to cope (meaningfulness).

**Table 2.4:        Central components of a sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987; 1996)**

Antonovsky developed an 'Orientation to Life' scale that aimed to measure the SOC; he later revised this tool and a shorter version of 13-items (rather than 29-items) was produced (Antonovsky, 1996). Antonovsky (1996) suggested that the scale could be used to measure a person's SOC; this would then help the health promoter to identify how the person's comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness could be strengthened. The SOC concept has been utilised in a range of health related studies (for example, Berg and Halberg, 1999; Forsgärde et al, 2000; Delbar and Benor, 2001; Eriksson et al, 2007); the validity and reliability of it has been debated (Eriksson and Lindström, 2005), and it has been adapted for use with different populations (Margalit and Efrati, 1996; Nash, 2002; Sagy, 2002; Vinson, 2002).

In 2007, the International Union on Health Promotion and Education [IUPE] gave the Folkhälsan Research Centre the responsibility of establishing and co-ordinating a Global Working Group on salutogenesis – Bengt Lindström and Monica Eriksson have been central to this development. Since this time, Lindström and Eriksson have made an important and significant contribution to the body of literature relating to Antonovsky's work (for example, Lindström and

Eriksson, 2009, 2010, 2011; Eriksson and Lindström, 2008; 2010), this has included a development of Antonovsky's salutogenic framework, entitled *"Health in the River of Life"* (Lindström and Eriksson, 2010). In addition, the authors have drawn upon the work of Blum et al (2002); Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Sun and Stewart (2007) to produce a model of health promotion that embraces ecological, salutogenic and resilience perspectives. Lindström and Eriksson (2009) propose use of the model as well as inviting discussion and debate in relation to its potential.

Perhaps most importantly, in the context of this doctoral work, Eriksson and Lindström (2010: 340) have devised the *"salutogenic umbrella"* which is sub-headed *"an assets approach"*, suggesting that the two have a clear relationship – the nature of this is, however, not discussed. The umbrella depicts 21 "a*ssets and resource concepts"* that are related, in the authors' opinions, to salutogenesis (for example, 'coping', 'quality of life', 'sense of coherence' and 'resilience'). Antonovsky (1987: 33) himself discussed five key *"views of health"* (not assets) which he felt had similarities with his own opinions ('hardiness' [Kobassa, 1982a, b]; 'sense of permanence' [Boyce et al, 1983]; 'domains of social climate' [Moos, 1984; 1985] 'vulnerable but invincible' [Werner and Smith, 1982]; 'family's construction of reality' [Reiss, 1981]) – the work of these other authors is recognised by Eriksson and Lindström (2010), however, the potential and practical application to assets and asset mapping is not clarified.

Antonovsky has undoubtedly made an invaluable contribution to the literature and has influenced health promotion strategies. Antonovsky strove to meet with professionals from a variety of disciplines and this may be one reason why his theory has become widely recognised (Lindström and Eriksson, 2006). However, there is a danger that his work could be applied to health assets outside of the original context. Morgan & Ziglio (2007) were among the first to suggest that the health promoting or protecting factors that create health are 'assets' - it could be argued that this is a simplification of Antonovsky's work. Secondly, Morgan & Ziglio (2007) comment that 'resilience' is at the core of salutogenesis; however, it is important to note that Antonovsky's focus was

'resistance'; indeed Antonovsky specifically referred to 'coping', a psychological construct that is concerned with response to stressors. There are clear differences between the interpretations of the terms; resilience focuses upon how people deal with adversity, whereas salutogenesis has its roots in the resources that underpin and create health. It is therefore interesting that resilience is the concept that appears to have been most frequently associated with asset based approaches (for example, Morgan and Ziglio, 2007, 2010; Bartley et al, 2010).

In summary, whilst there is a body of literature emerging (much of which has been offered since the commencement of this doctoral work) that has considered salutogenesis in relation to health assets, this has remained at a conceptual level with no insight being provided into the practical aspect of asset mapping.

### 2.3.4.2       Developmental Assets

The Search Institute (2006) in Minneapolis, USA identified forty developmental assets for each of four age ranges (3-5 years; 5-9 years; 8-12 years; 12-18 years). It is suggested that these are necessary for the healthy maturation of children and young people (Benson, 2003; Lerner and Benson, 2003) and include both internal and external assets. Internal assets are those that nurture internal growth, they comprise of four key areas ("*commitment to learning", "positive values", "social competencies" and "positive identity"*); external assets are influences that are outside of the person ("*support", "empowerment", "boundaries and expectations" and "constructive use of time"*). In addition, each internal and external asset heading identifies specific areas that need to be focussed upon in order for children and young people to become responsible members of society, who possess a range of positive personal qualities (Search Institute, 2006; http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists).

The assets were first introduced in 1996 and were the culmination of a range of work including workshops and focus groups with young people, parents and

policy makers; the reliability of the assets has been described by Scales (1999: 116) from the Search Institute as *"generally adequate but in some cases could be better"*. He continues by commenting that 19 of the assets (they are not identified) have alpha reliabilities that are between 0.60-0.80; Scales (1999: 116) admits that the reliability does *"look low"* overall, but explains that this may be attributable to the fact that not all assets apply in all circumstances and therefore a precise scale is not formed.

In order to measure the assets, the Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors [PSL-AB] tool was developed in 1996 (Search Institute, 2011). Research has been conducted to test this instrument; for example, Price et al (2002) undertook a study to ascertain the validity, consistency and reliability of the tool amongst 435 African-American inner-city students. The authors concluded that consistency and reliability was limited and that the tool may not be suitable for participants such as those involved in this work. Studies have also utilised the PSL-AB to underpin their research; for example, French et al (2001) identified that the presence of assets such as self-esteem, and having a sense of purpose were less likely to lead to unhealthy adolescent behaviour in relation to eating disorders. The same sample population and tool was used in a study conducted by Fulkerson et al (2006) who suggested that a higher frequency of family mealtimes was linked with a lower uptake of high risk behaviour in young people.

It has been suggested that children and young people should ideally achieve 31 out of the 40 developmental assets identified for their age range (Benson, 1996); however, as Howard et al (1999) highlight, it is not clear how the number of 31 was identified, or whether some assets are more desirable than others. In summary, whilst developmental assets have been discussed widely and have underpinned studies (for example, Murphey et al, 2004 and Scales et al, 2006a), they have a number of weaknesses that should be reflected upon. Firstly, The Search Institute (2006) has provided a list of assets that children should ideally achieve; whilst this can be beneficial as it provides a structure for families and professionals to work with, many of the individual assets are

36

reduced to specific behaviours (such as completion of homework). Whilst the Search Institute (2006) does recognise the value of internal qualities such as self-esteem, this is relatively limited; in addition, the list does not make any reference to biological factors, such as gender and ethnicity that could impact upon a young person's development. The external assets identified by the Search Institute (2006) do, however, offer areas of commonality with other asset based literature – the key aspect being the contribution of local communities to the overall health of individuals (for example, Baker et al, 2007; Rütten et al, 2008; 2009; Hufford et al, 2009).

Finally, the Search Institute (2006) does not overtly recognise the relationship that assets may have with each other; therefore an integrated approach is not portrayed. Whilst the assets were developed from work undertaken with young people, (as well as adults), it is difficult to know if the views of children have been fully represented in the final sets of assets. These points are crucial to the further and future development of asset based frameworks.

### 2.3.4.3    Community asset mapping

Asset mapping has traditionally been referred to within a community context, the work primarily stemming from the United States of America and Canada. A number of definitions have been offered from this perspective, for example, Fuller et al (2002: 3) define asset mapping as:

> *"a positive (and enjoyable) approach to learning about your community. It helps to think positively about the place in which you live and work."*

Other authors (for example, Emerson, 2004 and Office of Learning Technologies [OLT], 2006) concur that the central focus of asset mapping involves thinking positively about the resources (human and material) available within a community – the aim being to enhance and strengthen the environments in which people live.

A number of guides (for example, Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993; Kretzmann et al, 1996a, b; Fuller et al, 2002; OLT, 2006) have been produced that explain the community asset mapping process; all appear to propose that lists or inventories of assets are drawn up, this is often followed by a ranking of the assets and an examination of those that are considered to be the most important. In addition, some guides (such as OLT, 2006) also recommend the production of 'maps' by members of the community or professional staff – these are drawings which highlight the geographical context of the community and it is this process that appears to have led to the development of the term 'asset mapping'.

Kretzmann and Knight (1993) have been quoted widely in relation to community asset mapping and were the founders of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD) within the School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University, United States of America [USA] in 1995; it is therefore appropriate to consider their contribution to the literature. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993: 1) wrote their text as *"a guide about rebuilding troubled communities"*; they were referring to American cities which suffered as a consequence of the changing economic climate of the previous two decades, resulting in limited career and employment opportunities for low income families. They argue that the deficit approach of focussing upon the problems and needs of communities is not as productive or beneficial as the identification of the communities' assets. They highlight the importance of having a key person (a community builder) to compile inventories of individuals as well as a range of associations and institutions (public and private); in addition, one of the main aspects to the strategy is that the community builder continually fosters and develops relationships within the neighbourhood. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) also provide an overview of how the economy of a devastated community can be developed and identify five phases that can be undertaken to enhance it (Table 2.5). The strategies that are proposed suggest that the mapping of community assets is both time consuming and requiring of specific expertise. Kretzmann and McKnight have worked with colleagues to produce a range of publications that guide other aspects of asset mapping; these include

economic capacities (Kretzmann et al, 1996a) and local businesses (Kretzmann et al, 1996b).

| Asset | Interpretation |
|---|---|
| **Individuals** | The capacities and abilities of individual people |
| **Citizens' associations** | These include a range of groups (for example, those associated with politics; sports; school; charities; businesses); they are important as they:<br>• Empower people<br>• Help to strengthen communities<br>• Help to develop effective citizens<br>• Facilitate democracy |
| **Local institutions** | *"Formal public, private and not-for-profit institutions"* (page 171). Identification of these will provide further insight into the physical, financial and human resources available (examples include parks; libraries; schools; colleges; police; hospitals) |
| **Five steps to facilitate the mobilisation of community assets:**<br>• The mapping of assets: individual, citizens' associations; institutions<br>• The development and building of relationships within the community to facilitate problem-solving<br>• Mobilization of the community's assets to enhance economic wellbeing<br>• Establishment of a group with individuals representing the different community sectors to facilitate the development of a future vision<br>• Mobilising resources to facilitate asset based development ||

**Table 2.5:** **Types of assets and stages of asset mapping (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993)**

Whilst community asset mapping has been widely undertaken in Canada and the USA**,** some work has been conducted within the UK; for example, asset mapping was undertaken in three pilot communities in Lincolnshire (Toft Newton, Wrangle and Wragby) over a six month period in the summer of 2008 (Lincolnshire.gov.uk, 2008); the conclusion was that the project had facilitated an appreciation of the needs of the communities and how both the County Council and others could help to sustain the areas.

Other British work has been undertaken within a poverty context - Hocking (2003) reported on how Oxfam has used a *"sustainable livelihoods"* framework to provide guidance in relation to how their funds could be best utilised. Drawing upon some "*rough and ready"* (page 237) participatory work that was undertaken in Wales and England and a previous study conducted in Scotland (Scott et al, 1999), people's assets were identified; this was followed by an

exploration of strategies that could be used to help manage personal difficulties. Whilst full details of the procedures utilised were not identified, a range of issues were highlighted including the strategies that people used in order to survive on a low income. Interestingly, Hocking (2003) also commented upon the gender differences that existed from both an assets and coping strategy perspective; for example, although women tended to have fewer financial assets than men, they had more social ones, receiving good support from friends and family. Hocking (2003) recognised that this was exploratory work and that more needed to be undertaken by Oxfam in relation to their livelihoods programme.

In summary, work relating to community asset mapping has made a valuable contribution to the literature; however, health assets must surely go beyond the community perspective and encapsulate other individual and personal assets that contribute to the creation and maintenance of health and wellbeing. Clear guidelines for the mapping of assets within this context, and at an individual level, have yet to be produced.

### 2.3.5  Public Health Assets Model

Drawing upon the work of earlier authors, Morgan and Ziglio (2007) have offered an asset based public health model aimed at reducing health inequalities; they suggest that the current focus on the deficit approach to health improvement needs to be balanced with one that highlights its positive aspects. Morgan (2006: 31) states that:

> *"Asset models tend to accentuate positive ability, capability and capacity to identify problems and activate solutions which promote the self-esteem of individuals and communities leading to less reliance on professional services"*

In addition, they argue that an asset approach may help to provide further clarification of why there is a persistence of health inequalities. The model integrates three key aspects that seek to enable policy makers and practitioners to consider the promotion of health from a positive angle:

- Salutogenesis (from the work of Antonovsky, 1987; 1996): the model suggests that this may facilitate the building of an evidence base for health; it would require the identification of factors that promote health (they refer to these as 'assets')

- Asset mapping (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993) aimed at equipping health promoters *"with an understanding of how best to create the conditions required to maximise the potential for health"* (Morgan and Ziglio, 2007: 20)

- Asset Indicators, aimed at facilitating the evaluation of health promotion initiatives

Morgan and Ziglio (2007) acknowledge that assets may be individual, community and organisational (or institutional) and they highlight the potential areas that could be considered under each of these headings (Table 2.3). Discussion in their paper primarily focuses upon the mapping of community assets, as outlined by Kretzmann and Knight (1993); however, there are areas that perhaps require further more practical consideration; for example, who would lead community asset mapping programmes? What size of community could be considered when undertaking this form of initiative? Will the asset mapping procedure require repeating at intervals, particularly as some communities may be transient? Is the work of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), which focussed upon 'troubled' communities, transferable to a wider range of situations?

In their model, Morgan and Ziglio (2007) also refer to the use of asset indicators; however, the availability of these is currently limited – the work that has been done has primarily focussed upon materialistic factors (for example, McKenzie, 2005 and Córdova, 2009). Interestingly, however, Morgan and Ziglio (2007: 153) allude to the fact that Bauer et al (2006) have presented the *"European Community Health Promotion Indicator Development Model as a basis for establishing a European set of indicators for monitoring health promotion interventions"*; this framework incorporates both pathogenic and salutogenic perspectives – it is therefore feasible that as further work is undertaken that a comprehensive range of asset indicators will emerge.

Morgan and Ziglio (2007) presented their model for external scrutiny and to foster debate – the areas requiring further development may well be addressed as their proposed model develops.

### 2.3.6   Utilisation of an asset based approach

Interestingly, the majority of health related research that has drawn upon an asset based approach has focussed upon young people, in particular teenagers. There have, for instance, been a range of studies conducted that have suggested that the presence of individual and environmental factors can limit the engagement of teenagers in detrimental behaviour (for example, Kirby et al, 1994; McKnight, 1997; Resnick et al, 1997; Groft et al, 2005). In addition, research has focussed upon assessing the existence of assets within a given population (for example, Oman et al, 2002; Evans et al, 2004; Vesley et al, 2004); other studies have been underpinned by a community asset mapping approach (for example, Baker et al, 2007; Hufford et al, 2009).

### 2.3.6.1        Assessing the presence of assets

A number of studies have developed instruments to assess the presence of certain assets, primarily within the youth population (for example, Oman et al, 2002, 2004; Evans et al, 2004; Kegler et al, 2005; Doss et al, 2006; Klein et al, 2006; Sabaratnam and Klein, 2006).  For example, Oman et al (2002: 251) discussed the development of a tool to measure youth assets; the authors report that the assets were identified and measured following the undertaking of focus groups, literature searching and pilot work. Ten key assets were highlighted (*"non-parental adult role models", "peer role models", "family communication", "use of time [groups/sport]", "use of time [religion]", "good health practices [exercises/nutrition]", "cultural respect", "community involvement", "future aspirations" and "responsible choices"*). The tool was utilised in a large study within 1350 households; the same study population was drawn upon to identify the existence of different risky health behaviours, the assets were measured to establish whether their presence was likely to limit

unsafe health related activities (for example sexual activity [Doss et al, 2006]; alcohol and drugs [Oman et al, 2004]). Doss et al (2006) in their aspect of the study collected data from the 1350 households who were randomly selected from two similar cities. One teenager and one parent from each household were concurrently interviewed in different rooms of their home – the teenagers answered a verbally recorded self-administered questionnaire, entering their responses into a computer; unfortunately, it is not clear whether the same technique was used with parental participants. 445 of the teenagers involved were 13-14 years of age and were eligible to be a focus of data analysis; 64 of these people had responded positively to a question about whether they had had sexual intercourse – these participants were subsequently matched to a group of 64 who had responded negatively to the same question (the authors do not comment upon any potential inaccuracies in the responses, such as the teenagers misunderstanding of the question). Following statistical analysis, the authors report that the presence of two assets, *"peer role models"* and "*use of time [religion]"* (page 43), is less likely to lead the teenager to engage in sexual activity; the authors do, however, comment that when the assets were considered independently, "*use of time [religion]"* was not found to be significant. It is unfortunate that further content details of the parent and teenager interviews were not provided; in addition, discussion of the findings from the parental interviews is not included in the paper. The conclusions provide a sound foundation for further research, but their applicability to communities outside of the location of the study (for example, the UK) is limited.

Murphey et al (2004) conducted research to ascertain whether developmental assets could be used as a measure to predict both negative and positive health behaviours amongst teenagers. The authors report that a questionnaire was completed by 30,916 volunteer students; the results of this, and their student records, were analysed. Unfortunately, the authors do not discuss how the volunteers were recruited or where or how the tool was administered – both of these issues could impact upon the results. Nevertheless, the findings revealed that both negative and positive health related behaviour was related to the number of available assets, the key one being good school grades. The authors

acknowledge some of the limitations of the study, most notably, the challenges associated with self-report health behaviours.

A range of other work has been undertaken to ascertain the value of developmental assets – papers by those affiliated to the Search Institute are particularly prevalent (for example, Scales, 1999; Scales et al, 2006a; 2006b). There is a consensus that the more assets that are present, the more likely the young person is to have a positive and secure start in life. Interestingly, this body of research does rely heavily upon self reporting.

The majority of the research undertaken (for example, Evans et al, 2004; Murphey et al, 2004; Vesley et al, 2004; Doss et al, 2006) has drawn up a list of assets and then sought to ascertain whether these are present in a given group of participants - it could be argued that this mirrors some aspects of a deficit approach as there is the identification of 'missing' assets and the aim is frequently to work towards the establishment of those assets that are absent. Interestingly, none of the research studies retrieved was British and they have primarily drawn upon quantitative approaches.

### 2.3.6.2    Asset mapping within a health context

Whilst limited, research (Baker et al, 2007; Hufford et al, 2009) has considered the identification and mapping of assets for a specific community in order to promote child health. Baker et al (2007) conducted an American study that sought to establish a community partnership approach to reduce television viewing amongst pre-school children. The process of asset mapping drew upon the work of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) and Pan et al (2005); it began with the identification of the assets of the research team, this was followed by the mapping of assets within the community including key individuals, associations, institutions and physical assets. This process generated the development and operationalisation of a range of 40 community activities for children that could be drawn upon as an alternative to television viewing; whilst the authors acknowledge that outcome data is lacking, and the use of a specific community

environment means that generalisations are not feasible, the work demonstrates the potential value of a community partnership asset based approach.

Hufford et al (2009) described a programme entitled Communities and Physicians Together [CPT]. The CPT project was started in 1999 and is based at the University of California Davis Children's Hospital. Doctors who are undertaking the three year paediatric residency programme are provided with the opportunity to develop their skills as community advocates. The principles underpinning asset based community development (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993) are fundamental to the programme and emphasis is placed upon working in partnership with the community in order to identify community assets and enhance the health of children. During the three year course, the doctors are provided with an annual two weeks of protected time to work with their community; this is supported by educational workshops as well as community networks. Hufford et al (2009) describe some of the initiatives that have been developed within local communities, for example, one doctor worked with local children and a grocery store to develop the provision of more healthy snacks and a cookery book.

Hufford et al (2009) reported that the programme has been evaluated, using semi-structured interviews, with both the doctors and members of the community. The findings were positive with families benefiting from the doctors' more in-depth knowledge of the local area. Some challenges were recognised, most notably, there was a desire by the community for the doctors to be more fully involved in community activities; unfortunately, this was not always possible because of other workload demands (this stance is supported by others such as Christner et al, 2004). In addition, the doctors found the change from a structured medical orientated approach to a community collaborative one a "*major challenge*" (page 769); it could be argued that this is particularly significant - the majority of health professionals are not familiar with an asset based health model, this programme demonstrates the educational support and time commitment that may be required if a move from a deficit-driven approach

is to take place. One point that is interesting to note is that the project received a five year funding grant of $1.7 million from the Community Pediatric Training Initiative; as there were 36 doctors accessing the programme per year, this also highlights the financial commitment required if other health professionals are to receive similar support. Nevertheless, this work is important as it is the first programme of this type; its success has led to an expansion to include more doctors and a greater range of communities (Hufford et al, 2009).

In addition to the work by Baker et al (2007) and Hufford et al (2009), there are studies that have utilised an asset based approach with an adult population (Rütten et al, 2008; 2009).  Rütten et al (2008; 2009) focussed upon the promotion of the physical activity of women who were in "*difficult life situations*" (Rütten et al, 2009: 1667) (for example, women who were single parents, receiving a low income, from ethnic minority groups or unemployed). The research was conducted in Germany and initially drew on the findings of two focus groups (one with 21 women) and one with 14 local experts and policy makers. The focus groups facilitated the identification of perceived assets at individual, organisational and infrastructure levels. Overlapping assets were then subsequently explored in a central meeting comprising of members of both focus groups. Strategies for enhancing physical activity levels were then developed (for example, the organisation of exercise lessons at the local primary school). In addition, policy analysis was undertaken in order to identify the factors that could both facilitate and hinder strategies aimed at enhancing physical activity levels for this population of women; a range of methods were drawn upon including participant observation of planning meetings, field notes and documentary analysis. The findings revealed that one of the most crucial assets were the women themselves, not only did they act as social catalysts (Rütten et al, 2008) facilitating the growth of social networks and the longevity of the women's participation in physical activity, but their involvement meant that they had an opportunity to voice opinions, this allowed policymakers to gain an understanding of their needs.

This research was undertaken in Germany so comparisons to the UK are limited; however, it is a comprehensive health related study that has facilitated the identification of assets by the participants and has worked towards meeting the needs of the identified population. The study is presented from different perspectives in two papers, as a result, some aspects of the research are not fully discussed (for example the nature of the interview and participant observation that formed part of the policy analysis); nevertheless, this study provides a valuable contribution to the literature at both academic and practical levels.

### 2.3.7  Strengths and weaknesses of asset based approaches

The literature suggests that there are a number of benefits associated with an asset based approach to health, these are summarised in Table 2.6.

| An asset based approach: |
|---|
| • Helps people to think positively about their circumstances |
| • Helps to obtain a common view of what is important |
| • Is fun to do |
| • Is realistic as it identifies what is *already* available |
| • Fosters inclusivity |
| • Is a form of discovery |
| • Facilitates interdependencies |
| • Centres around effectiveness |
| • Facilitates the hearing and valuing of others |
| • Provides the information necessary for the mobilization of the assets |
| • Promotes the population as a producer of health, rather than as a service-user |
| • Encourages people to realise their ability to contribute to the development of health |
| • Facilitates the identification of a range of health promotion factors |
| • Helps to develop more sustainable initiatives |
| • Seeks to empower people |
| • Helps to identify methods in which individuals can use their talents |

**Table 2.6:**       **Benefits of an asset model and asset mapping, adapted from Kretzmann and McKnight (1993); Fuller et al (2002) and Morgan and Ziglio (2007)**

It is interesting to note that the weaknesses of an asset based approach are infrequently mentioned. However, Rütten et al (2008) do identify that there are some challenges, for example, valuable assets simply may not be identified; conversely, those that have been identified may not be useable. Rütten et al (2008) also suggest that some assets seem to better facilitate the

implementation of health promotion initiatives than others, however, it can be difficult to highlight the most beneficial ones.

Whilst the challenges of asset based approaches have not been explicitly identified in the literature, it could be argued that there are a range of issues that deserve consideration if the strategy is to be utilised and further developed (Table 2.7).

| An asset based approach: |
| --- |
| • Requires financial investment to develop the necessary knowledge and expertise within key health promoters |
| • May prove to be initially more time-consuming to implement than current health promoting strategies (particularly those that follow a medical and deficit driven model) |
| • May be resisted by health promoters, especially if they feel their current practice is effective and/or being questioned |
| • May result in some important assets not being identified (Rütten et al, 2008) |
| • May identify appropriate assets, but some of these may not be useable (Rütten et al, 2008) |
| • May not result in the identification of the most useful assets (Rütten et al, 2008) |

**Table 2.7:** **Potential challenges of an asset based approach**

As more asset based work is undertaken, it is important that the challenges of the approach are vocalised and debated. Without this information, practitioners will be unable to make informed decisions in relation to the most appropriate health promotion strategies for their client group.

## 2.3.8 Summary

This section has provided an overview of literature pertaining to health assets. In summary, whilst a number of important contributions have been made, British literature is very limited. No UK research appears to have examined health related assets; the studies from further afield have primarily been conducted with the adolescent age group with some research being undertaken with adults (Rütten et al, 2008; 2009); the work that has focussed upon younger children has been valuable (Baker et al, 2007; Hufford et al, 2009), but has not always involved children themselves nor has it been conducted at an individual level. There has therefore been a clear need to undertake asset based research with children in the UK – this study has sought to address this deficit.

## 2.4 A critical examination of children's wellbeing

This section of the literature review examines the concept of wellbeing and its relevance to children; whilst it is acknowledged that a range of work has been undertaken with children who have specific needs (for example, looked after children [Andersson, 2005; Harris and Woodhouse, 2009; Rubin et al, 2008]), this material will not be the focus of these discussions. Similarly, although there is a wealth of literature relating to wellbeing across a range of disciplines (for example, the scientific study of wellbeing within the field of psychology has centred upon eudaimic[5] and hedonic[6] wellbeing [Waterman, 1993; Ryan and Deci, 2001; Keyes et al, 2002]), it is the literature pertaining to wellbeing within the context of health that this section concentrates upon. Initially, definitions of wellbeing will be offered, this will be followed by an exploration of literature that specifically relates to children.

### 2.4.1 Contextualising and defining wellbeing

Both the current government and the WHO would concur that wellbeing is an aspect of health:

*"We use a broad definition of health that encompasses both physical and mental health as well as wellbeing"* (DH, 2010b: 6)

*"A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"* (WHO, 1948: 100)

Ryff et al (2004: 1383) suggest that:

*"the core hypothesis of positive health, in fact, is that the experience of well-being contributes to the effective functioning of multiple biological systems."*

It could be argued that the value attributed to wellbeing by Ryff et al (2004) has been acknowledged by recent governments as the term has now been widely used within a range of key publications (for example, DCSF, 2007a, b; DCSF and DH, 2009; DH, 2010a, b, c; 2011). However, Ereaut and Whiting (2008: 1)

---

[5] Please refer to Deci and Ryan (2008) for a more complete consideration of the concept

[6] Please refer to Deci and Ryan (2008) for a more complete consideration of the concept

comment that there is still *"significant ambiguity"* in relation to 'wellbeing' both within public policy and the wider arena. Following analysis, the authors concluded that the:

> *"meaning and function of a term like 'wellbeing' not only changes through time, but is open to both overt and subtle dispute and contest."* (Ereaut and Whiting, 2008: 1)

Sointu (2005) suggests that the usage of 'wellbeing' has not only grown in recent years, but the understanding of its meaning has altered – this is significant since it has the potential to impact upon policy development. Sointu (2005) analysed newspaper reports of wellbeing over a range of time periods between 1985-2003 in both the Guardian and the Daily Mail. Sointu (2005) commented that in the Guardian, between 1985-1986, there were 53 references to wellbeing (8 relating to children), the term primarily being used in relation to the *"health and wealth of nations"* (page 259). Between 2002-2003, the usage of the word had increased, with 665 articles (122 relating to children) appearing in the Guardian and 440 (134 relating to children) in the Daily Mail. In addition, the discussions had become more focussed on self-responsibility, perhaps reflecting 'New Labour's' ideological stance at the time.

White (2008) comments that 'wellbeing' suggests inclusivity, positivity and holism as well as an approach that centres on the individual person; she explains that it is not merely a focus upon numerical data in areas such as life expectancy and income. A number of authors have offered definitions of wellbeing and these are presented in Table 2.8. Whilst these vary, key components include social relationships and the recognition that humans have a need to interact with others if wellbeing is to be achieved. In addition, there is a central theme that suggests that people should be enabled to fulfil their potential and to contribute to society – this will inevitably benefit all.

| Definitions | Author | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| *"Healthy and successful individual functioning (involving physiological, psychological and behavioural levels of organisation), positive social relationships (with family members, peers, adult caregivers, and community and societal institutions, for instance, school and faith and civic organisations), and a social ecology that provides safety (e.g. freedom from interpersonal violence, war and crime), human and civil rights, social justice and participation in civil society".* | Andrews et al (2002: 103) | A comprehensive definition that has been devised with specific relevance to children; however, the child's subjective perspective is not reflected. |
| *"Well-being is a state of successful performance throughout the life course integrating physical, cognitive and socio-emotional function that results in productive activities deemed significant by one's cultural community, fulfilling social relationships and the ability to transcend moderate psychosocial and environmental problems".* | Bornstein et al (2003:14) | A comprehensive definition that has been devised with specific relevance to children; however, the child's subjective perspective is not reflected. |
| *"Well-being is defined through feelings in particular happiness, but integrating sadness is also relevant. Well-being is about feeling secure particularly in social relations, when relations are for example harmonious. Well-being is also defined as being a moral actor in relation to oneself (when making decision's in one's best interests) and when one behaves well towards others."* | Fattore et al (2007:18) | This definition has been drawn from primary research with children, however, it has been subjected to adult interpretation and it could be argued that the voice of the child has not been fully captured. |
| *"A dynamic state, in which an individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community."* | Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008: 11) | There is recognition of the changing focus of wellbeing; however, the definition particularly refers to mental wellbeing, it does not specifically relate to children and there is no explicit reference to its subjective nature. |
| *"Doing well"; "Feeling good"; "Doing good"; "Feeling well".* | White (2008: 3-4; 2010: 160) | This definition conceptualises wellbeing at the intuitive level; whilst it has not been formulated by children (or specifically for them), it was felt to be the most appropriate one to adopt for this research (please refer to Sections 1.2.4; 1.5.4 and Table 1.2). |
| *"A positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society. It is enhanced by conditions that include supportive personal relationships, strong and inclusive communities, good health, financial and personal security, rewarding employment, and a healthy and attractive environment."* | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] and National Statistics (2010: 106) | A generic definition that is not child specific. Whilst it is detailed, there is no acknowledgement of wellbeing changing over the life course. In addition, the subjective perspective is not embraced. |

**Table 2.8:**        Definitions of 'wellbeing'

White (2008: 7), following work with the ESRC Research Group into Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD), offered a triangular framework that depicts three key dimensions of wellbeing: "*Subjective*" (referring to experiences and

perceptions); "*Material*" (referring to practical issues including the standard of living) and "*Relational*" (concerning personal and social relations). In addition to this, White (2008) suggests that wellbeing is a process that is influenced by both time and space - interpretation of the concept altering with both historical time and also throughout the lifecycle. White (2010) explains that personal understanding and achievement of wellbeing can be influenced by geographical space, this includes daily movements between areas (such as work or school) as well as more long-term changes. White (2008) continues by identifying that there are also difficulties associated with the concept of wellbeing; firstly, "*Relational*", which she argues is such an integral aspect of wellbeing, could be viewed as less important than the "*Material*" aspects of life, particularly for those living in poverty. Secondly, there is a possibility that if all the dimensions of wellbeing are not embraced that this could lead to the withdrawal of governmental financial support, on the premise that someone can be "*poor, but happy*" (page 11). Finally, White (2008) suggests that models of psychological wellbeing have been developed within a western culture and that this is a dominant perspective that may misrepresent those from other groups and ethnicities.

The points raised by White (2008; 2010) are crucial; not only does she contextualise the concept of wellbeing, but she alludes to the challenges - this is something that does not appear to be considered within the wider literature, but which is particularly important in light of the development of governmental policy and the diversity of cultural groups within the UK.

In summary, the definitions of wellbeing suggest that it is a dynamic changing concept that embraces relationships as well as the fulfilling of personal potential.

### 2.4.2 Children's wellbeing

Interestingly, Cronin de Chavez et al (2005) suggest that the focus of wellbeing can be perceived differently between disciplines; however the authors comment that the area of children's wellbeing is exceptional since research in this area has tended not to focus on a particular aspect (such as material wealth), but has embraced many dimensions – this is certainly reflected in the literature that was reviewed in relation to this doctoral work.

The UNCRC (1989) highlighted that there should be a worldwide commitment to the enhancement of children's wellbeing; as a consequence, a range of countries, including the UK (DfES, 2004), Republic of Ireland (Hanafin and Brooks, 2005) and the United States of America (Land et al, 2001) have developed wellbeing indicators.

### 2.4.2.1 Children's wellbeing indicators

Within the UK, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] and UK National Statistics (2010) identified wellbeing (with nine sub headings [Table 2.9]) as one of their sixty-eight sustainability indicators - four key areas directly relating to children. To assess the status of children's wellbeing, the overall measurement was based upon responses to the 'TellUs' surveys (Office for Standards in Education [OfSted] and DfES, 2008) that were conducted with almost 250,000 children who were in school years 6, 8 and 10. Whilst this was quantitative data and children did not have the opportunity to elaborate or to identify additional issues, the overall findings were optimistic with responses indicating that children and young people were very positive about their local areas, had good friendships and family support, undertook some physical activity most days of the week and felt safe. The area that was evaluated least well was bullying with 29% of participants reporting that they had been targeted in the previous twelve months.

| |
|---|
| • Overall life satisfaction<br>• Overall satisfaction with aspects of life<br>• Positive and negative feelings<br>• Engagement in positive activities<br>• Child wellbeing<br>     ○ Local environment<br>     ○ Positive and negative feelings<br>     ○ Feelings of safety<br>     ○ Health and physical activity<br>• Physical activity<br>• Green space<br>• Cultural participation<br>• Positive mental health |

**Table 2.9:**      **Components of the wellbeing indicator (DEFRA and National Statistics (2010)**

More recently, the Office for National Statistics [ONS] (2011) undertook a national wellbeing debate between November 2010 and April 2011 that focussed upon 'what matters to you?' (Evans, 2011). The general public were invited to contribute to the initiative via the ONS website as well as through a range of events. Whilst this project was generic, school aged children were invited to participate; although specific details relating to their involvement are limited, the children indicated the importance of their friends and family. Following on from the debate, wellbeing indicators across the life course are currently being developed by the ONS (2011); these aim to both measure national wellbeing and identify the subjective aspects of people's lives that are most important to them.

Apart from this generic approach, more specific attention has been given to children's wellbeing. When the previous Labour party was in power, the document, 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2004) was published, with the fundamental aim of improving children's wellbeing. This goal has since been reiterated:

*"Enhance children and young people's wellbeing, particularly at key transition points in their lives"* (DCSF, 2007a: 13)

Five key outcomes were identified (being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; economic wellbeing) together with twenty-five aims; these outcomes were reflected in the Children Act (2004) and

the Children's Commissioner was given responsibility for ascertaining the views of children in relation to these areas[7]. Since the election of the coalition government, the DCSF (formally the DfES) which had responsibility for 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2004), has been dissolved; whilst the five key areas in 'Every Child Matters' remain on the Department for Education [DfE] (2011b) website, it could be argued that this is not receiving the same priority as it once was. However, a range of other UK policy has focussed upon children's wellbeing (for example, DfES and DH, 2004; DCSF, 2007a, b; DCSF and DH, 2009; DH, 2010c).

Unfortunately, despite this work, Unicef (2007) in 'An Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries' revealed that United Kingdom was ranked last out of the twenty-one countries that were included. In order to measure and compare child wellbeing between countries, Unicef (2007) identified six dimensions (material wellbeing; health and safety; educational wellbeing; family and peer relationships; behaviours and risks; subjective wellbeing). Quantitative data from a range of sources (for example, the WHO's survey of Health Behaviour in School-age Children, 2001 [Currie et al, 2004]) was drawn upon to assess the extent of child wellbeing. The Lancet (2007) does comment that some of the measures used to draw this conclusion could be considered weak; for example, if a child lives in a single-parent family or with step parents, this is considered negatively when assessing relationship wellbeing. In these circumstances, it could be argued that catholic countries, where divorce rates are lower, may fare better than those that embrace religious diversity. In addition, Unicef (2007) does acknowledge that the measurement and comparison of wellbeing across countries was not without its difficulties since there was not access to comparable data across all nations. Nevertheless, it is perhaps not surprising that the current government is focussing upon child wellbeing in relation to policy development, particularly as a more recent update from Unicef (2010)

---

[7] Please go to http://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/search?search=wellbeing for more details [Accessed on 20th September 2011]

indicated that the UK remains in the lower rankings where children's wellbeing is concerned.

Within the UK, children's wellbeing indicators are continuing to develop; for example, Communities and Local Government [CLG] recently commissioned The Social Policy Research Unit and The Social Disadvantage Research Centre to develop an Index of Child Well-being [CWI], this was published in 2009 (Bradshaw et al, 2009). This document presents an index of child wellbeing that drew upon the approach that was utilised for the development of the Indices of Deprivation and which focussed on seven key areas (*"material well-being", "health", "education", "crime", "housing", "environment", "children in need"*: page 6); a range of already available data was utilised to underpin the formation of the CWI; however, Bradshaw et al (2009) do acknowledge that data was limited in some areas. Nevertheless, the document is the first publication of its type that identifies child wellbeing indices for children aged between 0-16/18 years of age for specific areas of England. According to the scores attributed, the local authority district with the lowest level of child wellbeing is Manchester and the highest is Hart, Hampshire. Whilst this information can provide insight into particular areas of England, the data gathering did not, unfortunately, provide the opportunity for the inclusion of the child's perspective.

### 2.4.2.2    Children's subjective wellbeing

More recently, there has been a move towards the gathering of subjective wellbeing information; whilst this still primarily focuses upon quantitative data, it does provide the opportunity for individual perspectives (for example, refer to work by Løhre et al, 2010; Phillips-Howard et al, 2010; Van Ootegem and Verhofstadt, 2011). A range of wellbeing self-report tools are now available for children/young people (examples include, Warwick Edinburgh Mental Health Well-being Scale, 2006; Heady and Oliveira, 2008; TellUs survey [Ofsted and DfES, 2008); however, many have been developed from adult material

therefore their suitability for use with children could be questioned (Rees et al, 2010).

The Children's Society has funded a range of initiatives relating to children's subjective wellbeing, one of the most recent of which was a survey conducted with young people (10-15 years of age) in England with the aim of gaining a *"better understanding of well-being"* (Rees et al, 2010: 15). Two questionnaires were developed, (based upon a review of the literature as well as the views of young people), one for primary school children (which had 100 items) and one for young people at secondary school (140 items). The tools included questions that related to a range of wellbeing issues, including relationships, self and the environment. A stratified sampling technique was used which resulted in 325 primary and 785 middle/secondary schools being invited to participate in the research; the surveys were completed in the classroom, facilitated by Ipsos Mori personnel (March-July 2008) – it is not clear if the children were able to communicate with each other whilst completing the questionnaire and there is no indication that parental consent was sought. 6,744 (51.5% females; 48.5% males) children and young people completed the survey. When responding to the questionnaires, the participants were either asked to ascribe a numerical rating to, or indicate the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with a statement.

Overall, the analysis revealed that children and young people had a positive view of their wellbeing (this is in line with the findings from DEFRA and National Statistics, 2010); it is interesting that socio-demographic issues were not key in relation to the achievement of wellbeing, whereas being bullied, age (wellbeing declined slightly with age), gender (females had a slightly lower feeling of wellbeing than males), quality of relationships with family, learning abilities and family structure were all issues that were seen to impact to some extent on the perception of wellbeing. One of the areas that was ranked the highest was family and friends – this appears to be consistent with findings from other work both outside (Nic Gabhainn & Sixsmith, 2005; Fattore et al, 2009) and within the

UK (Counterpoint Research, 2008; DEFRA and National Statistics, 2010; Parry et al, 2010; Ipsos Mori and Nairn, 2011).

Whilst this survey is important as it considered the child/young person's perspective, once again, data collection was quantitative with the participants being asked to rate the items presented in the questionnaire. There was therefore no opportunity for the participants to comment on other factors that may not previously have been considered in relation to wellbeing. Rees et al (2010) do explain that further work is planned, including the collection of qualitative data.

### 2.4.2.3      Children's wellbeing: A qualitative perspective

Whilst there is an increasing body of literature relating to children's wellbeing, the focus is primarily on the development of children's wellbeing indicators, drawing upon a quantitative approach; however, there have been some studies that have embraced a qualitative perspective and these will now be considered.

Hanafin et al (2007) conducted research that aimed to identify a set of national wellbeing indicators for children in the Republic of Ireland, a key objective of the Irish National Children's Strategy (Department of Health and Children, 2000); the study focussed upon gaining the *"whole child perspective"* (Hanafin and Brooks, 2005: 13) and was influenced by earlier work, in particular Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1993; 1995). This was a large study that comprised of three aspects – firstly a review of indicators already being used elsewhere was undertaken (Brooks and Hanafin, 2005); this was followed by a feasibility study of already available data that could be used to develop children's wellbeing indicators (Fitzgerald, 2004, cited by Hanafin et al, 2007). In addition, a Delphi technique was drawn upon to utilise the expertise of a panel (Hanafin and Brooks, 2005), and, in parallel to this, qualitative research on children's perceptions of wellbeing was also undertaken (Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2006).

The Delphi study (Hanafin and Brooks, 2005) had a number of stages; initially a panel of 87 experts was purposefully selected – these people were from a wide range of backgrounds (including policy makers and parents); none were children or young people - whilst their involvement in this aspect of the research was considered, it was decided that it would be preferable to conduct separate parallel research to ascertain the views of children. The Delphi study took place over three rounds with respondents being provided with the opportunity to comment upon child wellbeing indicators. Finally, measurable outcomes to assess achievement of the indicators were drawn up using pre-existing data sets.

The views of children and young people, aged 8-19 years, were taken into account via the parallel study (Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2005); the participants were recruited via fifteen schools (both primary and secondary) and the research comprised of four key stages. In the first phase, 266 children were provided with a disposable camera and were asked to take photographs of anything that represented the feeling of wellbeing and that *"make them well"* or *"keep them well"* (page 10) (46 of the children withdrew from the study at this point for a range of reasons). The cameras were collected from the school, the photographs developed and the children, in class time, were asked to annotate the pictures; the children were able to keep a complete set of the photographs for themselves. For the purposes of the research, the concept of wellbeing was described as:

> *"feeling good, being happy and able to live your life to the full"*
> (O'Higgins, 2002, cited by Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2006: 252)

It is interesting that whilst this definition, and the guidance given to the children, does not embrace all of the dimensions of wellbeing that are referred to in other areas of the literature (Table 2.8), it does have some commonality with White's (2008) intuitive definition that was used to inform this doctoral study.

A number of the photographs were removed prior to phase 2 of the study, (some were duplicates or blank); following this selective process, 4073

photographs remained, these were randomly distributed into batches of fifty. This phase of the study asked different groups of socio-demographically similar children to categorize the photographs into themes (it is not clear how large each group of children was) – the researchers continued to introduce another set of fifty photographs to the groups for categorization until saturation was reached (this was normally between 200-450 photographs). The groups described the categories that had been identified and the potential relationships between them. A range of similarities between the groups (which included children in primary and secondary education living in both rural and urban locations) was evident; ten key areas finally emerged *("friends", "family", "sport/teams", "pets/animals", "environment/places", "tv/video games", "homes/houses", "food", "music", "school/teachers"* [Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2005: 32]).

Phase 3 of the study involved the researchers visiting a third school and asking children (none who had previously been involved in the study) to look at sample photographs and the categories to facilitate the development of schemata – this demonstrated the interconnection between key aspects of children and young peoples' lives. The schemata for primary children highlighted areas such as, family, friends, pets and home/bedroom and religion.

The final stage of the research (phase 4) involved the integration of the schemata that had been generated; this was undertaken within a youth café/centre with eight young people. This group was asked to identify similarities across both gender and urban/rural participants; as a result of this, a final schema of 22 categories (Table 2.10) was produced and said to *"represent the perspectives of all of the groups of children involved"* (Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2005: 60); the findings of this work were fed into the research previously discussed (Hanafin and Brooks, 2005) to facilitate the identification of wellbeing indicators for children (Table 2.10).

| Areas identified from children & young peoples schemata | Final children's wellbeing indicators |
|---|---|
| • Books and reading<br>• Money<br>• Phones<br>• School<br>• Sports<br>• Pets<br>• Friends<br>• Family<br>• Food<br>• Houses<br>• Bed<br>• Music<br>• TV<br>• Opposite sex<br>• Religion<br>• Art<br>• Computers, video games<br>• Environment<br>• Cars<br>• Clothes<br>• Playing, toys<br>• Travel and holidays | • Abuse and maltreatment<br>• Accessibility of basic health services for children and young people<br>• Attendance at school<br>• Availability of housing for families with children<br>• Children and young people in care<br>• Chronic health conditions<br>• Community characteristics<br>• Crimes committed by children and young people<br>• Economic security<br>• Enrolment in childhood care and education<br>• Enrolment in education/completion of school<br>• Environment and places<br>• Health of the infant at birth<br>• Immunisation<br>• Mental health<br>• Nutrition<br>• Parental time with children<br>• Participation in decision-making<br>• Pets and animals[8]<br>• Public expenditure on services for children and young people<br>• Quality of childhood care and education[9]<br>• Relationship with parents and family<br>• Relationship with peers<br>• Screening for growth and development<br>• Self-esteem<br>• Self reported happiness<br>• Sexual health and behaviour<br>• Things to do<br>• Use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs<br>• Values and respect[10]<br>• Child population<br>• Family structure<br>• Parental education level attained<br>• Child mortality<br>• Children and young people with additional needs |

**Table 2.10:** **Areas identified by children and young people in relation to wellbeing (Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2005) and children's wellbeing indicators (Hanafin and Brooks, 2005)**

This was a comprehensive and complex study that makes an invaluable contribution to the literature; in particular, it provided the opportunity for children to raise issues that were important to them – most notably, the value of their pets. The indicators that were finally developed were designed to apply to all

---

[8] Identified by children – specific measurable indicator to be developed

[9] Authors state that this was included in questionnaires as the focus had been identified from earlier work - specific measurable indicator to be developed

[10] Authors state that this was included in questionnaires as the focus had been identified from earlier work - specific measurable indicator to be developed

children in Ireland; as a consequence, their applicability to other countries may be limited. In addition, the generic nature of indicators necessitates that the individual perspective of participants cannot be fully captured; the perceptions of children of different age ranges, genders and environmental location may well have been diluted within the final schema. It could also be argued that the children and young people may not feel an affinity with the phrases used within the thirty-five wellbeing indicators that were finally developed (Table 2.10). However, the challenges associated with the involvement of children in the development of wellbeing indicators should not be underestimated; this study used an innovative child-centred approach that will undoubtedly provide insight for others wishing to utilise similar strategies.

Fattore et al (2007; 2009) conducted an Australian qualitative study with children aged between eight and fifteen years in order to inform the development of children's wellbeing indicators. The researchers drew upon a phenomenological/ethnographic approach that took part over three stages – the aim being to gain insight into what wellbeing meant to the children of New South Wales. 123 children were initially recruited, via schools, using a purposive sampling technique to ensure that a range of participants from differing socio-economic backgrounds were involved. Interestingly, the sample size had reduced to 92 and 53 by the time of the second and third phases of the study. The first stage involved either group or individual interviews with children (they were given the choice) – in this aspect of the data collection, children were asked about their views of wellbeing; the authors do acknowledge that this *"initially caused some confusion for some children"* (Fattore et al, 2007: 16) and this may be one reason why the second stage, which had not been pre-planned, was introduced as it provided an opportunity to discuss the themes that had been highlighted in stage one. The third and final stage required the children to undertake a project that enabled them to explore a theme that was important to them (this involved the use of photography, collage, drawing or journal keeping); on completion, the children discussed their projects with the researchers.

Fattore et al (2007: 18) published early findings from their research, initially presenting a definition of wellbeing:

> *"Well-being is defined through feelings in particular happiness, but integrating sadness is also relevant. Well-being is about feeling secure particularly in social relations, when relations are for example harmonious. Well-being is also defined as being a moral actor in relation to oneself (when making decision's in one's best interests) and when one behaves well towards others."*

The above description is interesting as it alludes to 'sadness' – this is not usually associated with wellbeing. Whilst the definition has been drawn from the primary research with children, it has been subjected to adult interpretation and it could be argued that the true voice of the child is not captured. In later work, Fattore et al (2009: 61) expanded upon their findings, explaining that children's understanding of wellbeing was through *"significant relationships and emotional life"*; in addition, three key dimensions of wellbeing emerged (*"agency", "security" and "positive sense of self"*) as well as six themes (Table 2.11)[11]. Concurring with other literature, (Nic Gabhainn & Sixsmith, 2005; DEFRA and National Statistics, 2010; Rees et al, 2010), Fattore et al (2009) comment upon the importance that children and young people attributed to their relationships with others. Interestingly, Fattore et al (2007: 20) illustrate how an initial theme that emerged from their work, *"activities and being active"* could be used to add to the already existing body of knowledge.

---

[11] The work of Fattore et al (2009) is further discussed in Chapter 6 as it has relevance to the findings from this study

| Dimension/Theme | Meaning |
|---|---|
| **Dimension:** Agency: Control in everyday life | Wellbeing included having the ability to make choices to influence decisions. |
| **Dimension:** Positive sense of self | A positive sense of self was associated with wellbeing. |
| **Dimension:** Security | A feeling of being safe and secure was identified as being a contributor to wellbeing. |
| **Theme:** Material and economic resources: What families need to get by | Children identified that the availability of financial resources provided access to a range of activities. In addition, children demonstrated an awareness of their family's financial difficulties. |
| **Theme:** Physical health | Physical health and activity emerged as being important to the children's sense of wellbeing. |
| **Theme:** Adversity | Being able to deal with challenging situations. |
| **Theme:** Activities: Freedom, competence and fun | Activities were important to the sense of wellbeing. |
| **Theme:** Physical environments | Physical environments can promote a feeling of wellbeing. |
| **Theme:** Social responsibility: Being a good person | Children identified that doing the 'right thing' created a good feeling; children felt good when they helped others. |

**Table 2.11:        Dimensions and themes from the work of Fattore et al (2009)**

In summary, the research by Fattore et al (2007) is of importance as it offers a valuable insight into the concept of wellbeing from the child/young person's perspective.

Within England, qualitative research has been undertaken (Counterpoint Research, 2008; Ipsos Mori and Nairn, 2011); however, its focus is somewhat restricted. A study was commissioned by the DCSF (Counterpoint Research, 2008) which sought to identify English parents, carers, children and young people's understanding of *"wellbeing"*, *"happiness"* and a *"good childhood"* (page 7). The children and young people were in school years 3, 7, 9 and 11 with all participants being recruited from *"higher"* and *"lower"* (page 11) socio-economic backgrounds. *"Tightly structured peer groups"* were used to explore the topics with participants with family interviews being held at a later stage[12]. Unfortunately, the authors comment that:

---

[12] Specific details relating to sampling technique and size as well as methodology are no longer available as the DCSF has ceased to exist since the coalition government was elected in May 2010

> *"'Wellbeing' was not a term with which they* [the participants] *were familiar, and respondents struggled with its use….When pushed they guessed it might be something to do with health"* (page 14)

As a result, the findings that directly relate to this aspect of the study are extremely limited; those pertaining to 'happiness' and a 'good childhood' are more extensive, but include a broad spectrum of quotes from a range of participants - the child's perspective therefore plays a minor part in the overall findings. Whilst some positive aspects emerged from the study (such as the importance of family, friends and the wider community), the report predominantly focuses upon the factors that negatively impacted upon childhood (such as environmental concerns, financial pressures and political correctness) – it was these areas that were subsequently reported by the media, (for example, British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2008; Mail Online, 2008). Overall, *"all participants in the research found it challenging"* (page 21); it is not clear what prior information about the study the respondents received, but it is possible that a lack of preparation impacted upon the findings since there are indications within the report that the participants did not know what to expect and were "*non-plussed by the topic"* (page 14).

In summary, whilst this study had some limitations, it was qualitative research that involved English children and their families; in addition, some of the findings (particularly those related to the importance of family and friends) have supported the work of others (for example, Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2005; Fattore et al, 2009; Rees et al, 2010).

Unicef UK commissioned Ipsos Mori and Nairn (2011) to undertake qualitative research in relation to children's wellbeing that aimed to understand the impact of inequality and materialism on children's lives. The research was underpinned by the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and compared the lives of children in the UK, Sweden and Spain; the first phase used an exploratory ethnographic approach which filmed, for approximately six hours, the day-to day activities of eight families in each country (the British families lived in all four countries

across the UK and were purposively sampled to embrace a range of socio-economic backgrounds). The second phase of the research involved in-school discussions with children aged between 8-13 years of age; 7 schools in each country (the UK was counted as one) participated with one or two discussion groups and two individual interviews taking place in each; once again purposive sampling was used to ensure a breadth of socio-economic backgrounds. A discussion guide was drawn up and included areas that had emerged as a result of phase 1 of the study. Whilst the focus of the research was restricted to two phenomena ('inequality' and 'materialism') and did not embrace all aspects of wellbeing, the findings revealed some interesting issues that support the work of earlier authors such as Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith (2005) and Fattore et al (2009). The children in all three countries highlighted the *"the importance of family time"*, *"friendship and companionship",* and *"being active and outdoors"* (pages 25-29); interestingly, the value of pets was also raised and the authors comment that they were frequently viewed as family members. The children perceived these three areas as being far more important than the materialistic resources that were also discussed within the study. Interestingly the UK parents were reported as struggling to spend as much time with children as their counterparts in Sweden and Spain (this was due to a range of reasons which included work commitments and financial resources); Ipsos Mori and Nairn (2011) comment that this has further ramifications since inequality within the UK is related to wealth, which, in turn impacts upon family life. In conclusion, the authors comment that:

> *"The children in all three countries have the same needs and wants and concerns. Yet the response to these by each society is different. It seems that children are more likely to thrive where the social context makes it possible for them to have time with family and friends, to get out and about without having to spend money, to feel secure about who they are rather than what they own, and to be empowered to develop resilience to pressures to consume."* (page 73)

This study makes an important contribution to the literature, particularly as it is one of few that have been conducted within the UK; however, the number of English children and families (four families and four schools) who participated was low meaning that qualitative research in this country is still very limited. In

addition, discussions with children were focussed upon very specific areas (such as 'materialism') – therefore the concept of wellbeing was not viewed holistically and other issues that were important to children's lives may not have been revealed.

Outside of England, but still within the UK, the Welsh Government recently published the Children and Young Peoples Wellbeing Monitor for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government [WAG], 2011). The role of the monitor was to report on the wellbeing of children and young people, 0-25 years of age, using indicators (data was drawn from a range of key surveys), the findings from a qualitative study with children and young people (Parry et al, 2010) and a review of evidence (Turley et al, 2011).

The qualitative aspect underpinning the monitor was a study of wellbeing, (commissioned by the WAG Social Research Division) undertaken at Glyndŵr University, Wales (Parry et al, 2010). The aim of the research was to explore children and young people's perceptions of wellbeing – the research being guided by the UNCRC (1989) which has been adopted by WAG. Eighty-two purposively selected participants from across the nine Welsh counties were involved in the study. The sample was representative of a range of households and was comprised of people aged between 6 months and 25 years. Children who were 4 years or older spoke for themselves, the parents of the younger children reported on their behalf. In total, 61 participants under 18 years of age, 15 young people between 18-25 years and 11 parents[13] took part in the study. Data collection was via focus groups (67 respondents) and one-to-one interviews (15 respondents); unfortunately, the age ranges for each method were not specified. Whilst the authors mention that semi-structured interviews were used and that the questions were generated from the research aims, it is not clear what the children and young people were specifically asked. Following

---

[13] If the parents were younger than 25 years of age their contribution was counted twice – once in the parent and once in the young person category

data analysis, based upon a constant comparative approach, the findings revealed 10 key themes (Table 2.12):

| |
|---|
| • No place like home: "I love my house" |
| • Safety and fear: "that stranger in the paper" |
| • Education: "relevance to later life" |
| • Money and finances: "I think it comes from seeing my mum struggle" |
| • Identity and belonging: "I am Welsh it makes me feel proud" |
| • Difference: "I don't think speaking different is a reason for people to make fun of you" |
| • Staying healthy: "I eat pretty much junk food but I use my trampoline" |
| • Wellbeing generally: "sometimes (money) makes you more sad" |
| • Being listened to and understood: "I try to get my point across" |
| • For the future: "mostly when you leave school it never works out like you want it" |

**Table 2.12:      Key themes that emerged from the study by Parry et al (2010)**

Whilst this study provided some important insights into children and young people's perceptions of wellbeing, the age and backgrounds of the participants was very wide, therefore making it difficult to establish the opinions of a particular group (for example, there is little mention of the perceptions of 9-11 year olds). In addition, the majority of data collection was undertaken via focus groups; therefore, individual views may not have been fully explored. Nevertheless, some of the findings do concur with the earlier work of Nic Gabhainn and Sixmith (2005) and Fattore et al (2009), most notably, the importance of children and young people's relationships with friends and family.

The final monitoring report (WAG, 2011) commented upon the negative lifestyle factors that have the potential to impact upon the health of children and young people (such as alcohol usage); interestingly, however, it stressed that:

> *"Focusing on such information alone could be said to follow a deficits model of public health, focusing on those problems that policies need to tackle. While this deficits model is important, it should ideally be complemented by addressing assets, those factors that develop resilience and promote positive health and wellbeing, such as participating in leisure activities, enjoying a positive school environment and ease of communication with family and friends."* (WAG, 2011: 29)

This above quote highlights the recognition that asset based approaches are now gaining; this doctoral study has responded to the need to further consider both the theoretical and practical elements of such a strategy.

### 2.4.3  Summary

In summary, whilst the qualitative research that has been undertaken in relation to children's wellbeing has been invaluable, it is recognised that:

> *"Far more work is required to incorporate the views and perspectives of children and young people themselves"* (Hicks et al, 2011: 11)

This doctoral work sought to capture the voice of the child within a specifically defined developmental stage, focussing upon the mapping of children's assets that underpin their wellbeing - something that had not previously been undertaken.

### 2.5    Conclusion

This review has critically considered a comprehensive range of literature that relates to the key aspects of the theoretical framework (Figure 1.1) that guided this doctoral study. The research examined has made a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge; however, it revealed that the mapping and identification of children's assets, at an individual level and in relation to their welbeing, had not previously been undertaken. In Chapter 3, attention is given to the research approach and process that was adopted for this study.

# Chapter 3:    Conducting the Research
## Methodological Approach and Data Collection Methods

## 3.0        Introduction

The research perspective that informed and guided this study was based upon a qualitative approach that drew upon ethnography. This chapter will provide a short introduction to qualitative research; this will be followed by a more detailed examination of ethnography itself. Each aspect of the data collection process will then be explained and the underpinning rationale for each stage of the decision-making process discussed. The chapter concludes by considering the ethical issues that were pertinent to the study.

## 3.1        Qualitative research

It has been suggested that enquirers should always approach a problem from within a certain paradigm (Khun, 1970) and it is imperative that researchers are clear about the one that leads their thinking (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). Since this doctoral study sought to gain insight into children's wellbeing through the lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy' - in other words, children's own views and perceptions, the qualitative paradigm was the most appropriate.

Carter and Little (2007: 1316) suggest that qualitative research involves the asking of *"open questions about phenomena as they occur in context rather than setting out to test predetermined hypotheses".* Cutcliffe and McKenna (1999: 376) argue that it is *"concerned with describing, interpreting and understanding the meanings which people attribute to their existence and their world".* An 'inductive' process is fundamental to qualitative research (Finfgeld-Connett, 2006), whilst this facilitates in-depth exploration of the phenomena under investigation, it does mean that the findings are unique to the particular study. In summary, the qualitative approach involves a number of diverse methods which aim to gain a greater understanding of human experiences,

perceptions, motivations and actions (Morse and Field, 1996; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Parahoo, 2006).  This over-arching statement of the intent of qualitative research is consistent with the aims of this study and has informed the selection of this paradigm within the research design.

## 3.2    Ethnography

The qualitative paradigm provides a wide range of methodological approaches that may be drawn upon (for example, ethnography [Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995]; phenomenology [Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1973]; case study [Yin, 2002] and grounded theory [Glaser and Strauss, 1967]). However, ethnography offered a method of investigation that would support the achievement of the research aim; the approach was considered at length, with careful thought being given to its application within the context of the whole study, including data collection and the analysis processes – these aspects are discussed further in the section below and at relevant points throughout this chapter.

### 3.2.1  Defining ethnography:

Ethnography has a long history; the term has Greek origins, 'ethos' meaning 'nation' and 'peoples' (Leininger, 1985).  Aamodt (1982) suggested that the most basic form of ethnography was apparent in the work of Herodotus in the 5th Century B.C when he investigated the origins of the Greco-Persian wars. This was followed, much later, by Thomas Jefferson in 1798, when he attempted to systematically collect data relating to Indian nations in America (Aamodt, 1982).  However, it was the anthropologist Malinowski (1954) who first explained and documented the 'rules' for data collection within this naturalistic research approach.

Ethnography has become the quintessential research method for anthropologists (Payne et al, 1981) and over the last century it has been the prime technique for the anthropological study of small-scale societies, such as

tribes or villages in Africa, Asia or America (Hughes, 1992). Although authors (such as Thomas, 1993 and Muecke, 1994) have criticised Malinowski's early form of ethnography, and would not practice the 'classic' approach advocated by him, it was his work that was influential in the development of other anthropological schools of thought; Muecke (1994) suggests that there are four major ones - these are summarised in Table 3.1.

A number of authors have attempted to define ethnography (for example, Leininger, 1985; Fetterman, 1989; Rosenthal, 1989; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Aamodt (1982, page 211) suggests that it *"describes particular cultures"*, and Ragucci (1972, page 486) states that it is:

> *"A naturalistic comparative method aimed at studying human behaviour and attitudes through observations in the natural setting."*

Kleinman (1992: 128) gives more detail, by saying that:

> *"The ethnographer first describes the local world and then, even if he or she is interested in particular persons, gives primacy not to the subjective reality of a single individual but to the social reality of a particular group. For the ethnographer the local world that encircles the group may be a village or a neighbourhood or even a social network."*

Hammersley and Attkinson (1995) identified two crucial aspects of ethnography. Firstly, it focuses on understanding the views of the group who are being studied, and secondly, it uses the direct observation of everyday activities of people. Fetterman (1989) has suggested that the traditional approach to ethnography requires extensive time to be spent undertaking fieldwork (between six months to two years); however, he continues by stating that this *"long-term continuous fieldwork is neither possible or desirable"* (Fetterman, 1989: 10). It would not have been feasible to spend a prolonged period of time with the children who participated in this study; this would have been too intrusive and impracticable. However, the need to nurture a professional relationship with the children over a period of time was acknowledged. This strategy facilitated the building of a good rapport with the children and their parents, undoubtedly enhancing the richness of the data that was collected. In

addition, the children's photographs provided an important visual insight into their lives and experiences.

| Type of ethnography | Key features |
|---|---|
| **Classical** | • The people studied are assumed to share a common culture<br>• The descriptions reformulate raw 'facts' into categories, such as kinship, trade systems and rituals<br>• Product of a prolonged sojourn with the community being studied. Includes observation and documentation while participating in selected activities<br>• Usually, key persons are selected from the group for more intensive interviewing<br>• The credibility of the ethnographer is crucial. There is an attempt to remain objective<br>• Communication in the language of the informants is usual |
| **Systematic** | • The aim is to define the structure of a culture, rather than the people and their social interaction<br>• The school criticizes classical ethnography for being too global<br>• It provides a systematic overview of the ways which people organize their knowledge. It's purpose is to discover 'the native point of view' and to learn the 'cognitive maps' which shape people's behaviour as members of a particular group<br>• Primary data are folk taxonomies of words and naming units and contrast sets of terms. Formalized data collection techniques and data base management are required skills |
| **Interpretive** | • Ethnography is essentially analytic and interpretive, rather than methodological (Woolcott, 1980)<br>• The aim is to discover meanings of observed social interactions<br>• 'Thick description' of human behaviour is a vital component<br>• There is a belief that analysis should discover the meanings of observed social interactions<br>• It takes ethnography to higher levels of analytical power. |
| **Critical** | • Ethnography is a fiction – an invention created by the interactions of the ethnographer and the informants, who are considered to be co-authors<br>• Ethnography is interpretive; therefore, different ethnographers would create different accounts. The interpretation is only one possible reading of the culture (Noblit and Hare, 1988: 14)<br>• Criticises interpretive school for 'rounding off' observations and excluding contrary voices<br>• Ethnography is subjective, reflecting the stance, values and awareness of the researcher<br>• The mutual influence of the ethnographer and research field on each other is termed 'reflexivity'. The ethnography should be explicit about the nature of the reflexivity (Lamb and Huttlinger, 1989)<br>• The product is an image which represents only a particular moment and context, not the holistic culture<br>• Two schools have emerged: Postmodernist and feminist |

**Table 3.1: Types of ethnography**

### 3.2.2 Principles underpinning ethnography

The four major schools of anthropologic thought, outlined in Table 3.1, share a number of common principles which describe the epistemological stance, derived from naturalism (Lofland and Lofland, 1971; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). A summary of these is provided in Table 3.2 and their relevance to this study considered.

| Key areas underpinning the ethnographic approach | Relevance to this study |
|---|---|
| Ethnographers are active participants in both data collection and data analysis (Aamodt, 1982). | Achieved. I conducted all aspects of the research including data collection and analysis. |
| The analytical process in doing ethnography focuses on generating categories and discovering relationships between the categories (Aamodt, 1982). | Achieved with the use of asset mapping (Chapter 4). |
| The cultural identity is viewed as more than a sum of its parts. It is important not to separate aspects of people's lives - if behaviour is studied in isolation, some of the factors leading to that behaviour may be lost (Laugharne, 1995). | Acknowledged. The study sought to gain insight into children's lives to gain further understanding of their wellbeing. |
| Within a situation there will normally be different perspectives (Hilton, 1987). | Acknowledged and recognised. |
| Cultural rules inform, in part, human social behaviour (Spradley, 1972). | Acknowledged. |
| Cultural data is derived from what people do and what people say they do (Aamodt, 1982) | Acknowledged. Whilst observation was not used for data collection, the use of the children's photographs enhanced understanding of their activities and insight into their lives. |
| A person's behaviour is inextricably linked with the meaning that the situation has for him/her (Hilton, 1987). What people do, is in part, determined by the culture in which they live (Laugharne, 1995). | Acknowledged. The asset mapping process facilitated the consideration of influential factors in the children's lives. |
| A person's behaviour and beliefs can only be fully understood in the light of broader aspects of organisation or culture (Hilton, 1987). | Acknowledged. The data collection procedures were carefully planned to embrace this aspect. |
| The group or culture must be studied 'as it is' (Hilton, 1987). In conjunction, the researcher must have respect for the social world in which the study is to be conducted. | Acknowledged. The data collection tools were chosen to facilitate this. There was respect for the children's social world. |
| A person's understanding, and behaviour, changes as he/she interacts with others (Hilton, 1987). | Acknowledged. Strategies were employed to facilitate the building of a rapport with the children and their families so that there was a more relaxed and informal atmosphere at the interview stage. |

**Table 3.2:** **Key areas underpinning an ethnographic approach and their relevance to this study**

A more traditionally written ethnography normally includes a comprehensive account of the participants, their history, the geographical area in which they live as well as a range of socio-economic information. However, an *"ethnographically informed report"* is as valuable as the more traditional ethnography (Fetterman, 1989: 117) – this is the approach that was adopted for the presentation of the findings from this doctoral work (Chapter 5).

### 3.2.3 Using ethnography with children

Ethnography provides the opportunity to *"learn from (rather than study)"* groups of people (Offredy and Vickers, 2010: 87); this is the stance that underpinned this research. It has now become well recognised that children can participate in research in their own right - ethnographic approaches have facilitated this acceptance with its use undoubtedly growing in recent years (Qvortrup, 2000). Punch (2002) highlighted three approaches to research with children:

- Children are viewed similarly to adult participants with the use of the same data collection tools

- Children are viewed very differently to adults and ethnography is used to explore the child's world

- Children are perceived as similar to adults, but it is recognised that they have different abilities – this has led to the development of a range of child centred tools

Whilst Christensen (2004: 165) very much supports and values the use of ethnography with children, she suggests that children should primarily be viewed as *'fellow human beings'* and that this:

> *"Entails not treating children as in principle different from adults. This approach does not assume that particular methods are needed for research with children just because they are children"*

This study was based upon the assumption that children are indeed "*fellow human being"*, deserving of their voice being heard; however, children in middle childhood have yet to reach maturity, therefore, their understanding of the world

is different to that of an adult. It is children's perception of their world that this study sought to capture; drawing upon ethnography, and the use of engaging data collection tools, was felt to be the most appropriate way in which to do this.

## 3.3     Data collection methods

Careful consideration was given to the selection of data collection tools so that they were engaging for the children, but also aligned with the ethnographic approach, thus reflecting Malinowski's advice:

*"The final goal of which the ethnographer should never lose sight...is briefly to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world"* (1954: 25).

In order to facilitate the above, it was decided that a photo elicitation method, conducted in two key phases, would be used:

- Initially children were provided with a single use disposable camera and asked to take photographs of the 'Activities I Enjoy'

- Secondly, children were individually interviewed and asked to talk about each photograph and the context in which it had been taken.

### 3.3.1  Photography

The use of photography in research with children is not new; a study undertaken by Moss (2008) to develop an inclusive schooling policy in Tasmania, found the use of visual images as well as oral interaction to be very beneficial. Similarly, Graham (Graham and Kilpatrick, 2010) conducted an ethnographic study with children in years 5 and 6, using a photo elicitation approach; she comments that:

*"The photographs taken individually created a platform for children to share their stories"* [Graham and Kilpatrick, 2010: 96]

Therefore, there was evidence that visual imagery, as well as the spoken word, could help to contextualise the activities that children enjoyed participating in; this in turn facilitated the mapping of assets and insight into children's wellbeing.

Whilst several studies, whose participants have been children, have successfully utilised photography (for example, Darbyshire et al, 2005; Epstein et al, 2006; Close, 2007; Cook and Hess, 2007), it is acknowledged that *"using photographs as a research tool is not easy"* (Donaldson, 2001, page 178). One of the chief concerns that has been expressed is the potential ethical implications, this has limited its use in some areas of health research (Banks, 2001; Riley and Manias, 2004; Graham and Kilpatrick, 2010) – these issues are further considered in Section 3.8.

The technique of *"inserting a photograph into a research interview"* (Harper, 2002: page 13) is termed 'photo elicitation'; this was a phrase originally coined by John Collier (1957), a researcher and photographer. More recently, Hurworth (2003) has highlighted four different approaches to photo elicitation (Table 3.3).

- 'Autodriving': The researcher takes photographs of the participants; they are then asked to discuss their behaviour
- 'Reflexive photography': Participants take their own photographs and are then asked to reflect upon these in an interview
- 'Photo novella'; Participants take their own photographs, but it is in done in a manner that facilitates the story of their lives
- 'Photovoice': Provides the opportunity for participants to take photographs of aspects of their community that need changing. It can be a powerful tool to influence policy makers

**Table 3.3:          Four approaches to photo elicitation (Hurworth, 2003)**

It was reflexive photography that was felt to be the most appropriate method for this study as it not only facilitated insight into children's lives, but was also empowering and valuing of their contribution. It is recognised that there are a number of benefits and challenges associated with the use of photography (Table 3.4), it was therefore important to establish the feasibility and receptiveness of utilising the method with children; as a result, a reference

group was arranged with similar aged children to those who participated in the actual study.

### 3.3.2  Children's reference group

One of the recognised methods of consulting children and of involving them in decision making processes is via a reference group – The National Youth Agency (2007: 4) state that this is when:

> *"A group of children and young people (perhaps with adults) advise and inform those planning, delivering or reviewing a piece of work, or who manage a team or organisation."*

A reference group was felt to be the most appropriate strategy to inform the planning of the proposed research methods; this event was arranged via the Aim Higher initiative (Directgov, 2009) in which UH participated. By liaising with the relevant UH personnel and the Head Teacher of a primary school in the South East of England, a reference group of one hour duration was held with 51 children (9-10 years of age) on 9th June 2008. In order to help conduct the activities, eight UH student ambassadors, who had been previously prepared, provided assistance. The reference group confirmed that the use of photography was appropriate for this age of children – there was full engagement and enthusiasm towards the cameras; in addition, useful feedback was provided in relation to the children's consent form and information sheet. Table 3.4 provides an overview of the potential benefits and challenges of photography, identifying their relevance to the children's reference group.

| Benefits | Degree of confirmation in reference group | Challenges | Degree of confirmation in reference group |
|---|---|---|---|
| It is fun and engaging (Close, 2007), quick and enjoyable (Cook and Hess, 2007). | There was an extremely strong indication from all 51 of the children that this was an enjoyable activity that they were very eager to participate in. | Children may not have the skill or the prior experience to use a camera, although it has been suggested that this is quickly remedied (Coad, 2007). | All 51 children demonstrated the ability to physically use a camera (including those who had not previously been exposed to the technology); however, some children did require a little guidance, particularly in relation to the flash component. |
| A visual prompt for later discussion (Cook and Hess, 2007). | Not established. | Children may take inappropriate photographs. | Not established as the children were asked to remain in the classroom for the duration of the reference group. However, this is an issue that was considered in relation to this doctoral study. |
| A tool that enables children to identify what they feel is important (Cook and Hess, 2007). | Partially confirmed. Although, the children were limited during the reference group in terms of what they were able to photograph, they were able to make clear choices and it was interesting to note their differences. | A camera may be given to a child who has had no previous experience of the technology (perhaps because of financial implications) and is unlikely to do so again – this could leave children feeling disappointed and unable to develop their skill (Punch, 2002). | Not confirmed; however, this is an issue that was considered in relation to this study, resulting in the development of camera guidelines for the children (Appendix 4). |
| Empowering; photography allows the participant to be in control and to make decisions; other techniques, such as drawing, may be further influenced by skill and the pictures drawn by peers (Punch, 2002). | Established. Children were able to make decisions in relation to their photography and they clearly enjoyed this. The majority had never previously had a camera given to them with total freedom of choice to take as many or few photographs as they wished. | Photography is influenced by the season (Punch, 2002); therefore this needs careful planning in relation to the undertaking of the study. | Not confirmed as the children were asked to remain in the classroom for the duration of the reference group. However, this was considered in relation to this study and data collection spanned a calendar year. |
| Helpful when presenting and reporting the study (Coad, 2008). | Not established. | Children may not fully understand the research and why they are being asked to take photographs (Cook and Hess, 2007). | The children appeared to understand why they were being asked to use the cameras; in addition, they provided feedback in relation to the photography experience as well as the participant information sheet and consent form – this was positive. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Children tend to have a strong interest in pictorial representations, including photographs (Coad, 2007). | Confirmed. Children enjoyed discussing the clip art on the participant information sheet and responded very positively to its inclusion; in addition they were all very certain about the use of photography as part of the study. | | |
| Photographs have the ability to provide a clear image from the participant's perspective, this can then be further explored (Morrow, 2001). | The children were able take the cameras home with them so a visual record from the reference group was not achieved; however, additional use of the camera outside of the reference group confirmed that good visual records were produced. | | |

**Table 3.4 :          The benefits and challenges of photography and their relevance to the children's reference group**

The reference group demonstrated that, if used appropriately, photography can be a suitable method that can facilitate the valuing and respecting of children, enabling them to be seen as partners in the research process (Thomson, 2008). Table 3.5 identifies how photography was used in this study (further specific details are provided in the sections below with Table 3.6 containing an overall summary).

- Each child was provided with a disposable camera (27 exposure) - Figure 3.1
- Each child was asked to take photographs of the 'Activities I Enjoy'; clear guidelines in relation to the use of the camera were provided (Appendix 4)
- The camera was collected from the child's home
- The photographs were developed and the child was asked to discuss each in turn
- The child was given the photographs to keep, but asked if they would like to give 2 or 3 to the researcher to keep for presentation purposes

**Table 3.5:**      **The use of photography in the proposed study**

Despite the many strengths of photography, an area that could cause concern is the environment in which children choose to take photographs. Personal communication with researchers who have successfully used it as a research method with children (Coad, 2008; Close, 2008) provided reassuring advice. Coad (2008) advocated the provision of 'ground rules' for children in relation to the taking of inappropriate photographs. Close (2008) did not use this approach and suggested that the cameras and photographs would belong to the children and therefore would be no different to other personal photographs that they may take, providing that they were either allowed to keep them or any recognisable features were pixillated.

The reference group revealed that children would need some guidelines in relation to *how* to use the camera (in particular the 'flash' component) and the types of activities that they could take photographs of, this was duly developed (Appendix 4).

**Figure 3.1:** *"I did them* [the photographs] *all myself"* (Emma)
**The disposable camera provided to each child**

### 3.3.3 Interviews

Interviews have been recognised as being a key component of ethnographic research by a number of eminent authors (such as Spradley, 1979; Ellen, 1984; Fetterman, 1989; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995); they have also been used in a range of ethnographic studies with children and young people (for example, Waters, 2008; Cross, 2009; Brewer and Sparkes, 2011; Lambert et al, 2011).

Polit and Beck (2006: 502) define an interview as:

*"A method of data collection in which one person (an interviewer) asks questions of another person (a respondent): interviews are conducted either face-to-face or by telephone."*

Interviews are now one of the most commonly used methods of collecting data (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006) with a number of texts (Burns and Grove, 2005; Fontana and Frey, 2005; Polit and Beck, 2006) differentiating between their types (structured; semi-structured and unstructured). It was the semi-structured approach that was felt to be most appropriate for this study as it provided children with the opportunity to talk about their photographs, whilst

also allowing the use of a set of developmentally appropriate 'prompt' questions to maximise data gathering (Appendix 5). Whiting (2008, Appendix 6) discusses semi-structured interviews in detail, considering each aspect of their use; in addition, further specific information about the conduction of the interviews is provided in Section 3.7.

## 3.4    Recruiting the participants for the study:

The aim of ethnography is for the researcher to work with participants to gain an insight into their cultural world, the success of which depends to a large extent on the nature of the relationship (Spradley, 1979). Spradley (1979: 25) adds that informants are *"native speakers"*, a very different role to that of *"subject"* or *"respondent".* To facilitate understanding of the culture, the researcher identifies individuals who can provide the information and insight (Burns and Grove, 2005); in the case of this study, children aged between 9-11[14] years of age.

The age and background of the research participants was selected for a number of reasons. Firstly, according to Kirby and Bryson (2002), children in this range are less likely to be invited to be involved in projects; they have, however, normally developed good verbal communication skills and have the cognitive ability to understand the role and function of a study - Broome (1999) reassures that children as young as six years of age are able to demonstrate an appreciation of research. In addition, studies that have involved children as well as young people have found that the younger age group provide as many thoughts and ideas as the older age range (Borland et al, 2001).

Secondly, it was felt that children between 9-11 years had developed sufficient independence to be able to fully participate in the study and to make autonomous decisions.

---

[14] All of the children were either 9 or 10 years of age with the exception of one who had her 11th birthday the week before her interview (ethical approval was granted for children between 8-11 years)

Thirdly, the majority of children in England are from middle to low affluence circumstances – this research sought to identify a sample of children who were representative of this socio-economic background (this is discussed in more detail below). Finally, primarily for practical reasons, it was important that the children lived within the South East of England as this enabled me to more expediently visit them.

Grieg et al (2007) acknowledge the challenges that the researcher can be faced with when trying to gain access to children as participants. Whilst Hood et al (1996) discuss the problems of recruiting children both through schools and health care settings, Grieg et al (2007) suggest that schools can provide a successful indirect route. In addition, it is important to foster a trusting relationship with parents (Grieg et al, 2007) and a letter via a school route may reassure them that the study is of a bona fide nature. There is evidence to suggest that schools are receptive to such requests (Kaplan, 2008) and the communication with the Head Teacher of the school involved in the reference group further reinforced this; therefore, to facilitate access to a group of children, two primary schools in the South East of England were approached. Following discussions with the Head Teachers, the Year 5 children of the first school were visited in January 2009 and the Year 5 children of a second school in June 2009. At this meeting, all of the children (45 in school 1, and 16 in school 2) were provided with information about the study and given a sealed envelop containing additional written details (Appendices 7 and 8). No children were excluded from participating in the research. From the first school, thirteen children were recruited, and from the second school, a further five. All of the children participated in all stages of the study; Table 3.6 provides an overview of the recruitment and research process, whilst Appendix 9 contains further biographical details about the participants including the two children from the pilot work (Section 3.6) - a total of 20 participants, 10 girls and 10 boys.

| Procedure | Rationale |
|---|---|
| • Formal letter to Head Teacher | • To explain the study and ask if children could be recruited via the school |
| • Telephone conversation with Head Teacher | • To further explain the study and to clarify questions |
| • Visit to school to talk to the children about the study. Each child in year 5 was provided with a sealed envelope containing two information sheets – one for the parent/guardian(s) and one for the child – and an stamped addressed envelope [SAE] | • The person who holds parental responsibility for the child needed to consent to participation, therefore they were able to decide whether to give the children's information sheet to their child |
| • A request was made in the Parent/Guardian Information Sheet to return the 'tear off' slip in the attached SAE if there was agreement from both the child and parent/guardian(s) for the child's participation in the research | • To ascertain interest in participating in the study |
| • On receipt of the 'tear off' slip, a telephone call was made to the family to further explain the research study and to arrange a face-to-face meeting with the child and parent/guardian(s) to: <br> 1. Gain consent from the child and parent/guardian <br> 2. To provide the child with a disposable camera <br> 3. To provide guidelines in relation to the use of the disposable camera <br> 4. To arrange a date to collect the disposable camera once the photographs had been taken | • To further explain the study and to clarify questions; the first visit to the house also provided the opportunity to obtain written informed consent from the parent/guardian and child, to answer questions and to give the camera |
| • Visit to the child's home to collect the disposable camera and to arrange a date for the individual interview | • Each visit to the child's home provided the opportunity to build rapport and trust with the family - I met each child a total of four times. |
| • Visit to the child's home to deliver the photographs and conduct an individual interview | • To provide children with the opportunity to talk about their photographs, the context and rationale for taking them |

**Table 3.6:**     **The recruitment and data collection procedure**

The majority of families in England fall within the middle to low affluence band, classified as group 'C' (UK National Statistics, 2009); this research sought to gain insight into the world of children who were from this typical socio-economic

background. As a result, the schools approached for the recruitment of participants were selected because they were both situated in similar middle to low affluence areas within the South East of England - the UK National Statistics (2009) were consulted to confirm this. It was appreciated that although the schools were located within these areas, it did not necessarily mean that the children and their families were of middle to low affluence; therefore, to provide a clearer indication, a demographic pro forma was developed (Section 3.7.1 and Appendix 10). Figure 3.2 depicts one of the children's homes; this was the type of house that the majority of the children lived in.



**Figure 3.2:** *"This is my house"* **(Fleur)**
**An example of the type of home that the children lived in**

The reference group had not only provided evidence that enrolment to the study via a school could be an effective method, but demonstrated some of the advantages of utilising this strategy (Table 3.7).

| |
|---|
| • Promotes inclusion: All children in a class were able to participate if they wished |
| • Promotes 'sharing': Children were able to share their experiences with others in the school |
| • Provides an initial clear strategy by which to approach families |
| • Children enjoy experiencing similar activities to their peers |
| • Parents knew that the Head Teacher has provided initial approval for families to be approached – this gave added reassurance in relation to the bona fide nature of the research |

**Table 3.7:** **Findings from the reference group that confirmed the feasibility of recruiting participants via school**

One criticism of this recruitment approach could be failure to embrace more children from other cultural and socio-economic backgrounds; whilst this is acknowledged, the study did not seek to be representative of all children.

## 3.5 Reflective diary

A number of authors have suggested that reflexivity is fundamental to an ethnographic approach (Davies, 1999; Hodgson, 2005; Pellatt, 2005; McGarry, 2007; Barton, 2008) as it can further enhance understanding of the participant's view point (Hertz, 1996) as well as rigour and reliability (Jootun et al, 2009).

A reflexive approach was adopted throughout the research process, particularly in relation to data collection - this was facilitated by the use of a reflective diary. Authors have discussed the value of keeping a reflective diary whilst undertaking qualitative research (for example, Koch, 1994, Wall et al, 2005; Clarke, 2009); Clarke (2009) suggests that there are a number of potential benefits to this, including the clarification of personal thoughts (this may facilitate data analysis), the provision of transparency throughout the study and the maintenance of rigour. Prior to, and after data collection, my diary took the form of an aide-mémoire; however, during the participant recruitment and data collection processes, the diary was used in a more structured manner; the framework offered by Wall et al (2005) helped to ensure its productive and constructive nature (all writings were kept securely) (Table 3.8).

| Stage of Framework | Interpretation of stage within this study | Rationale for undertaking this stage |
|---|---|---|
| Pre-reflective preparation | Prior to each visit to the school, or the child's home, I sat in the car and focused upon the purpose of the visit, any previous contact with the school, child or parent. | To ensure that all practical and physical resources were prepared, this helped to enhance my confidence in my abilities.<br>To clear my mind of activities that I had previously been engaged in (these were often work related).<br>To read through any relevant information that I already had (for example, if it was a second visit to the child's home, I re-familiarised myself with my previous reflective notes). |
| Reflection | This stage facilitated my reflective thinking in relation to specific situations (such as visits to the schools or a child's home). This involved documenting my thoughts and feelings, environmental information (such as the location and nature of the child's home) and further details about the child and their family. This stage was normally achieved within two hours of each encounter. | To further develop my understanding and insight of the meeting. If this was an interview with a child, documenting what else was going on in the home at the time facilitated my analysis. For example, in Myan's case, I was able to appreciate why he did not always fully engage with the questions asked – when I arrived, prior to the interview, he revealed to me that his Mother had told him that he could play outside with his friends when I had left; returning to this information during analysis helped me to understand the brevity of some of his replies (Myan's interview was the shortest in length).<br>To reflect upon the positivity of the recruitment and data collection processes – I felt it was important to acknowledge my achievements as well as the challenges faced.<br>To consider my abilities as a novice researcher. For example, I had originally thought that my interview questions may evolve as a result of initial findings; however, reflecting upon the approach I used, I decided that the original interview questions should remain the same throughout the study. |
| Learning | This stage enabled me reflect upon what I had learnt as a result of each encounter. | To clearly document what I had learnt from each stage of the recruitment and data collection process. Examples of my learning included: The importance of being punctual, the need to 'fit in', not just with busy family schedules, but also the availability of space for the interviews – I learnt very rapidly that a quiet, private room was not feasible. |
| Action from learning | This stage provided me with the opportunity to consider how my new learning could be used in the future, for example, during subsequent data collection. | To incorporate my learning into future aspects of the research. For example, it became clear from an early stage how important it was to plan ahead and to allow plenty of time to travel to each venue. Many of the children and their families had very busy lives, I was therefore frequently 'accommodated' in between various other commitments and activities – being late could have jeopardized my relationship with the family and my subsequent data collection. |

Table 3.8:        Application of reflective diary framework (Wall et al, 2005)


Barton (2008) comments, in relation to an ethnographic approach, that researchers should acknowledge their subjectivity; the maintenance of a reflective diary certainly assisted this process. For example, I was sometimes

conscious that I was making a judgment about a situation; as a result, I found it beneficial to re-reflect upon my writings two to three weeks later. This proved to be important; on one occasion, I had been concerned about Petra's home environment and her aspiration to work as a pole dancer later in life - I documented my thoughts in relation to this. Re-reading my diary reminded me to respect the child's culture as well as to try to 'make sense' of Petra's situation, appreciating that my concerns were resulting from my professional experience. Hegelund (2005: 656) comments that:

> "Because the researcher does have his or her background of knowledge with her all the time, and because this cannot, nor ought it to, be switched off, it will affect (also in the sense of give meaning to) what he or she sees and concludes."

Hegelund (2005) continues by explaining that in the ethnographic approach different researchers will provide their own interpretation and that as long as this is done competently, there is "*no need to worry*" (page 656).

## 3.6    Conducting the Pilot Study

Prior to the undertaking of the main study, it was felt that it was essential to undertake pilot work. There appears to be little published literature that discusses the role and purpose of pilot studies; however, van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002: 33) emphasise their importance, stating that:

> "The term 'pilot studies' refers to mini versions of a full-scale study (also called 'feasibility' studies), as well as the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule. Pilot studies are a crucial element of a good study design."

Whilst some authors such as Holloway (1997) suggest that pilot studies are not essential for qualitative studies, it is acknowledged that they can develop the skills of the novice researcher.  van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) continue by providing a range of reasons for the undertaking of a pilot study, these are

identified in Table 3.9 and are considered in relation to the work that was conducted for this research.

Two children participated in the pilot study (Appendix 9); both were the daughters of acquaintances who lived in the same locality as the schools that were used for recruitment to the study. I did not have any prior relationship with the children; this was felt to be important because a pre-existing association may have been influential. Peat et al (2002) comment that data from a pilot study of research using a quantitative approach should not be incorporated into the main study as there is a danger of contamination; however, it is recognised that this is less of a worry in qualitative research (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). Since only minor modifications were made following the pilot work, it was felt that the contribution of the children should be valued and that the data gained as a result of their participation should be included in the main research.

The pilot work proved to be an invaluable learning experience, enabling reflection upon the research tools and interview technique. Each stage of the research process was initially conducted with one child - this decision was purposefully made so that any modifications could be put in place and their appropriateness assessed during the pilot work with the second child. Some minor issues were raised as a result of conducting the pilot study, these are itemised in Appendix 11 together with the identification of the action that was taken.

| Reasons for conducting pilot studies | Applicability to the pilot study undertaken for this study |
|---|---|
| Developing and testing adequacy of research instruments. | Applicable. The pilot study was seen as an ideal opportunity to assess the appropriateness of a number of the research tools (for example, the Information Sheets, consent form, telephone pro forma, demographic pro forma, disposable camera, interview questions and the digital recorder). |
| Assessing the feasibility of a full-scale study or survey. | Applicable. The pilot study allowed assessment of the feasibility of undertaking the full-scale study. |
| Designing a research protocol. | Applicable. Minor modifications were made as a result of the pilot work. |
| Assessing whether the research protocol is realistic and workable. | Applicable. The pilot study allowed assessment of the feasibility of the whole research process. |
| Establishing whether the sample time frame and technique are effective. | Applicable. The pilot study provided valuable information in relation to the anticipated length of each visit to the children. |
| Assessing the likely success of proposed recruitment approaches. | Not applicable as a different recruitment strategy was utilised in the pilot study to the main research. |
| Identifying logistical problems which might occur when using the proposed methods. | Applicable. The pilot study was used to identify any logistical problems such as the time needed to travel between venues. |
| Estimating variability in outcomes to help determining sample size. | Not applicable. |
| Collecting preliminary data. | Applicable. The data from the pilot work was integrated into the main body of the study. |
| Determining what resources, such as finance or staff, are needed for a planned study. | Applicable. The Association of British Paediatric Nurses [ABPN] small research grant was subsequently applied for and granted to fund resources. |
| Assessing the proposed data analysis techniques to uncover potential problems. | Applicable. The pilot work was integrated into the main research; rudimentary data analysis began after the pilot interviews. |
| Developing a research question and research plan. | Applicable. Whilst the research question and plan had been completed, minor modifications were made as a result of the pilot work. |
| Training a researcher in as many elements of the research process as possible. | Applicable. I gained experience as I had not previously conducted research with children. |
| Convincing funding bodies that the research team is competent and knowledgeable. | Not applicable as the study was undertaken as part of a doctorate programme. |
| Convincing funding bodies that the main study is feasible and worth funding. | Applicable. Following the pilot work, the ABPN small research grant was granted to fund resources. |
| Convincing stakeholders that the main study is worth supporting. | Not applicable as the study was undertaken as part of a doctorate programme. |

**Table 3.9:** **Reasons for conducting pilot studies (from van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002) and their applicability to this research**

## 3.7    Conducting the interviews

When conducting interviews, Clarke (2006) suggests that the participant should be given a choice of venue; the time and site was therefore negotiated with the parent(s) and child, but all were conducted within the home. Whilst the interview involved the child (and no other family member), there were occasions when others were present, this was normally either one or both parents (this issue is further considered in Section 3.8).

Rose (1994) advocates that an interview checklist is prepared that identifies practical arrangements and areas to be clarified with each participant. Table 3.10 highlights key issues that were reiterated to each child who was involved in the research.

- Purpose of interview
- Clarification of topic under discussion
- Format of interview
- Approximate length of interview
- Assurance of confidentiality
- Purpose and use of digital recorder (including consent for its use)
- Assurance that the child can seek clarification of questions
- Assurance that the child can decline to answer a question(s)
- Assurance that the child can ask questions

**Table 3.10:        Checklist of points for explanation prior to interview**

Each interview (lasting for between 22-54 minutes) was recorded using a digital-audio recorder. This produced high quality sound with very minimal data-loss. The recorder was switched on prior to giving the child their photographs and switched off at the conclusion of the interview and after the child had chosen a photograph frame and album (please refer to Section 3.8.1). The children and parents were all reassured that the audio recordings would be used exclusively by the researcher and that, with the exception of the supervisory team and a professional transcriber, they would not be made available to any other party. Although the recordings themselves would not be used in any presentation of the research findings, the families were informed that verbatim comments may be drawn upon – there were no objections to this. All parents and children consented to the use of the digital recording. No supplementary written notes or memos were taken during the interview as it

was felt that this would be distracting for the children and could disrupt conversational flow; however, at the conclusion of each interview, and after leaving the child's house, reflective notes and comments were made (Section 3.5).

Pope et al (2000: 320) suggest that qualitative research incorporates the option of refining questions so that *"new avenues of inquiry"* develop. Consideration was therefore given to whether data from the initial interviews might inform a revision of the interview questions.  However, this option was not pursued as it was felt that making changes to the interview schedule might inadvertently risk the 'forcing' of emerging assets. As an illustration, children mentioned their friends and the relevance of them to the activities that they enjoyed. Specific questions could have been introduced relating to friendships, however, this may have had the effect of initiating and establishing a theme, rather than allowing the asset to 'reveal' itself. Conversely, it is acknowledged that this approach may have meant that issues were not raised by the children themselves and that this could also have influenced the findings.

Although changes were not made to the key interview questions, Spradley (1979) provided valuable advice in relation to the building of rapport; as a result, current and popular children's books were read to develop insight into the children's cultural world; whilst it is recognised that this literature was written by adults, further knowledge of the children's interests undoubtedly enhanced the 'depth' of interviews.

### 3.7.1  Demographic pro forma

Whilst the child's interview was being conducted, the parent was asked to complete a short demographic pro forma (Appendix 10); this was based upon the Family Affluence Scale [FAS] (Currie et al, 1997), but also incorporated other demographic questions (for example, the number of siblings) - this information proved very useful as it gave further insight into the family's

circumstances. None of the parents expressed any objection to providing the details.

The FAS was originally developed for the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children [HBSC] surveys (Currie et al, 1997; Currie, 2001) and was utilised to assess family affluence. The scale identifies four items (Currie et al, 2004)(Table 3.11) which were slightly modified for the demographic pro forma used in this study; a score is attributed in relation to each response, with all four then being added to give an overall numerical value. A FAS score of 0-3 indicates low affluence; 4-5 middle affluence and 6-7 high affluence.

| |
|---|
| **Does your family have a car, van or truck?** |
| Response categories: No = 0; yes = 1; Yes, two or more = 2 |
| **Do you have a bedroom to yourself?** |
| Response categories: No = 0; yes = 1; |
| **During the past year how many times did you travel away on holiday with your family?** |
| Response categories: Not at all = 0; once = 1; twice = 2; more than twice = 3 |
| **How many computers does your family own?** |
| Response categories: None = 0; one = 1; two = 2; more than two = 3 |

**Table 3.11:**       **Family Affluence Scale (Currie et al, 2004)**

Currie et al (2004) acknowledge that there are some weaknesses with the tool; they recognise that car ownership may, for example, vary according to the location of a family's residence – it does not necessarily have a direct relationship with affluence. Having utilised the scale within this doctoral work, other factors are not fully accounted for; for example, in one instance, an older sibling had bought a laptop as a result of savings generated from part-time employment – this impacted upon the FAS score, but the earnings were not sufficient to change the family's financial circumstances. Most importantly, the tool does not consider whether the family home is rented or owned; within the UK, residence tenure, as well as location, could provide insight into family circumstances. Despite these limitations, the demographic pro forma allowed the families' affluence to be considered against the same set of criteria; this

proved beneficial as the research had sought to involve children from low to middle affluent backgrounds – a suggestion from the FAS that this was not the case for some children would have impacted upon the data analysis and findings; the FAS identified scores of between 3 and 5 for all the families (this being within the relevant range). In addition, the pro forma provided useful information at the data analysis stage as it gave context to the family situation; for example, it was not unusual for children to refer to sibling(s) during their interview – the pro forma provided clarity in relation to their age and gender.

## 3.8 Ethical considerations

Involving children in research raises a number of ethical issues, all of which need to be considered if the participants are to receive the protection that they deserve (Morse & Field, 1996; Haber, 2002). From the inception of the study, the children's participation was fully valued and respected; each aspect of the research was scrutinised and approved by the University of Hertfordshire Research Ethics Committee for Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work, Criminal Justice and Counselling [UH Ethics Committee] on 16th October 2008. Three minor amendments were requested, these were completed and ethical approval was duly granted (Reference Number: NMSSCC/11/2008/1A). Key ethical issues are discussed in the following sections.

### 3.8.1 Children as participants in the research process

Burns and Grove (2005) suggest that the selection and treatment of all participants throughout a study must be fair and they advocate that a number of points be taken into consideration - the relevance of these to the children who were involved in this research is highlighted in Table 3.12.

| Points for consideration | Degree of achievement for this study |
|---|---|
| The participants should only be selected for reasons that are directly related to the issue being studied. | Achieved. Children in three Year 5 classes (two classes in school 1 and one class in school 2) were given the opportunity to be involved in the research. The children's participation was directly related to the study. |
| The researcher and participant should have a specific agreement about the degree of participation that is involved. This should be respected and not changed during the study unless consent is obtained from individual participants. | Achieved. No alterations were made to the degree of participation. |
| The researcher has a responsibility to be on time for interviews and not to keep the participants waiting. | Achieved. I arrived at the child's house approximately ten minutes prior to the agreed time and waited in the car until the appointment. |
| Any benefits that are promised such as a copy of the findings must be provided. | All children were promised a choice of a photograph album and frame in which to store their photograph(s) – this was adhered to.<br><br>A developmentally appropriate summary of the study's findings was distributed in May 2011 (Appendix 12). |

**Table 3.12:       The right to fair treatment (adapted from Burns and Grove, 2005)**

The undertaking of studies frequently prompts researchers to consider whether small gifts should be given to participants as a token of respect and thanks. Whilst gift giving can be ethically contentious (Fargas-Malet et al, 2010), it was felt that respecting and valuing the children's contribution and time was important. As a result, following their interview, each child was able to choose a small photograph album and frame in which to store their picture(s) – this was discussed at the UH Ethics Committee and was duly approved. In addition, a 'thank you' letter was sent to each child following the completion of their interview and a developmentally appropriate summary of the study's findings was distributed in May 2011 (Appendix 12).

### 3.8.2  Gaining informed consent

Gaining the informed consent of participants is absolutely essential (Morse & Field, 1996; Kumar, 1999; Locke et al, 2000; McHaffie, 2000). There is no reason why competent children under the age of sixteen years should not consent for themselves (Fargas-Malet et al, 2010; Alderson and Morrow, 2011). All of the children in this study were judged to be competent to make their own

decision about their involvement, but it was felt that the parent(s) should also consent to the child's participation; as a result a joint consent form (Appendix 13) was devised. Both the children and parents were provided with relevant information sheets; the principles offered by Alderson and Morrow (2004) were followed for the child version and the guidelines presented by Burns and Grove (2005) were used for the formulation of the Parent/Guardian Information Sheet (Appendices 7 and 8).

Burns and Grove (2005) suggest that certain details should be given to each person prior to consent being obtained - these were followed and applied to the children who were involved in this study (Table 3.13).

| Information | Degree of achievement for this study |
|---|---|
| Introduction of research activities. This should clearly indicate how the study is to be conducted. | Achieved. The children were initially introduced to the concept of the research study during visits to each school (January and June 2009). Parent/Guardian and developmentally appropriate Children's Information Sheets were given to all children in a sealed envelope. |
| Statement of research purpose. This should include both immediate and long term goals. | Achieved. Salient points were included in both the Children's and Parent/Guardian Information Sheets. In addition, verbal information was provided to the children and their parent(s)/guardians; the parents/guardians were informed that the study was being undertaken as part of a doctoral programme at the University of Hertfordshire. |
| Selection of research participants. Details need to be included explaining how and why the participants have been chosen. | Achieved. This information was given verbally and stated in both the Children's and Parent/Guardian Information Sheets. |
| Explanation of procedures. Information concerning how and when these are to be carried out, and in what setting, should be given. | Achieved. This information was given verbally and stated in both the Children's and Parent/Guardian Information Sheets. |
| Description of potential benefits and risks to the individual participants. | Achieved. The potential benefits and risks of the study were given verbally and stated in the Parent/Guardian Information Sheet. |
| Disclosure of alternative procedures or treatment. | This issue was not applicable to this study. |
| Assurance of confidentiality. | Achieved. A verbal and written (in both the Children's and Parent/Guardian Information Sheets) assurance of confidentiality was given. |
| Offer to answer questions. The researcher must make it clear how he/she can be contacted. | Achieved. There was the opportunity to ask questions on a minimum of four occasions; in addition, my e-mail address and telephone number were provided; the parents/guardians and children were informed that they could contact me at any point. |
| Non-coercive disclaimer. This should state that participation is voluntary. However, the completion of a questionnaire can be taken as consent. | Achieved. Written consent was achieved from the parent(s)/guardian and each child. |
| Option to withdraw. | Achieved. This was explained verbally and was stated in both the Children's and Parent/Guardian Information Sheets. |
| Consent to incomplete disclosure. This is only relevant if participants are not to be totally informed about the study as it may influence their behaviour. | This issue was not applicable to this study. |

**Table 3.13:** Informed consent: Information to be given to participants (adapted from Burns and Grove, 2005)

All of the interviews were undertaken by me in the child's home. It is acknowledged that this environment means that data collection can be more time-consuming (Scott, 2000) and that it can raise additional ethical

considerations. Firstly, Mayall (2000) suggests that the researcher needs to identify their social position within the home – this was addressed by visiting the child's residence on three occasions and building a rapport with the family.

Secondly, for safeguarding and child protection reasons, it may not be appropriate to ask to conduct the interview in a private room as this could place the researcher in a difficult position (Barker and Weller, 2003); as a result, parents or family members may be present and this could influence a child's responses (Scott, 2000). As the children's homes were small, space was at a premium; therefore, it was usual that other family members were in close proximity during the interviews (none were conducted in a child's bedroom – this was not suggested by either the families or me). The parents all expressed natural curiosity about the study; in addition, the first person that the children wanted to show their photographs to was their parent(s). All of the children lived within a family context – they appeared secure, comfortable and happy within the interview environment and this may well have had a positive (rather than negative) effect on their responses.

Thirdly, the safety of the researcher is also important; therefore, the UH lone worker policy was followed and appropriate precautions taken.

### 3.8.3   Maintaining confidentiality

Confidentiality is a fundamental aspect of any research involving human participants. Parahoo (2006, page 466) describe this as the:

> *"assurance given by researchers that data collected from participants will not be revealed to others who are not connected with the study."*

Alderson and Morrow (2011) suggest that this aspect of research with children has not always been respected, but that it is vital.

To assist in the protection of confidentiality, the following actions were taken:

- Children were allocated a pseudonym that could be used when reporting findings
- The name of the primary schools used to gain access to the children were not revealed to anyone other than the UH Ethics Committee and the supervisory team
- Any personal data was kept as a hard copy as well as on Universal Serial Bus [USB] memory sticks and stored in a locked cabinet. This material will be destroyed on completion of the study.
- All information relating to data collection (the interview recordings and transcripts; photographs) was kept in a locked filing cabinet. All data will be kept for a minimum of seven years following the conclusion of the study.
- At the end of the interview, all photographs were returned to the children with the exception of those that the children gave me; however, any of these photographs containing images that could result in recognition by others, will not be used for presentation purposes.
- Care was taken when reporting the findings (Chapter 5) and when describing participants as this could lead to recognition.

Finally, Alderson and Morrow (2011: 31) state that *"no one has an absolute right to confidentiality in research and, in rare cases, confidentiality may be broken, if it is thought that someone is in serious danger"*; fortunately, this situation did not arise.

### 3.8.4  Minimising participant and researcher discomfort

Whilst it was not anticipated that the research would cause undue distress or discomfort, it was acknowledged that this was always a possibility. Richards and Schwartz (2002) identified four areas of possible risk for participants in qualitative research: Distress and anxiety; exploitation; misrepresentation and identification of the participant in publications. Whilst care was taken to avoid all of these potential dangers (and will be continue to be taken), there was concern for the children's welfare; two of the interviews were purposely reduced in length as it was felt that the children were tired and loosing concentration. Streubert Speziale and Carpenter (2006) advocate that time is made available at the end of each interview in case any support or advice is required – several minutes was therefore spent with the family engaging in informal conversation; no obvious discomfort was noted and no referral to other personnel was

required. It is also acknowledged that a study can be anxiety provoking for the researcher, whilst this was not the case, I had not anticipated just how difficult closure with the families would be, having built a rapport with them.

## 3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of the research approach, data collection methods and ethical considerations; a rationale for each aspect of the decision-making process has been given in order to demonstrate the rigour demanded of qualitative research. Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the data analysis process that was undertaken.

## Chapter 4:    The Use of Asset Mapping as a Data Analysis Process

### 4.0    Introduction

In this chapter, the use of asset mapping as a data analysis process is described in detail.  The transcription, coding and analysis of the data obtained from the children's interviews are sequentially presented. The chapter concludes by offering a critical discussion of the nature of trustworthiness within qualitative research.

### 4.1    Qualitative Data Analysis

It has been suggested that the analysis of qualitative data is:

> *"a complex, iterative process that entails working inferentially and systematically with the data to produce a final written account" (Froggatt, 2001: 433)*

The method of data analysis that is utilised is clearly dependent upon how the data has been generated (Wolcott, 1994).  Although the underpinning research philosophy will influence the researcher's approach to the analysis (Froggatt, 2001), Cohen et al (2007: 461) comment that *"there is no single or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data"*.

Froggatt (2001) suggests that qualitative data analysis is something that is learnt by personal undertaking, this is interesting as Ingleton and Seymour (2001) comment that there is frequently a failure by both researchers and publishers to include adequate information about how qualitative data analysis was conducted – it could be argued that this not only has implications in terms of *"auditability"* (Sandelowski, 1986: 34) but also makes it difficult for novice researchers to understand and learn about the process that was undertaken. The following sections provide a detailed overview of the analysis of the interviews – it is important to reiterate that the photographs facilitated

conversations with the children and were their property; they were therefore not the subject of analysis.

## 4.2 Transcription of the initial interviews

There has been discussion in relation to who should transcribe interview data, Bailey (2008) suggests that this is a task that is frequently delegated to administrative personnel; however, she warns that if the person is not adequately trained, mistakes can be made. As an Association of British Paediatric Nurses [ABPN] small research grant was awarded in June 2009 (Appendix 14), financial support was available for the employment of a professional transcriber. The familiarization with the data, that can be hugely beneficial to the researcher in terms of analysis (Pope et al, 2000), was gained by re-listening to each interview recording and re-reading each transcript on several occasions.

Each interview was transcribed into a table within Microsoft Word®; I was then able to check the accuracy of the transcription against the recordings. The use of the column/row format of the table facilitated the subsequent process of extracting individual data from the transcript and also allowed the quotes to be linked back to the original script. Transcription was completed within 14 days of each interview.

## 4.3 Challenges of analysing interview data from children

It is important to note that there are some additional challenges to the analysis of interview data generated by children. Authors such as Waksler (1991), Mayall (1994) and Bricher (1999) acknowledge that adult interpretation of children's data is potentially problematic and representation of the child's perspective may never be wholly feasible (Burman, 1994); this does not mean, however, that the researcher should not try to understand the child's

103

experiences and views (Mayall, 1994). Therefore, to facilitate the accurate representation of the children's perspective, a range of measures were employed (Table 4.1).

| |
|---|
| • The analysis was undertaken using the children's own words wherever possible<br>• I took every opportunity to engage with the child's cultural world to aid my understanding of their perspective (examples included reading current children's fiction; familiarising myself with popular collectible play items such as 'Gogos'; visiting the parks and activity areas in the local vicinity)<br>• I viewed the children as experts who were able to provide a unique insight into the research focus<br>• I acknowledged the unequal power relationship that existed between myself and the children throughout the analysis of data; by recognising this, Burman (1994) suggests that the opening up of children's interactions and experiences will be facilitated |

**Table 4.1:** **Strategies employed to enhance the representation of the child's perspective throughout data analysis**

Whilst limited, there are studies (for example, France, 2000; Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2006) that have involved children at some point in the data analysis process; however, a decision was made not to involve children in the data analysis associated with this study for the following reasons:

- Children had not been appropriately trained and prepared for this role.
- An innovative approach was being developed in relation to data analysis - its operationalisation was experimental, therefore children would have been faced with additional challenges.
- The age of the children meant that their literacy skills and cognitive development could potentially limit their understanding and ability to carry out the asset mapping process.
- Children (and their families) had already given their time freely in relation to the data collection; to ask for more input felt 'uncomfortable'.

At this point it is also important to comment upon the nature of the children's interview transcripts. Children between the ages of 9-11 years are still developing cognitively; their language skills are being refined, but not all children are able to talk in longer and more complex sentences (Wong et al, 1999); this frequently resulted in brief responses to questions by the children who participated in this study. Secondly, the attention span of children varies and can be limited (Wong et al, 1999); it is not surprising therefore, that the participants in this research often wanted to change the direction or focus of their discussion quite abruptly. Thirdly, the cognitive development of a 9-11 year

old child is such that their perceptions of time, size and space are not always in line with those of adults (Piaget, 1969). By way of an example, one participant commented:

> *"I tried climbing up this huge tree….and then I couldn't get down because it was too high"* [Elizabeth: 986-988]

Further discussion revealed that a passerby had been able to simply lift Elizabeth out of the tree from ground level. All of these issues meant that a different form of transcript (to that which may be generated from interviews with young people or adults) was produced – these factors played an influential role in the selection of the data analysis method.

## 4.4 Selection of data analysis approach

A range of authors have suggested that the analysis of ethnographic data should be integral to the study and should begin a short time after the beginning of data collection (for example, Spradley, 1979; Robertson and Boyle, 1984; Mackenzie, 1994; Silverman, 2005; Offredy and Vickers, 2010). Mackenzie (1994: 777) suggests that analysis is challenging for the researcher and requires *"ability in original thinking"*. A number of authors have now provided useful guidance on the analysis of qualitative data (for example, Miles and Huberman, 1984; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Pope et al, 2000; Boeije, 2002; Silverman, 2006; Cohen et al, 2007); despite this, it can be both overwhelming (Beck, 2003) and time-consuming (Pope et al, 2000).

Prior to undertaking data analysis, an extensive literature search and review was conducted, this included a focus upon 'health assets' and 'asset mapping' (Section 2.3) – one of the aims being to identify an asset related process for data analysis. However, this revealed that a clear procedure, that was relevant to the mapping of assets at an individual level, had not previously been articulated. As children's transcripts have particular characteristics (Section 4.3), it was also crucial that a data analysis approach was chosen that would

facilitate the emergence of the children's assets as well as enabling the search for both consistencies and inconsistencies within the transcripts - it was felt that drawing upon constant comparative analysis could facilitate this process as well as the accurate portrayal of the data.

Whilst the constant comparative analysis method is central to grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Glaser, 1992), it is also fundamental to other areas of qualitative research (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001; Boeije, 2002). Offredy and Vickers (2010: 199) describe it as:

> *"the process that is used in qualitative research by which any newly collected data are compared with previous data that were collected…..This is an on-going procedure, because theories are formed, enhanced, confirmed or even discounted as a result of new data that emerge from the study."*

A range of authors concur that coding is key to this process (for example, Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Hewitt-Taylor, 2001; Cohen et al, 2007; Offredy and Vickers, 2010). Strauss and Corbin (1998) identify three stages/level of coding ('open'; 'axial' and 'selective'); these were drawn upon to facilitate the analysis of the interview transcripts in this study, the application of each is discussed in turn. Whilst the work of Strauss and Corbin (1998: 223) was influential in the data analysis process, it is interesting to note that they themselves state that *"the analyst has to develop his or her own style and technique"*.

During data analysis, the theoretical framework (Figure 1.1) was used to guide the asset mapping process. In particular, the definition of wellbeing – *"Doing well"*; *"Feeling good"*; *"Doing good"*; *"Feeling well"* (White, 2008: 3-4) was drawn upon to facilitate and focus the procedure.

### 4.4.1 'Open' coding

This is the early stage of data analysis in which the data is examined to enable the identification of categories or themes that then allow further scrutinisation and comparison (Offredy and Vickers, 2010). Strauss and Corbin (1998: 223)

referred to this as *'working on a puzzle'* – the sorting of the pieces of a jig-saw before they can all be placed together to form a complete picture.

### 4.4.1.1      Using 'open' coding to facilitate stage 1 of asset mapping

'Open' coding was undertaken by first listening to each interview recording a minimum of four times, this was followed by the reading of each transcript several times (with the interview soundtrack playing concurrently on the first occasion); notes from my reflective diary were also drawn upon to provide additional context. This process was carried out in the chronological order that the interviews had been conducted.

Initial coding of the transcripts was undertaken on hard copies with the original interview recordings being available. The definition of wellbeing (White, 2008; 2010) was used to 'question' the transcripts - this facilitated the identification of three types of data:

- Verbatim quotes from the interviewees.

- Codes: Labels were applied to words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs within the data.

- Memos, that suggested possible links to other areas within the single interview transcript, were made.

Once this had been accomplished for each transcript, the documents were further examined. This initial work revealed different types of individual assets[15]; these were transferred to a separate table, labelled 'Types of Individual Assets' (Table 4.2).

It was decided that no attempt would be made at this stage of the coding process to make comparative links between transcripts. However questions to

---

[15] Although the terms 'categories'; 'sub-categories'; 'themes'; 'sub-themes' are normally associated with constant comparative analysis, the word 'asset' was used in this study to reflect the nature of the research and the notion of 'asset mapping'.

aid later constant comparative analysis were noted, for example, Ben had explained in his interview that he went to Taekwondo classes, I wrote the question 'do boys do different activities to girls?' On another occasion, I wrote the question, 'do all children have at least one friend?'

| TYPES OF INDIVIDUAL ASSETS | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Temporal**<br>(time related factors) | **Internal**<br>(factors internal to the child) | **External**<br>(factors external to the child) |
| • Time as a continuum, for example:<br>▪ Minutes; hours<br>▪ Days of the week<br>▪ Seasons<br><br>• Time as a personal continuum, for example:<br>▪ Being able to 'fit' everything in | • Physical attributes, for example:<br>▪ Gender<br>▪ Age<br>▪ Ethnicity<br><br>• Cognitive attributes, for example:<br>▪ Perception<br>▪ Learning<br><br>• Personal attributes, for example:<br>▪ Resourcefulness<br>▪ Self-esteem/self-confidence<br>▪ Personality | • Environmental resources, for example:<br>▪ Home and garden<br>▪ Recreation and leisure facilities<br>▪ School<br><br>• Purchasable resources, for example:<br>▪ Play equipment; holidays; toys; clubs and societies<br><br>• Relationships, for example:<br>▪ Friends, family, pets |

**Table 4.2:** **Types of Individual Assets**

### 4.4.1.2 Using 'open' coding to facilitate stage 2 of asset mapping

Each transcript was returned to and re-examined in the context of the 'Types of Individual Assets' that had been revealed. This re-examination allowed interrogation of each phrase of every transcript and to identify if a relationship existed with one of the asset types. If it was certain that this was the case, the relevant section of the transcript was either 'pasted' in the column adjacent to the appropriate type of asset, or a comment made in relation to the applicability – this process facilitated the mapping of individual assets and led to the compilation of a table for each child, entitled 'Individual Assets' (please refer to Appendix 15 for an example). Additional 'memos' (in the form of statements or questions) were also made to facilitate later analysis. This process clearly demonstrated that the 'Types of Individual Assets' were relevant to each child;

in addition, the nature of the children's transcripts meant that the majority of material from the interviews was incorporated into the 'Individual Asset' table, the only areas that were not, were confined to either the beginning or end of the interview when introductions and closure were the main focus. At the end of this process I felt confident that no new categories were emerging.

### 4.4.2 'Axial' coding

'Axial' coding involves the making of connections and links between categories (assets). Strauss and Glaser (1998: 229) refer to this as the researcher beginning *"to fit the pieces of the data puzzle together"*. Offredy and Vickers (2010) comment that this stage involves further exploration and interrogation of each category (asset), comparing and developing them so that relationships become visible. Boeije (2002) suggests that there are potentially five different levels of comparison (Table 4.3), for the purposes of this study it was felt that the first two were relevant – the application of these is discussed below.

- Comparison within a single interview
- Comparison between interviews within the same group
- Comparison of interviews from different groups
- Comparison in pairs at the level of the couple
- Comparing couples

**Table 4.3:          Potential levels of comparison (from Boeije, 2002)**

#### 4.4.2.1    Using 'axial' coding to facilitate stage 3 of asset mapping

Once the process of 'open' coding was complete, each of the transcripts and the 'Individual Assets' for each child were re-examined. Data were compared within each transcript to identify and account for any inconsistencies; for example, Luke mentioned the large size of his back garden, yet later discussions, and his photographs, provided evidence that it was actually quite small. Myan commented that *"there's not much that we do as a family"* [400]; however, in other areas of the transcript he talked about different activities that he, his sister and parents did together. These inconsistencies arose directly from the child's cognitive development and perception of his/her surroundings,

but were important to note in case they impacted upon the presentation of the child's individual experiences and/or future analysis.

### 4.4.2.2 Using 'axial' coding to facilitate stage 4 of asset mapping

The process of constant comparative analysis requires that when coding within categories (assets), that comparisons are continually made with data from within the same categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).  Silverman (2006: 297) explains that the comparative approach to data analysis also involves the search for *"deviant cases"*. This was achieved through the re-examination of each of the transcripts and the 'Individual Assets' documents; this allowed comparison of interview data between children and facilitated the identification of deviant cases[16] (for example, Bethany was the only child not to refer to a friend during her interview). In addition, the procedure revealed 14 'Emerging Core Individual Assets' - these were mapped under the previously recognised 'Types of Individual Assets' ('Temporal' [1]; 'Internal' [9] and 'External' [4] Assets) (Table 4.2). Once this had been completed, the transcripts and 'Individual Assets' documents were re-considered to facilitate the comparison of data both within, and between, the assets. This process assisted the development and refinement of the 'Core Individual Assets', leading to the final establishment of 12 'Core Individual Assets' (Table 4.4). It was decided that two of the assets, ('What we do together' and 'We're busy''), were actually aspects of 'My family' – this resulted in the loss of the 'Temporal' type of asset.

Chiovitti and Piran (2003) advocate that the participants' actual words are used in the generation of theory - it was felt that this strategy would not only value the children's contributions and facilitate the portrayal of their views, but would also avoid the potential temptation to 'force' data under certain headings. As a consequence, the terminology used to identify the 'Core Individual Assets' (Table 4.4), were drawn from the children's own words - this was either a term used by many of the children (as in the case of 'Loads of Stuff'), or, a phrase

---

[16] These will be further discussed in chapter 5

that was used by one child, but which was felt accurately reflected the nature of the asset (as in the case of 'Practise, Practise, Practise').

### 4.4.3 'Selective' coding

'Selective' coding involves the identification of a main category (asset); the relevance of this to the other remaining categories is then examined (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Offredy and Vickers (2010) suggest that selective coding involves:

- Identification of the main category
- Relating the main category to the other remaining categories
- Examining the relationships between the categories
- Considering categories that need further modification and development

#### 4.4.3.1 Using 'selective' coding to facilitate stage 5 of asset mapping

The main 'Core Individual Asset' identified from the data was that of 'My Family'; although the nature of the family varied between the children, this asset was fundamental and pivotal to the life of each child. This is perhaps not surprising as authors such as Rutherford (1998) have suggested that there is wide acknowledgement that the family has a significant impact on children's growth, nurturing and development. As a result, this asset was termed the 'Stabilising Asset'.

Further examination of the remaining eleven assets suggested that they all had a relationship with the asset of 'My Family'; in addition, whilst analysis revealed that some were more strongly represented in the transcripts than others (for example, the asset of 'My Friends' featured in all but one of the transcripts), one asset was not deemed to be more 'important' than another. Table 4.5 identifies the final assets – the children's words are accompanied by a phrase that indicates the focus of each one; they are all are presented and discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

| CORE INDIVIDUAL ASSETS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Internal**<br>(i.e. all factors internal to the child) | **Related Core Assets** | **External**<br>(i.e. all factors external to the child) | **Related Core Assets** |
| • Physical attributes, for example:<br>  ▪ Gender<br>  ▪ Age<br>▪ Ethnicity<br><br><br><br>• Cognitive attributes, for example:<br>  ▪ Perception<br>  ▪ Learning<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>• Personal attributes:<br>  ▪ Resourcefulness<br>  ▪ Self-esteem/self-confidence<br>  ▪ Personality | **'I Like Cubs; I Like Dancing':** This asset reflects the different activities that children enjoy.<br><br>**'I Can':** This asset incorporates physical ability.<br><br>**'I'm Growing Up':** This asset includes:<br>  1. The increasing levels of responsibility and independence that the children were assuming<br>  2. The children's perception of the world around them<br><br>**'Practise, Practise, Practise':** This asset reflects the commitment and seriousness that children have towards activities that they enjoy.<br><br>**'I'm Proud':** This asset includes personal pride in relation to achievement as well as personal possessions.<br><br>**'Fun':** This asset embraces the child's 'sense of adventure' and desire to have fun.<br><br>**'When I've got Nothing To Do':** This asset encapsulates the resourcefulness and imagination of children.<br><br>**'By Myself':** This asset reflects the fact that children value time alone and that they enjoy undertaking some activities by themselves. | • Environmental resources, for example:<br>  ▪ Home and garden<br>  ▪ Recreation and leisure facilities<br>  ▪ School<br><br><br>• Purchasable resources, for example:<br>  ▪ Play equipment; holidays; toys; clubs and societies<br><br><br>• Relationships, for example:<br>  ▪ Friends, family, pets | **'It's Near':** This asset reflects the proximity and importance of the local community to children's lives.<br><br><br><br>**'Loads of Stuff':**<br>This asset refers to the physical resources that children have access to.<br><br>**'My Family':** This asset includes:<br>  1. Family membership (siblings; grandparents; cousins, pets etc.)<br>  2. 'Togetherness': Undertaking activities as a family<br>  3. Family influence in relation to activities<br>  4. Being busy<br><br>**'My Friends':** This asset represents the friendships associated with childhood. |

**Table 4.4: Core Individual Assets**

**Stabilising Asset:**
'My Family': Being a Family

**Core Individual Assets:**
- **Internal:**
  - 'By Myself': Self-worth
  - 'I Can': Being Physically Active
  - 'Practise, Practise, Practise': Commitment
  - 'Fun': Having Fun
  - 'When I've Got Nothing to Do': Resourcefulness
  - 'I'm Proud': Pride
  - 'I'm Growing Up': The Developing Child
  - 'I Like Cubs; I Like Dancing': Self-identity
- **External:**
  - 'Loads of Stuff': Personal Possessions
  - 'It's Near': Community
  - 'My Friends': Friendships

**Table 4.5:** The children's assets that emerged following data analysis

## 4.5 'Trustworthiness'

There has been considerable discussion within the literature about the trustworthiness and rigour of qualitative research (for example, Sandelowski, 1993; Sparkes, 2001; Rolfe, 2006; Porter, 2007). Morse and Field (1996) are amongst a number of authors who have commented that research in the qualitative paradigm has attracted particular criticism in terms of the reliability and validity of studies (see also, Sandelowski, 1993; Hogston, 1995; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Despite this, there have been suggestions that the establishment of firm criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research is unlikely to be achieved (Sparkes, 2001; Sandelowski and Barroso, 2002) due to the broad range of methods and approaches that are drawn upon (Rolfe, 2006). A variety of decision-making processes were based upon the enhancement of trustworthiness, key aspects of these are now considered.

### 4.5.1 Credibility

Credibility reflects the degree to which the findings are an accurate replication of the participants views (Sandelowski, 1986). Hammersley (1990: 57 suggested that:

*"By validity, I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers."*

However, this can be a challenging goal (Sparkes, 2001) that is difficult to evidence. One of the most recognised mechanisms of establishing credibility is consulting with participants after data analysis is complete (McBrien, 2008). However, there has been much debate within the literature in relation to returning the findings to the original participants for comment; authors such as Morse et al (2002: 7) have cautioned against it, stating that *"it is not a verificational strategy"* and suggesting that this might even be a *"threat to validity."* Morse et al (2002) suggest that this *"threat to validity"* may occur as a result of data analysis which involves the abstraction of data, synthesis and decontextualisation – if the findings are then presented back to the participants, they may not recognise themselves or their experiences (it could be argued that this may be particularly pertinent to children). Coad and Evans (2008: 44) express concern about the potential difficulty of consulting children in relation to research findings since the *"danger is that in this approach, children are consulted only to validate adult researchers' interpretations and it does not change the balance of power between adults and children in decision-making processes."* In addition, it was recognised that children cognitively develop at a rapid rate, resulting in a potential change in their views and perceptions; therefore children may not have felt the same affinity with the findings as several months previously. As a consequence, and after much consideration, it was decided that children in this study would not be asked to comment upon the research findings post analysis.

Shenton (2004) has suggested that credibility can be enhanced by the use of random sampling. Whilst a school was 'purposively' sought, I was blinded to the selection of the sample as all children in Year 5 of both schools were invited to be involved in the study; the children and their families were able to decide whether to participate and no attempt was made to influence this process.

Leininger (1994) warns that one of the other problems associated with achieving credibility is that the researcher may not spend sufficient time with the participants to fully understand their experience. This was an aspect of the

study that was carefully considered and the research was planned to facilitate the building of a professional relationship with the children.

The maintenance of a reflective diary, as well as strategies to familiarise myself with the child's cultural world, undoubtedly facilitated the development of a rapport, leading to a more informal and relaxed final interview. In addition, the children's photographs helped to enhance credibility as I was not only able to more accurately understand and visualise their experiences, but some of the photographs were used to illustrate the findings (Chapter 5). Finally, Shenton (2004) recommends that the researcher's work is scrutinised by other academics/peers via conference presentations as this provides the opportunity for critical comment and subsequent self-reflection of the research strategies employed – this advice has been followed (Appendix 16).

### 4.5.2  Applicability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the term applicability refers to the extent to which the findings can be compared with other situations or groups of participants, and that it is related directly to the degree of similarity. Sandelowski (1986: 32) uses the term *'fittingness'*, suggesting that this is concerned with the extent to which:

> *"the findings of the study, whether in the form of description, exploration or theory, 'fit' the data from which they are derived."* (page 32)

In order to achieve this, details about the context (situation, setting and participants) are required (Reinharz, 1983). Hinds et al (1992) highlight three aspects of context which should be considered – these are identified in Table 4.6 and are interpreted and related to this study.

| Context | Interpretation | Degree of Achievement for this study |
|---|---|---|
| **Specific** | Environmental factors, for example, setting, time of day. | Achieved. A record of this information was kept. In addition, the information was used to inform future decision-making. For example, reflective notes revealed that the children were sometimes tired directly after school, therefore, where possible, appointments were made for slightly later in the evening, school holidays or weekends. |
| **General** | Details about the participants which may relate to previous experience and the research interviews. | Achieved. A demographic pro forma was completed by each parent during the interview (Appendix 10). Details of the child's life and their experiences were revealed during the interview. |
| **Meta** | The sources that have led to the participants' knowledge | Achieved. The child's knowledge and their experiences were revealed during the interview. |

**Table 4.6:** **Contexts to be considered in order to achieve transferability (adapted from Hinds et al, 1992)**

### 4.5.3  Consistency

Consistency refers to the extent to which the research can be subjected to audit; whilst readers may not concur with the researcher's interpretation, it is essential that there is a clear understanding of the process that has been undertaken (Koch, 2006). Each stage of this doctoral research has been carefully planned and conducted; this document has provided a description and sound rationale for each aspect of the study so that others can appreciate the decision-making processes as well as all of the practical aspects.

### 4.5.4  Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), when the above three criteria (credibility, applicability and consistency) have been met, confirmability is achieved. Morse and Field (1996) suggest that confirmability relates to freedom from bias. They add that in quantitative research objectivity is crucial, but within the qualitative paradigm, it is the degree of the researcher's neutrality that is critical – every effort was made to achieve this with the reflective diary serving as a valuable tool to assist this process.

## 4.6    Reflecting on the analysis

Constant comparative analysis was drawn upon to map the children's assets. Whilst the process was effective, it is not possible to contrast it with alternative approaches since the mapping of children's assets, at an individual level, has not previously been documented. It is feasible that this method could be replicated either to map the assets for an individual (stages 1-3) or to map core assets for a particular cultural group (stages 1-5).

As with other qualitative data analysis techniques, the strategy utilised in this study has relied upon my interpretation of data. I have made every effort to read the children's transcripts without prejudice and to identify the assets from the children's perspective; this has helped to ensure that the quality of the findings are neither impaired nor contaminated.

## 4.7    Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of the data analysis methods that were undertaken. Each stage has been clarified in order that the reader is able to track the procedures, hence adhering to the underpinning philosophy of Sandelowski's (1986) auditability decision-making trail. One 'Stabilising Asset', eight internal and three external 'Core Individual Assets' emerged - these are presented in more detail in Chapter 5.

**Chapter 5:    Research Findings**

## 5.0      Introduction

This chapter presents and describes in detail the assets that emerged from the constant comparative data analysis and asset mapping process. A narrative approach is utilised to present each asset in turn. A prime focus of the research study was the valuing of the children's contribution, therefore discussions are supported by a range of quotations taken from the children's interviews[17] (the line numbers of each transcript are included in brackets after each quote); in addition, some of the children's photographs[18] are integrated into the text to provide illustrative context. A brief overview of each child and their family circumstances is included in Appendix 9 to provide background information.

The chapter will conclude by presenting the *'I'm Good': Children's Assets Wheel* (Figure 5.33); this model summarises the study's findings and represents the insight into children's wellbeing that was captured.

## 5.1      Stabilising Asset:  'My Family': Being a Family

The Stabilising Asset that emerged from the data was that of 'Being a Family' with all of the children identifying that their family was a key and fundamental element of their lives. The concept of the family is undoubtedly complex; it is therefore not surprising that this asset encapsulated four key areas, each of which will be discussed in turn:

- Family Membership
- Togetherness
- Family Influence
- Being Busy

---

[17] Pseudonyms are used throughout the text for the children, their friends, family, pets and place names

[18] Only photographs that met the Ethics Committee criteria (please see Chapter 3; Section 3.8) are used

### 5.1.1  Family Membership

'Family membership' relates to the structure of the children's families. The children were all part of a family; however, the composition varied considerably (Appendix 9) and included both blood relatives and step family members. In some instances, this meant that the family had become large and complex; this is illustrated by James who had taken a photograph of some relatives who attended his tenth birthday party, he pointed to each person, identifying who they were:

> *"Cousin, cousin, cousin.  Nanny and granddad, nanny and granddad.  I have quite a lot of nanny and granddads.  I do!...I have five nannies and four granddads."* [James: 595-603]

Despite the fact that some families were diverse, children identified that they had formed good relationships with their 'new' relatives; for example, Ryan's mother had re-married, but Ryan spoke positively about his step-father and step-brother:

> *"my stepdad used to take me and my stepbrother to [the adventure playground]* [107]*…This is a picture of me and my stepbrother.. .*[138] *he comes on Tuesdays and Thursdays…*[140]*… Well, my stepbrother is sort of getting me into F1…*[186]*… my stepdad bought it [a new football shirt for Ryan] on a special occasion."* [395]

The positive views about step-relatives were also echoed by other children who were in a similar situation to Ryan; there was an indication that being part of a step family could provide new opportunities that the child might not otherwise have had. For example, Shazia spoke about the activities that she enjoyed with her older step siblings who sometimes looked after her during the school holidays; Hannah referred to her new stepdad as 'Dad' and talked about the activities they did together, such as going to the park and playing on the Wii.

The importance of immediate family members to the children was further reinforced by the fact that nearly all of the children chose to take photographs of both siblings and parents; in addition, everyone discussed their families during their interview. All of the children talked about their parents in a manner that

indicated that they were simply part of their lives; in other words, parents formed a fundamental, but assumed presence:

*"My Mum just takes me."* *[Shazia; 106]*

*"my brother and I actually do it [taekwando] but my Mum and Dad just take us and they'll take turns basically."* [Luke: 315-316]

On other occasions, children displayed their awareness of their parents in a more perceptive manner; Ryan commented that he took a photograph of his Mum because:

*"I think she's very pretty."* [479]

Whilst some children undertook different activities with their individual parents, nearly all of the children displayed equally positive relationships with parents of both genders (this was the case even when a parent did not live with them), the only exception being Paul who referred to his Dad as 'horrible' [412] - it was not clear why Paul had this view.

All the single-parent families were maternal; this meant that these mothers were undertaking activities that were not always adopted by mothers who had a partner. For example, James (from a traditional nuclear family) commented upon how his Dad helped him and his sister to make a family of snowmen, whereas the following conversation was had with Anna:

LW:    *"So who made the snowman then?"*
Anna: *"Me and Mum."* [156-57][Figure 6.1]
LW:    *"Do you do anything else with your Mum?"*
Anna: *"Yeah. Tennis… Outside in the back garden."* [161-166]

**Figure 5.1:** *"This is another one of the snowmen we made"* [ Anna: 930]

A similar comment was made by Elouise:

LW:      *"Catch, and who do you do that with then?"*
Elouise:  *"Err…my Mum."* [39-40]
LW:      *"And where do you ride your bike then?"*
Elouise:  *"Mmm…sometimes we go on trips…, I go with my Mum."*
         [60-71]

For many of the children, grandparents played a key role in their lives and they had close relationships with them, the comments below are typical:

| Hannah: | *"This is at my nan's."* |
|---|---|
| LW: | *"How often do you go to your nan's then would you say?"* |
| Hannah: | *"A lot, I go there every day."* [153-156] |

| LW: | *"So how often would you see your nan then?"* |
|---|---|
| Ben: | *Umm, quite often, like daily, we'll probably go to her today because it's not far away."* |
| LW: | *"And what do you like about going to your nan's then?"* |
| Ben: | *Seeing my nan and my granddad…. I play on the trampoline sometimes outside and stuff. She bought a trampoline for me and my cousins."* [Ben: 144-156] |

| Elizabeth: | *"Erm, we all sit…because my nan and granddad love cooking they always make cakes, so we just sit in front of the TV, have some tea and watch horror films."* [323-325] *"Erm, I like my nan's house."* [593] |
|---|---|

Not all grandparents lived locally, but children clearly enjoyed the time that was spent with them, there were often activities that only grandparents did with them, Bethany describes a game played with her grandma and granddad:

*"Yeah, err, we played this sleeping lion game but we didn't have to sleep, we could move, yeah?  And erm then you had this jelly bean or something on your forehead or nose, yeah, and you had to see if you can…someone tickled you and you see if you can laugh because you couldn't…I don't think you could laugh and you couldn't move because otherwise it would fall off."* [194-195]

When children did not see their grandparents very regularly, the time was often viewed as being precious, when something special was done:

*"I remember when I went to Disneyland once, me and my granddad, we went on Space Mountain Mission 2 and we waited half an hour to get on…. And when I came off my ears were all red because erm I was just under the height but I managed to get on and because my ears were banging against the safety things...He was like I'm not going on that again."* [Paul: 573-584]

*"maybe on a special occasion like when my granny's down or something."* [Luke: 352-353]

Whilst grandparents were important members of the family, and were also influential to some aspects of children's activities, three children made no mention at all of their grandparents – in two of these instances, the children's genetic parents were divorced, in the third situation, the child's parents had immigrated to England and the grandparents still resided in their homeland. It is not feasible to draw any firm conclusions from this since other children, such as Hannah and Anna (whose parents were both divorced) had very strong relationships with one or more grandparents.

Whilst grandparents were central to many of the children's lives, other family members also played important roles for the children. For example, children talked about activities undertaken with aunts, uncles and cousins.

Although family structure and relationships varied, it was not just confined to humans. Several of the children had pets and many had taken photographs of them (for example, Figures 5.2 and 5.3), also referring to them during their interview. Close bonds were formed with these animals and they were viewed as family members; Gareth highlighted, for instance, that his favourite activity was being with the family dog:

LW: *"What would be your favourite activity out of all those pictures?"*
Gareth: *"Erm, being with Snoopy"* [pet dog]. [952-955]

**Figure 5.2:** *"This is my dog, our dog"* [Anna: 89]



**Figure 5.3:** *"My cat"* [James: 418]

On occasions, children explained that their pet had died, this caused upset and sorrow:

> *"She* [the guinea pig] *was brown and she was laying like that* [demonstates how guinea pig was lying]*, she wouldn't move, I poked her going 'Treacle!' and she didn't wake up. So this is when I was living down in* [name removed] *Hill so I run upstairs to my Mum and I start crying and go 'Mummy, Mummy, Treacle's dead, Treacle's dead' like that. So we put her in a phone box with loads of hay and some food… And then a bowl of water and then we buried her in my old garden."* [Petra: 679-687]

Despite the sadness at the loss of an animal, the pets were great assets in the children's lives. Even children who did not have a pet themselves, talked about the animals who belonged to either relatives or friends.

> *Erm, my friend's got a dog down the road… Yeah, I take it for a walk lots of times."* [Sam: 419-421]

The children formed friendships with their pets, they gained comfort through cuddling and stroking them; in addition, there was the development of responsibility in terms of ensuring that the animals were appropriately cared for. Children's pleasure in relation to their pets was evident in the interviews; even the more reserved children became animated and lively when talking about their relationships and experiences with animals.


In summary, there was not a 'typical' family the children belonged to; rather there was a diversity of structures which reflects the current situation in the UK in the twenty-first century. All of the children spoke about their family throughout their interviews and within a variety of contexts - it was evident that the child's family was the most fundamentally important aspect of their lives. The asset of 'Being a Family' brought an unparalleled richness to the children's lives through the relationships and bonds they formed with family members. However, the children also portrayed their family as being an assumed presence – their family was comprised of people who were always there and who were an integral part of their lives, this undoubtedly brought stability.

### 5.1.2 Togetherness

This section focuses upon the activities that were undertaken as a family; this varied from those enjoyed within a home environment (for example, watching a DVD together) or within the local vicinity (such as family bike rides or walks) to day trips and holidays. Elizabeth clearly enjoying some of her family outings:

LW:        *"So how often would you go on a family bike ride?"*
Elizabeth:  *"Erm, maybe once a week. At weekends."*
LW:        *"Okay, and where would you go?"*
Elizabeth:  *"We would just get lost… The last adventure we went out on we ended up in the [name removed]… Because there was erm…because it was like down in the countryside, because it was like down the countryside we were going and it had little old-fashioned houses and then the best thing about it was a huge garage what we didn't know what was in there and then a huge steam train just came down…. We go for about two or three hours don't we? And then we might stop at a pub."* [93-131]

It is interesting that Elizabeth was the only child to mention an outdoor activity that the whole family engaged in on a regular basis. Whilst Myan did comment upon how he and his family went for walks, when asked about the frequency of this, he said:

*"Mmm…probably about once a month.  Not lately a lot because we are quite busy all week."* [Myan: 436-437]

The main activities that related to the whole family being together were weekly events (such as watching a DVD together on a Friday evening) and special occasions/treats (such as day trips, celebrations or holidays). The weekly events were all viewed positively and had become a 'hallmark' of the family. Four of the children specifically mentioned activities that occurred on a Friday evening or after school – these were all looked forward to and viewed as a 'treat'. Elizabeth excitedly explained that:

*"Every Friday we have our nice sweetie family night or we go swimming. And my Dad brings a huge projector home and points it at the big wall and we watch a film. Erm, once we've watched Treasure Island one and then we watched…what was the film we watched last time? Spiderwick Chronicles and this week we're going to watch Space*

126

> *Chimps… Erm, we buy them* [the DVDs]*….We buy a bag of sweets…we snuggle up on the sofa."* [622-639]

Emma and Hope also spoke about their Friday evening treat:

> *"Well we watch DVDs on Friday night because there's no school the next day and Saturday night."* [Emma; 243-244]

> *"On a Friday night we normally have a take-away."* [511-512; Hope]

In addition to the above, families spent time together when there was a particular celebration or if a day trip had been planned. These events often involved the extended family and had been organised in advance:

> *"Yeah, like my Mum sometimes does little parties for the family and me and my auntie and my Mum all dance."* [Elizabeth: 869-870]

> *"This was the family party."* [James: 592]

> *"We all went there and we liked it* [site of an historic castle]*."* [Ben: 472]

> *"Err maybe when it's someone's birthday we have a birthday dinner or maybe on a special occasion like when my granny's down or something. She often pays as her treat."* [Luke:351-355]

Some of the above comments are perhaps reflective of the busy lifestyle that families now lead, meaning that it was often difficult for the whole family to spend time together unless it was a pre-planned event (this is discussed further in relation to 'Being Busy', Section 5.1.4).

An activity that was mentioned by some children as being family orientated was the watching of television; however, these children were in the minority – it was more usual for children to either watch television by themselves or with friends or siblings.

127

Emma was the only child who made little reference to activities with the family – only brief comments were made and these related to a recent holiday and occasional trips to the park in the summer. Emma was the only child who lived with her genetic father (rather than mother); the household included Emma's step-mother and two half-siblings who were several years younger than Emma; in addition, a third half-sibling was expected within a few weeks of conducting the interview – Emma was concerned that the arrival of this baby would mean that she needed to share her bedroom. Emma's genetic mother was not mentioned during the interview (although the term 'my other family' was used in one instance) so the nature and background of the mother/daughter relationship was not known; however, there is a possibility that the family structure may have impacted upon the undertaking of family activities.

In summary, children spoke about a range of activities that were undertaken together as a family; these focussed upon the weekly family treats, holidays, special occasions and days out. These experiences provided the opportunity for the family to be both physically and emotionally close to each other, fostering and enhancing their 'Togetherness'. The time spent together was not only very much enjoyed, but was an important part of 'Being a Family' and the reinforcement of its stability.

### 5.1.3  Family Influence

This section discusses how children were influenced in their activities by their family members, there being evidence of this amongst both boys and girls. The influence was evident in a variety of ways; firstly, many children had adopted physical activities that one of their parents had an interest in:

> *"Yeah, it's a netball, it's when at school I got chosen for the team… I kind of picked it* [netball] *up from you, Mum, didn't I? Because Mum used to play."* [Fleur: 219-258]; *"Yeah.  I started horse riding at the age of two, I did.  Because Dad used to ride, didn't he?"* [Fleur: 1009-1011]

> LW:  *"So how have you heard about cricket, then?"* [615]

Luke: *"Erm my Dad plays for a* [name removed] *Cricket Club."* [616]


*"Erm…Dad just brought it* [rugby] *up and I said I would like to have a go and then we just did it from there and Dad became coach so I just thought I'll go for the flow and do it."* [Angus: 290-292]

Family influence in relation to activities was not restricted to physical activities. For example, Joe's father was a teacher and acted as a technical director for school dramatic productions - Joe was able to help his Dad with this:

*"I didn't actually get showed…I didn't actually, I wasn't actually shown on the stage but what happened was I was the person who opened the door…. Yeah, because they run out of a door and I opened it for them."*
[Joe: 145-149]

The hobbies that Joe primarily spoke of were related to his computer, construction toys and his train sets – this had certainly been influenced by his father. Similarly, Myan played the Indian drums and had Indian language lessons, this was as a result of parental influence.


There were however occasional instances when a parent had tried to interest a child in an activity, but this had not been wholly effective:

Gareth: *"Dad is a big kite enthusiast so he's got these big power kites."*
LW: *"So have you got your own kite?"*
Gareth: *"Err, yes."*
LW: *"And how often would you fly that then?"*
Gareth: *"Erm, not very much because Dad's the only one that really likes to fly kites."* [502-508]

Whilst parents positively influenced children in relation to activities, this often resulted from their own personal interest; as a consequence, the parent played a pivotal role in relation to the identification of suitable venues, the payment of the child's lessons/training and taking the child to and from the relevant classes. Interestingly, none of the children commented upon undertaking training/lessons *with* a parent – it was usual, for example, for a child to go to a

football club on one day of the week and the father to undertake his training on another evening.

Some children referred to the influence that grandparents had in relation to their activities; however, a key difference was that the grandparent normally undertook the activity *with* the child, this is perhaps indicative of the additional free time that some grandparents may have (particularly if they are retired):

> LW: *"Do you do other activities with your grandma and granddad?"*
> Fleur: *"Umm, yeah, well we go walking, we do quite a lot because they've got like loads of fields and everything and we go over to their village shop and get stuff and if our cousins come over, they've got a new dog, they have, so we walk the dog quite a lot, we do, and it's like quite energetic. Like their new dog, umm, Scrappy, he's like…he's so energetic, he's only a puppy, he is, he's like a little Terrier puppy."* [410-418]

> *"Erm…I normally go up my granddad's boat on Saturdays… It's a Sun Cat…. just me and my granddad… We do fishing, we take it out and I go on the dinghy."* [Angus: 183-206]

> *"I like helping my nan do the gardening and I do loads of things really…. I put all the plants in and I don't kill the slugs, I put the slugs into a safe place where they don't eat like the plants."* [Hannah: 203-205]

Although parents and grandparents had the most influential role in relation to activities undertaken by children, other relatives also played an important part; Petra explained her aunt's influence in relation to the development of her dance skills:

> LW: *"So how have you learnt to dance?"*
> Petra: *"My auntie Beverley…Yeah, but it's not proper dancing it's… dirty dancing…Like erm like pole dancing.* [557-564]

Family influence in relation to physical activity was also evident in relation to the availability of resources, this included physical, human and financial. Families had provided a range of equipment to facilitate the children's physical activity; the majority of children had play apparatus in the back garden, including

climbing frames, swings, slides, trampolines and football nets (for example, Figures 5.4 and 5.5).



**Figure 5.4:** *"That's our trampoline"* **[Sam: 590]**



**Figure 5.5:** *"We play football in the back garden"* **[Luke: 149]**

In addition to the provision of this equipment, some children also attended extra-curricular activities (examples included gym, netball, football, swimming and taekwondo) all of which incurred a cost and necessitated that they were taken and collected from the venue – parental influence was very evident in this respect and the comments by both Fleur and Paul demonstrate the commitment that was involved by the family (this is further explored within the 'Being Busy', Section 5.1.4):

> LW: *"So how often do you go to gym then?"*
> Fleur: *"Umm, twice a week… Umm, Saturday afternoon and Thursday afternoon."* [294-297]

> LW: *"So how often do you go swimming?"*
> Paul: *"About six times a week."* [108-109]

In summary, family influence played a substantial role in the development of children's interests, not just in the choice, but also in the provision of the necessary resources and the transportation required in order to access an activity. 'Being a Family' provided the opportunity for children to gain insights into these different activities; when family members had shared interests this frequently had a positive impact upon the time spent together.

### 5.1.4  Being Busy

This aspect of 'Being a Family' highlighted the busy nature of the children's lives. Whilst a busy family lifestyle may not initially appear to be a feature of the overall Stabilising Asset, it is important to recognise that this facilitated many aspects of the children's wellbeing. Children's lives were busy as a result of their personal commitments which included school as well as any extra-curricular activities. However, parental and sibling commitments also influenced the busy lifestyle of the children as they needed to accompany family members to and from various activities since they were too young to be left alone. This way of life was important to the children for a number of reasons; firstly, it provided a sense of routine – children knew what they were doing each day of

the week; secondly, children realised that other family members had commitments, this fostered an accepting and respectful manner towards others, as well as the development of a family teamwork approach; thirdly, aspects of the busy lifestyle were generated from parental work responsibilities – this meant that children were then able to benefit from more material resources, such as holidays and personal possessions.

Some children were busier than others in terms of organised activities. Whilst the majority of the children only undertook one or two extra-curricula activities, there were a small minority who had a range of commitments each week, Paul was one of these children:

> LW: *"Do you do any after school clubs?"*
> Paul: *"Yeah, I'm in the school football team and go straight after school Wednesdays…Yeah, football and then I have a little rest before I go Cubs."*
> LW; *"What days are the swimming days then?"*
> Paul: *"Erm all of them, it's Sunday morning, Sunday night, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday."* [326-335]

However, what is not evident from the quotes above is the family circumstances. Paul lived on a large housing estate in a small three-bedroomed terraced house (approximately 30 years old) with his Mother and three sisters (one of whom was profoundly disabled). During his interview Paul showed me photographs of his swimming equipment, explaining that he went to a club several times per week. The conversation went on to reveal that one class took place for an hour before school (07.00-08.00 hours), three other lessons were an hour each after school and another two were at the weekend. Paul displayed tremendous commitment towards his swimming, but this was firmly underpinned by his family and the support they provided in order to facilitate his attendance. Paul's mother chatted to me during one visit, explaining that whenever one of the children needed to go anywhere, the whole family had to go – this was an observation and not in anyway a complaint; it did however mean that a supportive teamwork approach was required within the family unit.

Children such as Paul and Luke had weekly training for a particular sport (Luke for football and Paul for swimming); however, Fleur was the only child who carried out a range of different activities over the course of the week, attending classes for gym (twice per week); majorettes (twice per week); netball (once per week) and horse riding (once per week). It is interesting that Fleur commented:

*"Doing all these things is quite hard."* [329]

The children themselves recognised how busy the whole family were and that this could impact upon activities that they did together. As a result, time was precious and families adapted to this in different ways. Elizabeth explained how her mother made sure that she spent time with her and her siblings:

*"We sometimes…like because my Mum's really busy she says we're going to spend an hour with you both separately and then we get to choose what we do in that hour like."* [Elizabeth: 337-339]

Whilst Elizabeth was the only child to mention this strategy, there was evidence that families used different techniques to ensure that they spent time with their children within the context of their busy lives. Most usually, rather than all of the family participating in all activities, it was far more likely that one parent would take the lead for a particular event (the other parent was then 'free' to complete household tasks or to go to work); in other words, children commented upon activities that they undertook with *either* their mother *or* their father, for example:

LW:  *"Who did you go to* [theme park – name removed] *with?"*
Hope: *"Erm, with my Mum, because my Dad was at work."* [81-82]

Frequently, the father led the more physical activities, for example, Ben and Gareth said that they went on bike rides with their fathers and siblings. Other children, such as James, commented on other activities:

LW:        *"And who plays on the Wii?"*
Myan:      *Me and my sister and my Dad, not much my Mum."* [51-52]

*"Well me and Dad normally play on that* [the pool table]*"* [James: 148]

LW:          *"Who built those snowmen?"*
James:        *"Me, Dad and Fran."* [Sibling] [541][Figure 5.6]

**Figure 5.6:**        **Snowmen built by James, his Dad and his sister**

Children recognised and respected that parents also had commitments, primarily work ones and that there was a need to 'fit in' with these. In relation to this, children demonstrated both adaptability and capability; for example, Bethany explained that her mother worked night shifts; this meant that in the school holidays, Bethany and her brother were taken by their mother, on the train, to their grandparents – this then enabled Bethany's mother to sleep whilst the children were looked after. Bethany went on to say that:

> *"When she's* [mother] *been working the night before she sometimes sleeps on the train then I have to look after both of them* [mother and younger brother] *…. So I'm like basically the Mummy."* [455-458]

Likewise, Fleur explained how her family life was influenced by her father's work:

> *"Because like normally my Dad's working, like he's been working nights, so we have to be out the house* [on Saturdays], *we do, so."*
> [Fleur: 859-860]

There were several other examples of how children were required to adapt to meet the needs of busy parental work lives, for example, Shazia described how her older sibling looked after her during half-term as her mother and step-father were working; Sam explained that both of his parents were studying and that this meant that family life had to be organised around this. It was therefore understandable that many activities were undertaken with one parent, rather than within a whole family context.

In addition to parental commitments, children understood that the needs of their siblings also had to be accommodated within family life. Typically, Myan described how his sister had a swimming lesson each week, so he always made sure that he had his Playstation Portable [PSP] or a reading book with him to keep himself amused. Similarly, Emma explained:

> *"B*ecause we can't play games unless Damien's *[younger brother]* out or…yeah, because he just gets the wire and yanks the console…*[177-179]

It is important to note that, whilst the four children without siblings (all girls), were not required to adapt to the needs of brothers or sisters, there was still evidence that it was necessary for them to 'fit in' with family life, in particular parental responsibilities.

In summary, there was clear evidence that the children's lives were busy, due to both their own and their family's commitments. Children displayed flexibility - none of the children questioned this, it was all accepted as part of 'Being a Family' and everyday life. The families drew upon a teamwork approach to juggle the challenges associated with a busy lifestyle; the children were very much part of this team, understanding and respecting their roles and their need to be adaptable.

### 5.1.5  Summary:   'My Family': Being a Family

'Being a family' was a fundamental part of children's lives. Whilst the family varied in terms of its structure and composition, it provided consistency and stability for children. Even those who had experienced family breakdowns had good relationships with key family members; in fact, in some instances, their 'new' relatives had made a very positive contribution to their lives.

Whilst the families undertook some activities together, family members were also strongly influential in a child's choice of activities – this being based upon parental interest as well as the availability of resources.

There is no doubt that 'Being a Family' was a key factor in the development of children's wellbeing, with the potential to influence all of the other assets. 'Being a Family' embraced family relationships as well as the physical resources that underpinned children's lives. However, and perhaps most importantly, throughout their interviews children talked about their families (including their pets) in a very positive and loving manner. In summary, the Stabilising Asset of 'Being a Family' encompassed the lives of the children and made a fundamental contribution to their overall wellbeing.

### 5.2     Core Individual Assets: Internal

The following section presents the children's eight internal assets that emerged following data analysis:

- 'By Myself': Self-worth
- 'I Can': Being Physically Active
- 'Practise, Practise, Practise': Commitment
- 'Fun': Having Fun
- 'When I've Got Nothing To Do': Resourcefulness
- 'I'm Proud': Pride
- 'I'm Growing Up': The Developing Child
- 'I Like Cubs; I Like Dancing': Self-identity

It is important to re-iterate that they are of equal importance and that they all have potential relationships with one another.

### 5.2.1 Internal Asset: 'By Myself': Self-worth

Whilst the family was a fundamental and integral part of each child's life, it was also evident that children spent time undertaking activities by themselves and valued their personal space - a number of children spoke about this, for example:

> *"I come home and play on the computer or read by myself."* [Hope; 303]

> *"I'm good being on my own."* [Gareth; 51]

> *"I dance by myself most of the time."* [Petra; 549]

> LW: *Who do you tend to do your* Lego *with?*
> Ben: *By myself.* [418]

The most common activities that were undertaken alone were reading (Figure 5.7) and playing on electronic games consoles. Whilst both boys and girls mentioned reading, it was an activity that was more prevalent amongst the girls and was something frequently undertaken before going to sleep. The following quotes are illustrative of some of the typical remarks made:

> *"I read to myself."* [Elouise; 483]

> *"I like reading by myself at night time."* [Hannah; 296]

> *"I normally read before I go to bed."* [Fleur; 1130]

Emma's comment suggests that pleasure was derived from this activity:

> *"I just lie on my bed by myself peacefully reading. It's one of my favourite times"* [Emma; 251]
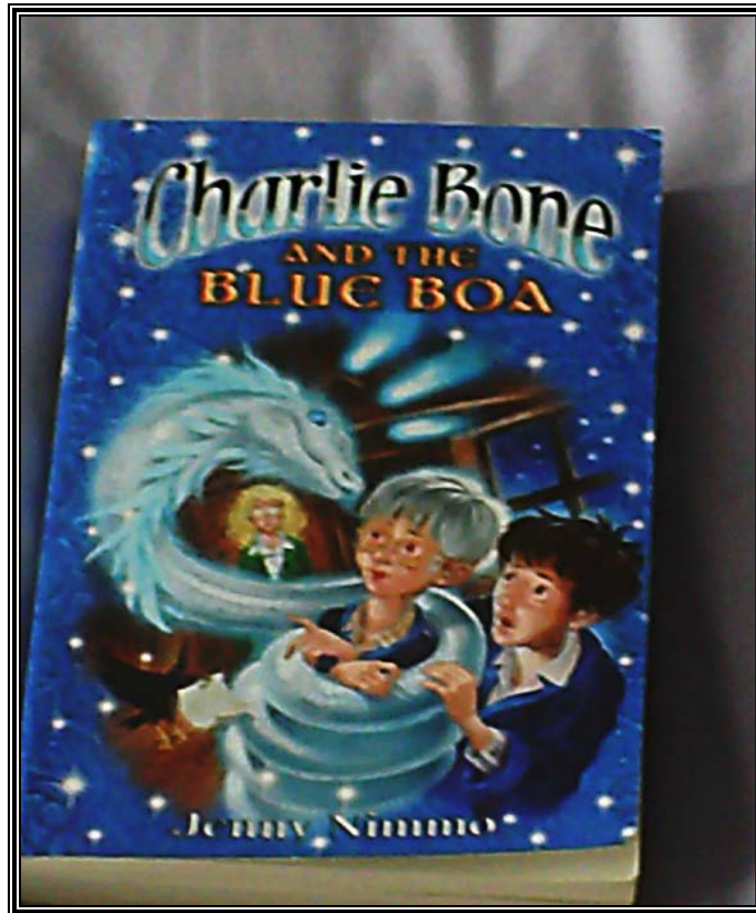
138

**Figure 5.7:** *"I like reading Charlie Bone"* **[Joe: 107]**

Another activity that tended to be undertaken alone was the playing on electronic games consoles:

LW:        *When you're playing on these [consoles] do you play by yourself or do you play with somebody else?"*

Gareth:    "*By myself*" [740]

Emma:    "By *myself*." [190-192]

Hope:    *"I sometimes play on it on my own."* [ 628]

Angus:    *"I normally do it by myself."* [400]

However, other activities included, for example, playing football, riding on a scooter or bike, dancing, playing pool and watching television. Several children took photographs of a television (for example, Figures 5.8 and 5.9); this was usually situated in the living room and shared by the family (although a small number of children did have a television in their bedroom).



**Figure 5.8:** *"I took this photo because I like watching TV"* **[Emma: 22-23]**

The children commented that their favourite programmes were children's ones, although they also enjoyed family entertainment shows. Whilst television viewing is frequently portrayed in a negative light, it is interesting that a more positive side was occasionally commented upon by the children; for example, Fleur spoke very excitedly about the programme *'Total Wipeout'*[19] and said how much she would like to take on the assault course – the programme certainly had an impact on increasing her desire to undertake some of the activities shown:

---

[19] *Total Wipeout* is a game show that first aired in January 2009. Each week, contestants complete assault courses that are comprised of a range of physical challenges in an attempt to win £10,000

*"There's one TV programme which is new and it's called Total Wipeout…. me and Imogene* [younger sister] *really want to do it, don't we?... It's kind of like you want to like show the adults like how it's done. Because like when you're smaller it's much more easier to do stuff… Yeah, watch it as a family normally…I think that like at the end they should do one with all the winners and they should put them together and they have to make like a different like harder course, they do… Yeah, the Wipeout Zone No. 2 or something and then make it even harder."* [Fleur: 1071-1124]



**Figure 5.9:** *"This is Spongebob…one of my favourite programmes"* [Joe: 477-478]

Similarly, Shazia talked about how she liked to dance and television was a good conduit for this:

LW: *So what is it that you like about the music on the television then?"*

Shazia: *"I don't know, I just like music, because I go dancing I like loads of music….Disco, Hip-Hop, Street, Latin, Ballroom, Rock n' Roll, loads of other stuff. So I watch Smash*

*Hits![20] And if there's a really good song then I'll dance."*
[65-70]

There was no indication that the children were watching television for lengthy periods of time.

There was little suggestion that undertaking activities by themselves was problematic; for example, James commented that it he didn't mind if he played pool by himself or with a friend/family member:

| James: | *Well sometimes I play by myself and then sometimes I play with somebody."* |
|---|---|
| LW: | *Do you mind playing on your own or do you prefer it with somebody else?"* |
| James: | *"I don't really mind.  Sometimes I just play games by myself…. I make myself up games."* [175-180] |

Petra was the only child to refer to an activity by herself in a negative manner:

*"I sometimes go on it* [the trampoline] *on my own but it gets boring when you go on it on your own."* (Petra; 377-379)

Whilst Petra made the above comment, it is important to recognise that there were other activities, in particular dancing, that she was more than happy to engage with alone:

"*I dance by myself most of the time."* [549]

Petra loved dancing and said *"It's constant"* [544]; this provides some insight into the connection that children have with some activities but not others.

### 5.2.1.1    Summary: 'By Myself': Self-worth

In summary, the research findings demonstrated that all of the children spent time alone and that this included undertaking activities of both a sedentary and

---

[20] Smash Hits! A commercial television channel that broadcasts a range of pop music

physical nature. Children did not, in the main, consider that the undertaking of activities by themselves was problematic; in fact, 'Being a Family' meant that the children had busy lives and it was important to balance this with some time 'By Myself' in which there was an opportunity to relax and unwind – this was welcomed and perceived in a positive manner. Children valued their own company, demonstrating feelings of self-worth.

### 5.2.2  Internal Asset:      'I Can': Being Physically Active

This asset considers the children's physical abilities. None of the children, at any point, referred to their health or wellbeing; instead children explained their abilities in terms of what they could do and what they enjoyed; the quotes below are typical of some of the comments made:

> *"I can do about eight keepie ups."* [Ryan: 86-87]

> *"I can swim as far as I want really."* [Luke: 272]

> *"I can do it* [twirl a majorette batton] *all through my fingers."* [Hannah: 573]

> *"I can do it* [make a Lego train with 1,085 pieces] *I think it's age 14+ because there's electronics in it."* [Joe: 572-574]

> *"I can do like cartwheels."* [Hannah: 79]

> *"I can do flips underwater, I can do that…because I can do handstands in the water."* [Shazia: 561-563]

It is clear that the children had the ability to develop a range of physical skills and there was a definite sense of pride associated with this; this was demonstrated both verbally and by the photographs that children had taken (please refer to the asset, 'I'm Proud': Pride, Section 5.2.6)

Some children developed their physical activity skills via formal training sessions:

*"Yeah, I go to football training… Yeah, training. Training is on the Saturday and the matches are on a Sunday."* [Luke: 578-606]

*"I go for a club* [swimming]." [Paul: 115]

*"And when we go to Taekwondo you have to do a lot of press ups. ..To get your muscles stretching."* [Ben: 582-585]

Fleur: *"This is me on the bar at gym club."* [Fleur: 293]
LW: *"Can you do a handstand on the beam?"*
Fleur: *"Yeah. Cartwheel, forward roll, anything really."* [371-372]

However, the majority of children had honed their abilities by simply practising by themselves (or with a friend) within their immediate environment:

LW: *"So how often would you dance?"*
Petra: *"Loads and then I'll close my bedroom door, because it's behind my bedroom door* [the mirror] *and then I'll go and dance… It's constant."* [538-544]

LW: *"How much time do you spend doing your gym in the garden?"*
Hannah: *"Nearly all day."* [76-77][Figure 5.10]

The above comments demonstrate the children's commitment to their activities; despite an acknowledgment by Fleur and Paul (two children who were particularly active and who attended regular classes) that training could be challenging, there was no suggestion that they wanted to stop, Fleur's comment sums up their views:

*"Umm, some of the days, you are just like oh it's so hard but I love it* [gym] *and then other days you're just like oh this is quite easy, I'm glad that I do it."* [Fleur: 314-316]

**Figure 5.10:** Hannah practising her gym *"nearly all day"* [76-77]

### 5.2.2.1    Summary:   'I Can': Being Physically Active

The photographs and interviews with the children demonstrated their physical health; whilst not all of the children excelled at a particular activity, there was no mention of any physical barriers to activities that they wished to undertake. The children displayed a positive, enthusiastic and committed approach towards the activities that they enjoyed.   Whilst this asset links with many others, the relationship with 'Practise, Practise, Practise': Commitment (Section 5.2.3) was particularly evident.

### 5.2.3 Internal Asset: 'Practise, Practise, Practise': Commitment

This asset considers children's commitment to the activities that they enjoyed. It was clear that there was a distinct difference between informal activities undertaken on an 'ad hoc' basis by the children and those that were more officially organised.

Some of children undertook regular sports training; in these instances, children accepted that coaching occurred on certain days of the week at certain times; this is illustrated below in the excerpt taken from the interview with Paul who belonged to a swimming club:

> Paul: *"That's me about to go to swimming"* [pointing at a photograph]
> LW: *"So how often do you go swimming?"*
> Paul: *"About six times a week."*
> LW: *"And where do you go?"*
> Paul: *"The sports centre…. Erm, I go for a club."*
> LW: *"So how good are you at swimming?"*
> Paul: *"Quite."*
> LW: *"What's your strong stroke?"*
> Paul: *"Breast stroke… my best is breast stroke…But…erm you have to do every single stroke."*
> LW: *"And what time of the day do you go?"*
> Paul: *"Erm, one is in the morning and the rest are in the night; an hour each one."*
> LW: *"Who takes you?"*
> Paul: *"My Mum and sometimes friends' Dads and parents take us."* [107-140]

In addition to Paul, other children attended regular training for various sports:

> LW: *"So how many times a week would you go for training* [football] *then?"*
> Ryan: *"Twice counting school and the other one."* [125-126]

> Luke: *"Yeah, training. Training is on the Saturday and the matches are on a Sunday."* [606-607]

Fleur was the only girl who undertook more formal sports training more than once per week:

LW:     *"So how often do you go to gym then?"*
Fleur: *"Umm, twice a week… Umm, Saturday afternoon and Thursday afternoon… Umm, Thursday is two hours. Or three hours and Saturday is… Yeah, three hours again."* [294-303]

All of the above comments help to demonstrate the commitment that is required by children (and their families) for the maintenance of more formal sports focussed activities.

Whilst it was a minority of children who attended sports training several times a week, others went to a weekly club:

LW:           *"So how often do you do dancing classes?"*
Shazia:     *"Every Saturday."* [91-92]

Whilst many of the weekly lessons, such as that undertaken by Shazia, were operated by private organisations, it was clear that school was a conduit for the regular undertaking of physical activities, the most commonly mentioned was swimming:

*"I have swimming lessons at school, at* [name removed] *school, because they have a swimming pool, but hopefully we're going to have a swimming pool soon, get a swimming pool… at school we go every Monday."* [Anna: 501-506]

*"Erm, well we started off at school swimming and because I was really good he asked if I could join the club so I joined and I just keep on getting better and better."* [Paul: 145-147]

However, children also mentioned that school had provided the opportunity for other activities:

*"I do football for my school."* [Angus: 108]

*"Well I go for a school team and another team* [football]." [Ryan: 122]

*"Yeah, it's a netball, it's when at school I got chosen for the team for High Five… Yeah and we got…our school had to go up to the*

147

*community centre, our High Five team did and play against umm quite a lot of other schools."* [Fleur: 219-228]

*"Erm, we mostly do it at school and I like…netball, that's one of my favourites."* [Hannah: 883-884]

The children's sense of dedication pervaded other interests with many of them referring to how they practised certain skills such as dancing, football, trampolining and music:

*"I practice* [the keyboard] *nearly every day, nearly every day. I'm good at it now"* [Ben: 258]

*"I really want to be a singer when I'm older so I just practised, practise, practise, practise, practise."* [Elizabeth: 290-292]

Whilst the children's commitment and practise was related primarily to activities that they enjoyed, Hope explained how she wanted to work with animals:

*"Erm…well I was talking to my Mum one day about what I wanted to be when I grow up and erm, well I wanted to be a vet but I said is there anything else like a vet and she said yeah, you could be a zoologist and I want to be one of them because you can go out like to different places and discover animals in the park.  But I have to get a bit better at my maths because you have to be really good at maths to do that kind of stuff…. Well it's okay erm because I asked my Mum to get me some tutoring, and I'm getting tutoring. I think when I get home next Thursday, I think it's starting.* [130-144]

Hope acknowledged the importance of maths in relation to the realisation of her aspirations; as a result, she was prepared to undertake the necessary tutorage to facilitate this.

### 5.2.3.1    Summary:   'Practise, Practise, Practise': Commitment

The children displayed a tremendous amount of motivation and commitment towards the activities that they enjoyed; some children, such as Hope and Elizabeth had clear ambitions which necessitated the achievement of certain goals – these children demonstrated their commitment in terms of working

towards the realisation of their dreams. The children's positivity shone through the interviews with emphasis being firmly placed on what was, or could be, achieved.

There was also a particularly clear relationship between this asset and 'It's Near' (Section 5.3.2); all of the children's activities being undertaken within the local vicinity with some being facilitated by school or sports centres.

### 5.2.4  Internal Asset:  'Fun': Having Fun

The asset of 'Fun' was evident throughout the study and also underpinned several of the children's activities. It was clear that fun was promoted in a range of ways. Firstly, it was associated with 'different' activities, in other words, ones that were not usually part of everyday life. For example, Emma described how she was looking forward to her friend's birthday – this was being celebrated by having a 'sleepover' one Friday after school:

> Emma:  "*Yeah, I can't wait.  Every single time I say 'I can't' wait at school they* [friends] *tickle me and I hate being tickled so that I'll stop saying it…. Err…I don't know, I just can't wait. I can't wait erm…to walking home to her house because we're going to stop off at the shops and maybe buy something at the Co-op.*"
> LW:  "*What some sweets or something?*"
> Emma:  "*Yeah, eat on the way there or something. Erm…it's going to be really fun, apparently there's a mystery guest.*" [393-401]

Sam explained how he had participated in a major incident training day that had been part of his mother's course that she was studying:

> "*Just having a really fun day and I got to ride back in an ambulance.*"
> [Sam: 566-567]

One factor that certainly underpinned some of the fun elements of activities undertaken was the four episodes of snowfall that occurred on separate occasions during the data collection. Children spoke excitedly about the snow and the activities that they were able to undertake as a result; there was a

decrease in rules and boundaries, with the children being given freedom to enjoy the weather:

> *"Well, because it was snowing and I like snow. And erm, but I got incredibly cold and I didn't like it so, yeah, I got incredibly cold, err, but I went in my pyjamas so. Err, so, yeah, I like snow and its fun and I made a number 10 and six in between it, so. Erm, yeah, I like snow."* [Bethany: 388-392]

> "*This is when it was snowing and I went sledging and I was just about to go sledging…. I went sledging with my sister… We went sledging with her son and then another day we actually went to* [name removed] *and we went proper sledging by ourselves, because obviously you can't go really fast and go down high hills when you've got like a two year old boy."* [Shazia: 213-219]

Fleur described how a group of friends came to her house when the snow arrived:

> LW:    *"So what were you doing in the snow that afternoon then?"*
> Fleur: *"Umm, because like we had everyone round and it was just trying to fit everyone in* [the garden] *and going outside it was like all snowing and we don't get to see snow much so might as well make it worth it….if I was just with Imogene* [younger sister] *I couldn't really like build a snowman, we couldn't really like by ourselves, we needed a couple more helpers…and as well like having a snowball fight, like if it was just...us two so we don't really have many options for people to aim at so it's useful to aim."* [76-89]

'Fun' was also associated with other forms of unstructured play, in other words a freedom from rules and constraints that were imposed upon children at other times in their lives. For example, Bethany spoke about the fun she had at the end of her swimming lesson when her mother repeatedly threw the locker key into the water for her to jump in and retrieve; similarly, Hope mentioned the fact that there was an opportunity for fun at the end of her swimming class:

> *"Erm, well we…sometimes when it's like the end of our lessons and we are not doing any more we have a fun swim which is where we go in like a little pool and there's like floats and balls and stuff and we can do what we like."* [Hope: 559-562]

Paul explained that going swimming on a Saturday was fun – he was not constrained by the needs of his training, which he undertook six times per week:

> "We all go Saturday morning [swimming], that's for fun, not for training." [Paul:160-161]

On another occasion, Bethany described how her and her brother enjoyed having fun when they went out for the day:

> "And in this one we went to [name removed] Farm and in…because they had this erm, they had this like playground bit just where this was, but instead because they put all these haystacks here, so, and you could go in yeah, it was like a kind of maze to find your way to the top, the middle, but everyone was climbing on the haystacks and jumping over the gaps and I had to come and catch Dan and Dan had to come and catch me….Err, and that was fun.  It was also a cold day but we got really hot so we could take off our coats…. That was probably the best thing we did all holiday." [Bethany: 301-318]

Angus explained the activities that he undertook with his friend:

> Angus:     "We go mainly to the woods … and we use our bow and arrows. Yeah, because we hand carved them."
> LW:         "How did you do that then?"
> Angus:     "Well he [friend] has two little pen knifes what are children's ones and he carved it and that was it." [168-174]

This freedom and ability to have fun also underpinned everyday life and was sometimes simply related to activities that children enjoyed when they had the spare time:

> "Because I like going on the trampoline, it's really fun." [Emma: 679]

The only more formal activity that was viewed as 'fun' was Cubs, all the boys who attended really enjoyed the experience. It was clear that Cubs was associated with a whole range of different activities and this may have been the driver for the sense of fun that developed, the comments made by Paul are typical:

LW: *"What do you like about Cubs?"*

Paul: *"Well we do lots of activities… Erm, we sometimes play games, we learn how to tie different knots, we sometimes go on camps."* [27-31]

In addition to providing a range of different activities, Cubs was also associated with a sense of adventure and this clearly added to the fun element; one example of this was the experiences that some of the boys had on Cub camp:

Myan: "*I went on the Sunrise camp where we got up really early in the morning and looked at the sunrise and then we had a fun day where we just did rock climbing and stuff like that."*

LW: *"What makes that type of weekend away good?"*

Myan: "*Because after school you usually want to play out with your friends a lot but sometimes you don't really have the time to, so when you go to Cubs and Scouts you get to see them. And in Cubs we usually play games quite a lot, so we play games there but at Scouts it basically teaches you how to survive in the wilderness, stuff like that, in the forest."* [Myan: 245-264]

A sense of adventure was also interweaved with the concept of fun in other contexts; for example, Gareth explained that he enjoyed horse riding because of the *'fastness'* [595]; a number of children mentioned the fun they had had when they visited theme parks or fun fairs, the roller coasters causing the most excitement:

*"Yeah, and then you go up and you get turned over like that and it's really, really fun. I was crying because I didn't want to go on it so when I went I was like again, again!"* [Hope: 373-375]

*"They're just more fun than the other rides."* Paul [569]

Similarly, Joe excitedly described the accident that he had whilst sledging:

*"Because basically there was slope which was supposed to stop you, it was like that* [demonstrates with hands] *and someone had added an extra bit on the end so instead of going brbrbrb I went woaaaah!..Went right over the top and landed in the car park at the end!"* [762-767]

It is interesting to note that the activities that children highlighted as fun occurred outside of school. Whilst some children clearly enjoyed school, Sam was the only person who spoke very animatedly about it and clearly loved his experiences there; in addition, he was a member of the School Council and was involved in some aspects of decision-making – this sense of responsibility may have contributed to his positive attitude:

Sam: *"That's our teacher and erm, I took a picture because she's fun and she helps you out a lot."*
LW: *"What do you like about school?"*
Sam: *"Err, it's just really fun and it's a place to go and learn."*
LW: *"What makes her a good teacher?"*
Sam: *"It's just that she's fun and she takes you everywhere."* [43-68]

Sam was also the only child who described the fun that he had in the playground (Figure 5.11):

*"Yeah, because there's tyres on this side and what you can do is you can put your head through them and me and my friend sit there upside down. And wait there for ages until our heads go red and then we fall through… Because it's fun and it's easy to climb up."* [Sam: 272-279]



**Figure 5.11:** *"We've got a big gazebo on our playground.. , look, they're all playing inside there, playing catch"* **[Sam: 97-105]**

### 5.2.4.1      Summary:    'Fun': Having Fun

This asset has highlighted the importance of having fun in relation to the children's lives. The children had an innate capacity and ability to enjoy themselves and this was evident throughout their interviews; other assets (in particular, 'Loads of Stuff': Personal Possessions and 'My Friends': Friendships – Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.3) reinforce this and demonstrate how external assets such as friendships and material resources can further facilitate the sense of fun. In summary, children's capacity and ability to enjoy life was very evident.

### 5.2.5   Internal Asset: 'When I've Got Nothing To Do': Resourcefulness

This asset discusses the children's ability to be able to keep themselves occupied; all children displayed a resourceful approach to their activities, a number, for example, commented upon undertaking an activity when there was nothing else to do:

> Fleur: "*I wrote quite a few stories and I'm on one story now, I am.*"
> LW:     "*And what's that called?*"
> Fleur: "*Umm, Bang…. Umm, I sometimes take them into school or I just keep them for myself, I do, because you never know when you might need like a story… Umm, I just write it whenever I can really… like I'm waiting in the house and I have like nothing to do.*" [1044-1058]

> LW:     "*How often would you go on the trampoline?*"
> Sam: "*When it's not raining and when we've got nothing to do.*" [596-597]

Similarly, other children used the word 'bored', but this was not in a negative manner – it merely demonstrated their initiative and resourcefulness:

> "*Erm, well its not as good as a park, it was just a climbing frame, erm because like if we ever got bored we'd just go down there and play on it.*" [Paul; 641-643]

> "*I like to listen to music like just whenever I'm bored.*" [Emma; 247-248]

*"Erm…sometimes I don't really know it's there but then I'm like I'm bored and then I go oh I can play on my DS and then I never stop playing on it."* [Hope; 593-595]

Children also showed their resourcefulness and positivity in other ways, for example, Ryan commented that he liked playing basketball; further discussion revealed that he did not have any basketball facilities, so managed without:

*"I like playing basketball just outside on the wall; we had a hoop but it broke* [417-19] *so I bounce it against the wall."* [Ryan; 427].

The lack of facilities did not seem to worry Ryan at all; in addition, since the demise of the basket ball hoop, he had begun to practice tricks – during the interview he mimed and explained what he could do – *"I can put it through my legs and catch it."* [Ryan; 436].

Several children provided examples of their resourcefulness through play, frequently making up games. For example, some children described how they had invented games to play with their friends and siblings:

*"Well, I normally make up magical games… Basically games where we have powers and we can play with powers."* [Joe: 992-998]

*"Me and my brother we go on the trampoline and we just like get all of our balls on, because we've got loads, and then we have to like not touch them and if you do touch them you have to lay down on the floor for five seconds."* [Luke: 507-511]

*"Well this one* [referring to a beach on holiday]*, it's got like little hiding places and dunes to run down and erm, down this side there's this like little sheltered den kind of thing and me and Dan play this game and I'm the queen and all that stuff, and we hide in there."* [Bethany; 71-74]

*"I used to play…me and Fran, I made up a game, it was tennis, it was like where you had to whack the ball and it went that way and then you had to keep it up."* [James; 338-340]

Other children demonstrated their resourcefulness through their creativity – this was evident in their story writing (Fleur, Hope, Anna, Ryan and Emma all

expressed a particular interest in this) as well as art/craft activities (popular amongst both boys and girls).

Finally, the children's creativity was depicted via their photographs; whilst they had been asked to take pictures of the activities that they enjoyed, many took photographs of scenery – Bethany explains why:

> *"When we went to this place in Northumberland…the sunset was really nice, it was like the sky was on fire"* [Bethany: 153-155]



**Figure 5.12:** *"When we went to this place in Northumberland…the sunset was really nice, it was like the sky was on fire"* [Bethany: 153-155]

### 5.2.5.1 Summary: 'When I've Got Nothing To Do': Resourcefulness

Whilst the nature of children's resourcefulness varied between individuals, there was clear evidence of its existence. Children demonstrated their ability to keep themselves amused and to deal with the 'When I've got Nothing to Do' situation in an effective manner. A range of strategies were used and included:

- Identifying activities that they could undertake by themselves, such as

playing on an a games console and listening to music, this demonstrated a link with the asset of 'By Myself': Self-worth

- Being adaptable – for example, when Ryan did not have access to a basketball hoop, he modified his activities accordingly
- Being creative. Children's creative resourcefulness was sometimes undertaken on an individual basis, such as the writing of stories; on other occasions it involved friends or siblings and the invention of games; the potential relationship between other assets such as 'My Family': Being a Family and 'My Friends': Friendships was therefore evident. It is interesting that none of the children mentioned adult involvement in this aspect of their lives.

The children's ability to always be able to find something to do, once again, demonstrated their positive approach to life; children dealt with times when there was a lack of resources or when they were feeling bored in an effective manner. This resourcefulness is undoubtedly a fundamental asset.

### 5.2.6  Internal Asset: 'I'm Proud': Pride

The asset of 'I'm Proud' was strongly evident amongst all of the children, both verbally and in the photographs that they took. Whilst the actual word 'proud' was not used widely by the children, they talked excitedly and enthusiastically about their treasured possessions and achievements. During the interview, some children asked if I would like to see their certificates and excitedly pointed them out to me, for example, pinned to the kitchen wall; others demonstrated activities they could do – for instance, Petra did some of her newly learnt dance moves. Anna, Elizabeth and Hope were especially keen to show me evidence of their achievements at the conclusion of their interview – they each presented me with an album which stored a range of certificates and letters from school and family congratulating them on their progress (*"in my album upstairs I've got loads of certificates in it"* [Hope: 544]; *"because we've got loads of badges and certificates upstairs."* [Elizabeth: 264-265]).

Some children clearly vocalised their sense of pride in their achievements, for example:

*"I'm really proud that I got to the top group in swimming, because I never, ever thought I'd do that and I did it. I'm good at swimming now."* [Emma: 699-700]

*"Erm…I was proud when I got Players' Coach of the Year for rugby… Erm…at a ceremony last year…. You get a trophy."* [Angus: 459-469]

Other children did not use the word 'proud' but talked about their achievements with a definite sense of pride:

Shazia:     *"You get a certificate.  You get like marks out of a 100 and you get honours, you get…what else do you get? Honours, pre-bronze, commended, highly commended."*
LW:         *"And how did you get on with it* [dance exam] *Shazia? You're smiling."*
Shazia:     *"I got highly commended!"* [89-98]

As in Shazia's situation, a sense of pride was frequently nurtured via a club or group that was regularly attended. Although none of the girls went to Brownies or Cubs, many of the boys attended the latter; this provided the opportunity to undertake a range of badges. A number of the boys took photographs of their badges on their Cub uniform as well as discussing the activities undertaken:

LW:     *"You look ever so smart there* [looking at photograph taken by Paul]. *Look at all your badges, how many have you got?"*
Paul:   *"Erm, I've got about 20 or so."* [70-72]

Ben:    [Looking at a photograph of his Cubs badges] *"There is a reader's badge, I have the reader's badge and I have an ice skating badge…. Swimming badge…. we have to complete swimming things."* [722-727]

Being proud was not just restricted to tangible achievements that resulted in a certificate or trophy, as mentioned above; children also discussed how their sense of pride had been nurtured via other routes, such as school:

LW:         *"Tell me a bit more about your dances."*
Hannah:     *"We show them in front of the school we do. I make up the dances with my friends and then I do it in front of the teachers and the whole people at the school."* [252-260]

158

Sam spoke about being a member of the school council; he clearly took this responsibility seriously and there was a sense of pride in his involvement:

Sam:   *"I'm part of the School Council as well so."*
LW:    *"What do you do on the School Council?"*
Sam:   *"Just improve the school really and we've got these new things called buddy benches we're bringing in so."* [84-90]

Personal possessions were another important source of pride, with children taking photographs of objects that they cherished. In these instances, the word 'my' was used to indicate it was a personal possession; in photographs taken of family items, such as the television or Wii, this was not the case. 'My' was frequently associated with a sense of pride; the item most commonly photographed was a bike:

*"This is my bike, my blue bike."* [Ben; 355][Figure 5.13]

*"This is me riding my bike."* [Gareth: 167]



**Figure 5.13:**    *"This is my bike, my blue bike"* [Ben; 355]

Each child had items that were important to them; although these objects varied, there was a sense of pride associated with them:

> *"This is my special t-shirt that I've got, I got it for Christmas."* [Fleur: 335]

> *"My gogos are the best thing."* [James: 685]

> *"I've got all my like colouring stuff and all my notebooks because I like doing creative stuff."* [Emma: 278-279][Figure 5.14]



**Figure 5.14:** *"I've got all my like colouring stuff* [Emma: 278]

A number of the boys had taken photographs of models that they had made from construction kits (Figures 5.15; 5.16; 5.17); this was undoubtedly associated with a sense of pride:

> *"I took this picture because I like making things out of* Lego *and stuff like that. I really like this one because it took me a long time to do it, I put it in my shelf, the window shelf in the playroom or my window shelf upstairs in my bedroom…. I leave them there so I can keep looking back at them."* [Myan: 6-40]

**Figure 5.15:** *"This is my Lego"* [Ben: 415]



**Figure 5.16:** *"I just got that, the fire station"* [James: 620]

**Figure 5.17:** *"A Lego train"* **[Joe: 526]**

Whilst girls played with construction materials, there was a different approach to the boys; girls primarily enjoyed imaginative play with Lego and did not use kit instructions (for example, Figure 5.18)**.**



**Figure 5.18:** *"Lego, a Lego house I made"* **[Elouise: 94]**

However, girls did 'make' other items and the sense of pride was equally present, Shazia explained in detail how she had made a model of a volcano and then took it into school, the following is a brief excerpt:

> Shazia: "*All we used is baking powder, vinegar and red colouring…then it explodes. It didn't go really far, it just comes out and then goes…It bubbles up….Me and my sister went onto the Internet …and we found this…recipe for clay. All we done is sort of flour, sugar, water, mixed it all in and made like a thick piece of…like a ball. Yeah, then we modelled it, I modelled it and then… Then I made a booklet.*"
>
> LW: "*So what did everybody say when they saw your model?*"
>
> Shazia: "*It was funny, I was showing it* [at school] *and everybody was coming round like 'Explode the volcano! Explode the volcano!' I was like alright, alright.*" [397-406]

Many of the children collected various items and this was also associated with a sense of pride. Myan explained how he had recently completed his 'Yu-gi-oh!' comic book collection:

> "*Well I…well just recently, just before you came, I got my last 'Yu-gi-oh!' comic book collection, I just got my last one…Erm, they just come every fortnight with models, one of the models is like a mini monster model, so it's like a little figure of the monsters in it and the others are little battle triangles and you keep flinging them at the opponents.*" [Myan: 99-106]

Myan went on to comment that the comics and models were safely stored:

> "*Well we get these little…well we get two boxes to put our comics in and we get this little tin to put all the triangles and medals in that you get.*" [124-126]

In addition to personal possessions, children took numerous photographs of their friends, family members and pets, perhaps indicating the close relationship that they had with them, but also their pride. For example, Fleur commented that it could be difficult to play with her younger sister because of the large age gap; despite this she expressed pride in her sister's achievements:

*"But horse riding she's* [sister] *just like, horse riding she's just like, the riding instructor is like, like he's just like "Oh my God!" because of how good she is at everything."* [Fleur: 999-1001]

### 5.2.6.1    Summary:    'I'm Proud': Pride

The potential relationships that this asset had with others was evident through the children's demonstration of pride in relation to their families ('My Family': Being a Family), their possessions ('Loads of Stuff': Personal Possessions) and their achievements (for example, 'I Like Cubs; I Like Dancing': Self-identity). The children wanted to show, for instance, their collections of certificates and badges that they had 'earned'. It was clear that items such as these were not just important to children, representing their accomplishments, but also enhanced their self-esteem and inspired them further (on occasions children mentioned activities that they had undertaken, but which they had not performed well, the children had been very aware of this and had lost interest and ceased the activity). Whilst some of the certificates were related to a *level* of attainment (for example a swimming distance), the cubs badges were awarded for other aspects of performance, such as attendance or reading a book (it did not matter which book or how challenging it was). These latter awards were cherished just as much as those given for attaining a certain standard, but were far more achievable for all children, rather a selected few who had a particular skill or talent.

Children spoke openly and confidently about their possessions and their achievements; it was clear that these had an impact on many other aspects of their lives, for example, their personal development and their friendships. Pride was undoubtedly an overt internal asset.

**5.2.7        Internal Asset:       'I'm Growing Up': The Developing Child**

The asset of "I'm Growing Up" considers two key aspects of the children's development:

- The increasing levels of responsibility and independence that the children were assuming
- The children's perception of the world around them

These areas are discussed below; both are crucial, but are almost the antithesis to each other - the growing responsibility and independence being counterbalanced with the child's immature perception of their surroundings.

Firstly, children demonstrated that they were developing independence and a sense of responsibility. Hope described how she and Elouise had recently been allowed to walk home together, let themselves into Elouise's house and remain there by themselves until Elouise's mother arrived home and Hope's father came to collect her:

> *"Well, every night we walk home together and I go to her house… for about half an hour. Err…like certain nights we read, certain nights we do homework and certain nights we have fun and on Mondays and Fridays we go to the shops together, so we'll go to the shop tomorrow together…. Erm, the Co-op… And me and Elouise get a Kinder egg….we do it all by ourselves."* [Hope; 202-219]

Whilst other children did not describe a situation similar to Hope's, an element of freedom and responsibility was evident amongst many of the children, it frequently related to being outside with their friends:

> *"Me and my friends in a minute, if my Mum lets me, we're going to go out and play with my friends* [173-174*] Well we usually take our bikes and ride along the paths and stuff like that and go to the park."* [Myan; 176-177]

> *"I'm going to play out today and go to the park as well with my friend."* [Hannah; 327]

> *"There's not really much stuff there* [the park] *but there's a huge field where all my friends live and we hang out there."* [Elizabeth; 684-685]

165

Although children demonstrated a respect for this growing independence, Bethany did confide that she had been given the responsibility of getting the Sunday newspaper by herself and that she enjoyed this:

> *"Because I sneak a bit of money."* [Bethany; 559]

The children's freedom and independence was permitted within boundaries that had been set by the family. Several children mentioned these; none of them complained about them and they appeared to accept them in an unquestioning manner. The boundaries mainly focussed on outdoor play, although electronic games consoles were also mentioned:

> *"Because I'm not allowed down there by myself, Charlotte* [older sister] *would take me down there, she would drop me off, I would go and knock for all my friends and then she'll go to her friend's house."* [Elizabeth; 687-690]

> *"I've always had my* [cycle] *helmet on because my Mum and Dad won't let me go out without one on."* [Luke; 548-549]

> *"Yeah, we're only allowed on it for like an hour a day, so if I went on the computer I'm only allowed on it for an hour, same with Wii, same with DS, same with…well not really with DS, we can go on that for ages but it don't really hurt, it don't really strain your eyes as much as the others…"* [Emma; 232-237]

> *"Well, I'm only allowed to play on it [the Wii] Friday to Sunday because my Mum says education is more important."* [Myan, 68-69]

Interestingly, although there was similarity between the boundaries, children sometimes provided different rationales for them; for example, Myan's time spent on the Wii was restricted to accommodate his educational needs, whereas Emma explained that her rule was in place because of possible eye strain.

The second aspect of this asset related to children's perception of the world around them. Children perceived that certain activities were either suitable or

unsuitable for them due to either their increasing age or their maturity, for example:

> *"Well, I'm getting a bit old for it [the park] because it's getting a bit boring and things, but I still like it."* [Paul; 661-662]

> *"It's a kind of a baby thing, I'm too old for it."* [referring to a television programme] [Hope; 294]

> *"Well to Dan it's* [a hill at the seaside] *steep, for me it isn't."* [Bethany; 88]

In addition, children were starting to think about their future and were beginning to form perceptions about what this might hold, some of these were short-term, others were more long-term:

> *"I want to go to Scouts when I'm old enough."* [Sam; 627]

> *"I'm trying to make neat copies for all of them and then hopefully publish them* [stories] *when I'm older."* [Anna; 368-369]

> *"Well, when I'm older I think I might actually.  I might go for like a beauty thing* [makeover]*…I want to be a singer when I grow up."* [Elizabeth; 418-419]

Petra's aspirations were different to those of the other children:

> *"When I'm older I want to be a pole dancer* [564-565]*…So when I'm older, yeah, my auntie Beverley's going to take me to a gay club."* [Petra; 568-569]

In another instance, there was a suggestion that Petra's perception of her future was influenced by events occurring around her; she explained that she pushed her doll in her pram around her bedroom and:

> *"I pretend that I'm a teenager and I get kicked out of school."* [324-325]

A little later in the interview, Petra explained how her older teenage brother had been expelled from school; perhaps Petra anticipated that this would also happen to her. Petra was the only child to mention about becoming a parent herself one day:

> *"Well, just when I'm older I'll be a good Mummy so I practise with my dollies."* [99-100][Figure 5.19]



**Figure 5.19:** *"Well, just when I'm older I'll be a good Mummy so I practise with my dollies."* **[Petra: 99-100]**

The asset also highlighted that whilst the children were developing rapidly, gaining independence and an awareness of the world around them, their perception of situations could be quite different to that of an adult. This was demonstrated on several occasions. For example, many of the children loved the thrill and excitement of theme parks or fair ground rides. In a number of instances, they perceived themselves to be brave since they had risen to the challenge of a particular ride; Hannah excitedly explained her experiences at the funfair:

> *"Me and Dad were the only ones, we were the only bravest ones to go on there."* [Hannah; 732-733]

At the conclusion of Hannah's interview, her father entered the room. Hannah told him excitedly that she had relayed her experiences of the funfair to me; Dad then went on to explain that they had been the only ones on the ride because the funfair had been so poorly attended.

Children's differing perception also related to time, size/space and distance. For example, Paul commented that he saw his Granddad *'quite a lot'* [597], yet later discussions revealed that this was approximately every two months. Conversely, Shazia explained that her older sisters did not visit *"very often, once a week, maybe twice"* [58]. Myan explained the very long journey that he needed to undertake to learn how to play the Indian drums, when it was only a few miles away. Similarly, Angus commented that his Granddad did not live nearby, but further discussion revealed the name of the town, indicating the distance to be approximately 3 miles.

On another occasion, Hope described a climbing frame in her local park:

> *"There's like a massive…I don't know what they're called…there's like wires, like red wires with rope on and it goes really, really high and you climb up it."* [434-436]

However, a personal visit to the park revealed the true size of the climbing frame as being approximately 7 feet in height. This is similar to Elizabeth's experience of being stuck in a tree, but a passerby being able to lift her down; James' description of his massive pool table (Figure 5.20), which was a child's version; Luke's description of his large garden, which was actually quite small.

**Figure 5.20:**     *"Me playing pool"* **[James: 143]**

Interestingly, however, children's perceptiveness embraced others; they displayed an awareness of the needs of friends and family. For example, Anna explained how she watched different DVDs depending upon which friend she was with:

Anna:     *"Erm, mostly we like to watch calm ones but when we're with our other friends it's usually quite a bit of action…. and because she's much younger than me as well, she's seven."* [233-238]

Emma explained her awareness of the needs of her younger cousins:

Emma:     *"Yeah, I do that a lot because erm…our cousins come to the same school as us, Harry and Lily, Harry's in T's class and Lily's like in Year 1 and they get really, really bored in the infant playground and we're not allowed on the apparatus. So I make a really fun game and everything, like you have to do a race or there's a 100 grid square, a square that's gigantic, and I made a game*

*that you have to run around the edges and you start at a corner each, you've got to try and tap someone, if you get them then they're out and whoever is left is the winner and lots more ones but I love playing them, they all do as well."* [737-747]

Emma illustrates in her above quote a caring and nurturing approach; it is not clear whether this had been 'taught'; whether it was innate, or whether Emma was using others as role models; however, it was a stance that was also reflected by other children. For example, Sam talked about the suitability of playground equipment as he was concerned that *"little kids can get hurt"* [325] and Myan explained how one of his friends was not allowed to play outside with his bike, therefore, children adapted their strategies to meet his needs.

### 5.2.7.1    Summary: 'I'm Growing up': The Developing Child

This asset provided evidence of the children's cognitive development – this undoubtedly influenced the activities undertaken as well as a range of other assets (such as 'My Friends': Friendships; 'My Family': Being a Family and 'Fun': Having Fun). 'I'm Growing Up': The Developing Child captured the children's developing independence as well as the perceptiveness that they showed towards others.

Children highlighted the boundaries that had been instigated by parents - these were viewed positively as they actually facilitated freedom and independence; without the boundaries associated with outdoor play, for example, many children would simply not have been allowed outside.

The children realised that they were growing up and spoke positively about their aspirations as well as about their current lives. The children had an optimistic outlook towards their future – no insurmountable difficulties were vocalised, although there was sometimes an acknowledgement of challenges that might need to be faced.

In summary, the asset of 'I'm Growing Up' reflected the children's confident perception of their development.

### 5.2.8  Internal Asset: 'I Like Cubs; I Like Dancing': Self-Identity

Whilst the children's interviews did not reflect very many gender differences between boys and girls, it was important to recognise that there were some. One gender was not viewed more positively than another; rather, being male or female gave a particular self-identity and it was this that was the asset.

Both boys and girls frequently enjoyed the same activity, but sometimes there were gender variations in relation to its focus – this was the key aspect of self-identity. A good example of this was the collecting of stickers which was popular amongst both boys and girls; however, the content of the stickers varied with gender. Many of the boys collected the stickers that accompanied the Gogos[21], whereas girls displayed an interest in Harry Potter (Figure 5.21) and Hannah Montana :

> *"Yeah, you buy…you get…if you buy one packet you get three gogos and three stickers. You can put all the stickers in it* [a book]" [James: 53-58]

> *"That's stickers.* [Harry Potter]*. I'm collecting them. I've still got loads to get."* [Elouise: 357-396]

> *"And erm, we've got like a sticker album of it* [Harry Potter] *and sometimes when we go to the Co-op we buy stickers for it, they're 40p each for five stickers and erm, we take…we like stick them in together and because she* [friend] *started before me erm, she has more stickers than me and all the extra ones that she's got she sometimes gives to me to see if I've got them."*  [Hope: 248-253]

---

[21] Small plastic figures to collect and play games with; 99p for a pack of three Gogos and three stickers

**Figure 5.21:** *"That's stickers…. I've still got loads to collect"* **[Elouise: 357-396]**

Similarly, particular possessions were popular with both boys and girls, for example, electronic games consoles, books, balls and equipment to listen to music; however, the use of each of these objects often indicated a gender preference – for example, boys frequently played football with their ball, whereas girls tended to play 'catch'; likewise, the type of books read or music listened to varied. Other possessions were also gender specific, the collecting of Gogos was only mentioned by boys; similarly, cuddly toys, dolls and teddies were only discussed by girls.

In addition to possessions, there were some differences in the clubs attended; whilst none of the girls went to either Cubs or football training, several of the boys did. Conversely, a number of the girls went to dance classes whereas none of the boys attended these. Some of the boys who went to Cubs said that they did so because their friends had joined - this is interesting as the children primarily mixed with friends of the same gender; it is not possible to know whether a friend's attendance at dance classes would have made it more attractive for some of the boys, or whether a girl belonging to Cubs would have encouraged others to join. Whilst some activities such as swimming and bike riding did not reveal any gender demarcation, children's friendships and activities undoubtedly played an important role in relation the development of their self-identity.

### 5.2.8.1    Summary: 'I Like Cubs; I Like Dancing': Self-Identity

All of the children displayed a strong self-identity and this clearly impacted upon other aspects of their lives including their friends ('My Friends': Friendships) and possessions ('Loads of Stuff': Personal Possessions).

### 5.3    Core Individual Assets: External

The following section presents the children's three external assets that emerged following data analysis:

- 'Loads of Stuff': Personal Possessions
- 'My Friends': Friendships
- 'It's Near': Community

### 5.3.1  External Asset:    'Loads of Stuff': Personal Possessions

The word 'stuff' was used repeatedly by nearly all of the children; for example, phrases such as *"stuff like that"* [Myan; 246]; *"loads of stuff"* [Fleur; 160; Sam; 291; Shazia; 174] *"all sorts of stuff"* [Emma; 80]; *"doing stuff"* [Angus; 181]; *"kind of stuff"* [Hope; 136]; *"different stuff"* [Luke; 454]; *"my stuff"* [Bethany; 619] were used throughout the interviews. The word 'stuff' was either used in the context of doing something, or to represent possessions. This asset focuses upon the latter and encapsulates the possessions that the children had access to; most of these were personal to them, others, such as electronic games consoles were sometimes shared with the family. Whilst several of the personal possessions represented a potentially large financial outlay, others did not.

All of the children took photographs of some of their personal possessions and discussed them during their interviews. When asked a question such as, 'Why did you choose to take this photograph?' The child would typically reply: *"Because I like going…"* [Ben; 625]; *"Because it's a thing I like"* [Bethany, 442]; *"Because I like going in it"* [Joe; 692]; *"Because it's just like all nice and beautiful"* [Luke; 484], indicating that children had focussed upon favourite

items. A number of children took several photographs of the same object, perhaps to underline that this was something very important to them.

There were a range of personal possessions mentioned by children that would have necessitated a significant[22] financial outlay; this included a range of electronic games consoles, iPods, construction kits, garden play equipment and bikes - some children had several of these items. The most popular of these objects were the electronic games consoles with a number of the children either taking a photograph (for example, Figures 5.22 and 5.23) and/or spontaneously discussing them during their interview. Sometimes the consoles were their personal possessions, in other instances they were owned by the family and the child had access to them.

---

[22] For the purposes of this study, this was objects costing more than £50.00

**Figure 5.22:**  *"I like the Wii, I like Wii Sport, the football one and the Olympics one"*
**[Ben: 542-543]**

Children spoke positively  about their electronic games consoles:

*"I like my DS and I like going on it."* [Emma; 32]

*"I play on the Wii a lot, I like playing on the Wii"* [23-24]; *I like playing…what do I like playing…erm…my dog games."* [Hannah; 662]

"I like playing *it* [ Wii], *yeah."* [James; 238]

*"I like playing my Nintendo."* [Paul; 407]

"I *took* [a photograph of] *my PSP because that's one of the things that I usually play and the Wii I've just got recently so I like that as well."* [Myan; 45-47]

**Figure 5.23:** *"I took a photo of my PSP because that's one of the things that I usually play"* [Myan: 45-46]

In addition to having the electronic games consoles, children had a large range of games on which they played (Figure 5.24):

*"Wii Sport; Mario, Strike Football; Wario Ware, Smooth Moves, Mario & Sonic Olympics, erm that's for that one still, De Blob and that's it really. I like Wii Sport, the football one and the Olympics one."* [Ben; 539-542)

*"The Wii, we've got things like Mario Kart; Animal Crossing. We've got Wii Fit, Wii Play and Wii Sports. We've got Rayman Raving Rabbids, TV Party and I think that's it, isn't it?"* [Paul; 441-443]

*"Err, we've got Mario Kart, erm, Wii Fit, Wii Sport, Animal Crossing, Sim Animals. Oh I've got another one, I can't remember what it is…erm…I've got loads, I can't…oh yeah, Mario & Sonic at The Olympic Games and Cooking."* [Hope; 611-614]

*"I've got well loads. I can't remember them all. I've got Carnival Kart EA, I've got Carnival Mini Golf, Carnivals, Family Ski, Wii Fit,….Mario Kart."* [James; 246-248]

*"Well one I'm playing at the moment, I'm really, really far on it, it's called My Sims Kingdom* [182-183]*…I play Mario Kart and Mario Double Dash a lot with my brother* [195-196]*…And Wii Sports and Wii Fit and things like that."* [Emma; 199]



**Figure 5.24:** *"It's the Wii….Wii Sport"* **[Joe: 346]**

The Wii appeared to be the most popular console with children – they enjoyed playing on it both by themselves and with family and friends. Hope's comments are typical:

*"Erm, sometimes…I sometimes play on it on my own. I like Mario Kart, that's really good and erm, sometimes when friends come round we all play on the Wii Fit and see if we can beat each other and stuff."* [628-631]

Whilst the majority of children had access to an electronic games console and enjoyed playing on it, children did not appear to use them for several hours at a time; in some cases, children highlighted that there were parental boundaries in relation to the time that could be spent playing on a console; however, and

interestingly, children identified that they preferred other activities to the console and this seemed to influence the time spent playing on them:

> *"I do have them* [consoles]*, it's just like they're not the best things I do"* [Sam; 609]

Sam said that he preferred:

> *"playing out with my friends and going to school."* [614]

Ben agreed with this comment:

> *"No, not every day… Today I'm not sure if I'll play, I prefer other things."* [Ben; 456-458]

Apart from electronic games consoles, the most expensive possessions were forms of outdoor play equipment and included bikes, trampolines and climbing frames. Over half of the children mentioned having bikes, with a number photographing theirs:

> *"Me riding my bike… I've got friends and I sometimes go out and ride it by myself."* [Joe: 217-229]

> *"Because I like riding my bike."* [Elouise: 57]

> *"Erm, me and my bike."* Elizabeth; 74]

Once again these were personal possessions and not shared.

It is clear that having a bike provided a means of transport, but, perhaps more importantly, a way of facilitating friendships and independence (please refer to the asset 'My Friends': Friendships, Section 5.3.3).

**Figure 5.25:** *"I like riding my bike"* **[Elouise; 57]**

Two of the children lived in an apartment (and therefore had no personal outdoor space), the others lived in a house which had a small back garden, the average size being approximately twenty-five feet in length and fifteen feet in width; as a consequence, family garden space was limited. Despite this, and the cost of outdoor play apparatus, several children said that they either had a climbing frame, a swing/slide or a trampoline. The children who did have this equipment seemed to use it on a regular basis:

> *"Erm, I have my climbing frame because now its summer we're playing outside a lot on that….So we usually play on the climbing frame and play football and all that."* [Myan; 169-174]

> *"I play on the trampoline a lot in the back garden."* [Petra; 370]

> *"I play on the trampoline in the back garden* [240]*…. nearly every day. I go on that for at least an hour."* [Elizabeth; 251]

> LW:   *"How often would you go on the trampoline then?"* [154]
> Luke:  *"Every day." [Luke; 155-156]*

**Figure 5.26:**    *"I like playing….like on the swing and like going down the slide"* **[Ben: 418-419]**

Whilst the children had access to a range of possessions that had necessitated a significant financial outlay, this was not the case for most of the items they owned. The personal items that were often the most cherished were those in which the child had invested considerable time. This ranged from the construction of a range of models (Lego being the most popular) to collections of stickers and 'Gogos' that had been acquired over a period of time. 'Gogos' were popular amongst boys with a number of them spontaneously referring to them. James, a quiet and reserved boy spoke animatedly about his 'Gogos':

> *"I really like playing with them [Gogos]…..they're like little figures that you can flick at…you can play quite a lot of games with them..either by yourself or with different people; if you buy one packet you get three Gogos and three stickers."* [James; 29-58][Figures 5.27 and 5.28]

James went on to provide a lengthy description of the games and battles that that can be undertaken with Gogos.

**Figure 5.27:** *"Gogos"* [James: 31]



**Figure 5.28:** *"Gogos…They're like little figures that you can flick at…you can play quite a lot of games with them"* [James: 31-34]

There was evidence that the boys wanted to keep their Gogos safely, most were stored in bags:

> *"Erm, I keep them in two bags and then I put the bags in this really big bag."* [Gareth; 906]

> *"Erm, I've got these Gogo bags."* [Ben; 769]

These personal possessions were frequently kept in special places, whether that be a window sill, in the case of Lego models, or boxes/bags/books in the case of stickers and 'Gogos'.

The other popular items were art and craft materials (such as paper; colouring pencils; card making kits) and the availability of books to read. Whilst both boys and girls mentioned these items, there were more consistent and enthusiastic comments from the girls:

> *"I have a card making set and I love making cards, I always try and make them really special."* [Emma; 378-379]

> *"Yeah, we've got an art cupboard, there's stickers and things, loads and when it's peoples birthday we make them a homemade card."* [Petra; 301-302]

> *"I have like an easel I do painting"* [Shazia; 262]

> *"And all the time I just draw and this is my favourite notebook."* [Anna; 347][Figure 5.29]
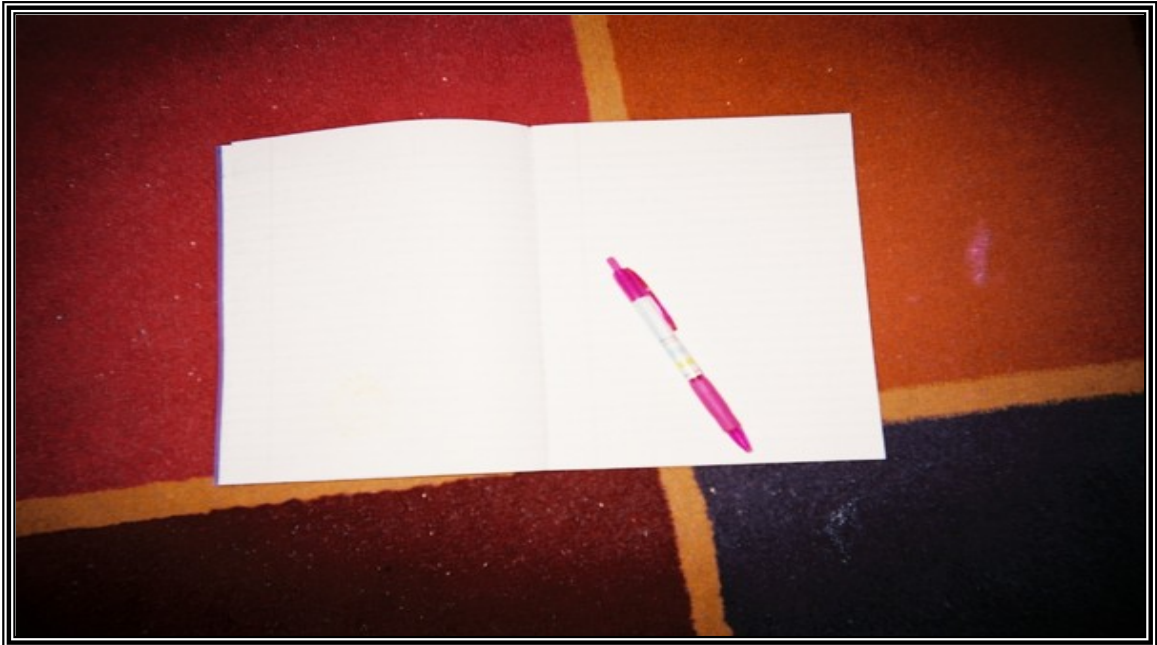
**Figure 5.29:** **"*This is my favourite notebook*" [Anna: 347]**

The funding of the possessions that were mentioned by the children, primarily came from family members; however, children also talked about their own money, this was either pocket money, or money that had been received as a birthday or Christmas gift. Some children received pocket money on a weekly basis and it was expected that this was used to buy small personal items; for example, James and Myan both collected Gogos and commented that they had to buy them with their pocket money. James and Myan lived within a traditional nuclear family; however, children from more diverse family backgrounds did not always have a parental consistent approach to money, for example,

> Petra: *"I get loads of money from my Dad's side of the family… When I get some more money I'm getting a new phone."*
> LW: *"Why do you need a new phone?"*
> Petra: *"Well I don't, I just want a new phone."* [214-228]

Similarly, Paul commented that his Dad (who was divorced from his mother) gave him a range of expensive items including several electronic games consoles.

Some children did not receive any pocket money (*"I don't get pocket money"* [Emma: 369]), but it was not clear why this was. Many children commented upon the birthday and Christmas money that they had received and identified items that they had bought with it:

*"I spend all my birthday money and stuff like that on them* [dolls clothes] *and I go down Sainsbury's and get them."* [Petra: 209-210]


*"I bought my iPod with my own money as well."* [Paul: 417]


*"So we went there and I had a little bit of my birthday money to spend, I had a pound."* [Bethany: 515-516]


### 5.3.1.1    Summary: 'Loads of Stuff': Personal Possessions

A number of key issues emerged from this asset. The children demonstrated an enjoyment of electronic games consoles, but it is important to remember that there was an indication that other activities were often preferred.

The children's lives were undoubtedly influenced by the availability of resources and this had an impact upon many of the other assets, such as 'My Friends': Friendships; 'I'm Growing Up': The Developing Child and I'm Proud': Pride. Whilst parents were primarily responsible for financially driven purchases, children highlighted that they had some monetary awareness and independence, identifying that a number of their possessions had been self-purchased; whilst these objects tended to be less expensive items, they were cherished and well looked after. Children demonstrated their responsibility and capability in relation to this aspect of their decision-making.

In summary, children's possessions were important to them; in addition, there was no doubt that the ownership of some items positively influenced other aspects of the child's life, such as friendship and the fostering of independence and responsibility.

### 5.3.2 External Asset: 'It's Near': Community

This asset presents some of the community related factors that emerged following data analysis. Whilst none of the children referred specifically to the 'community' in which they lived, it was clear that their immediate locality influenced their lives. The proximity of the children's homes to both family/friends and physical resources meant that children developed their knowledge of their community; Figures 5.30 and 5.31 are maps of the locality in which the children lived, they show the approximate position of key buildings and areas frequented by the children, including the local parks and schools. Whilst the maps are not drawn to scale they provide some illustration of the children's local environment. The children spent the majority of their lives within a small community setting, continually referring to how near something or someone was to their home.

The local neighbourhood certainly contributed to the development and maintenance of the children's friendships; children had met their friends in a variety of ways, this included via school, local clubs (such as swimming lessons) and in the immediate vicinity of their homes; the comments from Myan and Fleur were typical:

> *"Erm, some I know them from other activities and some are my school friends."* [Myan; 211-212]

> *"Umm, Natalie, she doesn't go to my school but I've been friends with her for ages and Jasmine she does go to my school and I've been friends with her quite long and Fiona and her they're just down the road so we play with them quite a lot."* [Fleur; 63-66]
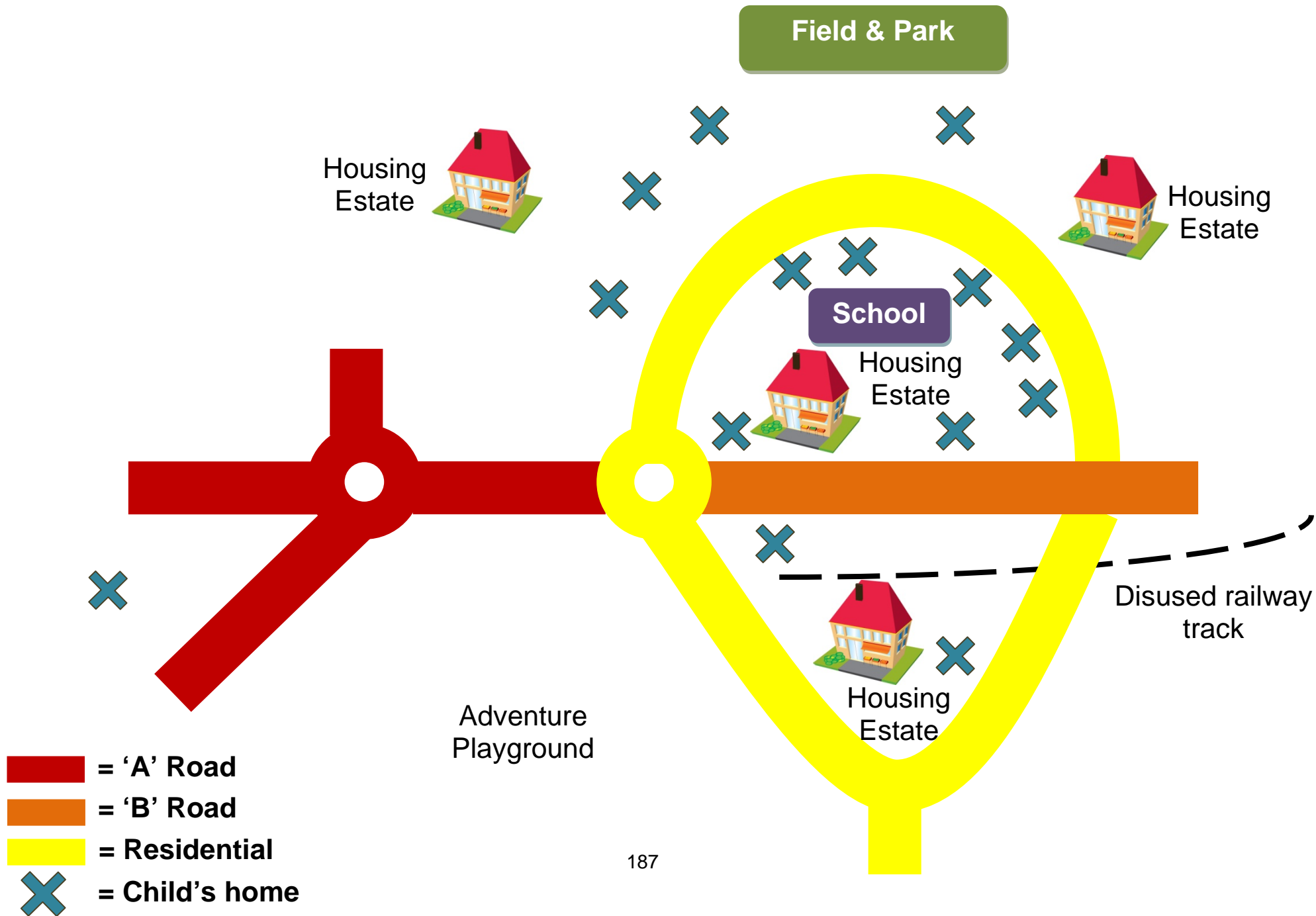
**Field & Park**

Housing Estate

Housing Estate

**School**

Housing Estate

Housing Estate

Disused railway track

Adventure Playground

Housing Estate

= 'A' Road

= 'B' Road

= Residential

187

= Child's home

**Figure 5.30 Location of School 1 and the homes of fourteen children**

School 2

Woods

Housing Estate

Housing Estate

Park

Park

Woods

Housing Estate

Housing Estate

Woods

Fields

Park

Woods

■ = 'A' Road

■ = 'B' Road

✖ = Child's home

Figure 5.31: Location of School 2 and the homes of six children

The local community also provided opportunities to attend various activities, such as Cubs, dance classes, swimming and gym. The clubs that children attended facilitated the building of relationships, this meant that children developed a network of people who they knew in their surrounding community; as a result, it was not unusual for a child to comment that someone else's parents took or collected them from an activity, for example:

> *"My Mum and sometimes friends' Dads and parents take us* [swimming]*."* [Paul; 140]

> *"I go* [to the theme park] *with one of my Mum's friends."* [Elouise: 195]

Occasionally this network provided other opportunities, for example, Luke described how a friend's father had seen him playing football at the local park and then invited him to join the club he ran:

> *"One of my friend's Dad is the manager and he saw me diving into tackles at this park."* [Ryan: 592-593]

In other instances, children mentioned how their parents were involved in aspects of community life; this further reinforced the children's network as they were frequently part of the same organisations as their families:

> *"He* [Dad] *helps* [at Cubs]. *Well not every week, sometimes he is, well mostly every week. He's a Chairman.*" [Ben: 676-677]

> LW:        *"Oh, so your Dad coaches on a Sunday?"*
> Angus:     *"Mmm."* [293-294]

> *"£3 a week [football subs] or something….. My Dad collects all the money from everyone.* [Luke: 651-653]

In some of these instances, it was the child who had instigated parental community involvement (as in Ben's situation) by belonging to a club; in other instances, it was the parent who had initiated the child's interest (as in Angus and Luke's cases).

School was clearly a central part of the children's lives and of their community, with everyone mentioning it in their interviews; Elizabeth described how she played schools at home, indicating the influence that school had had on her:

> *"Erm, well, we'll play schools in the bedroom….Me and my two cousins and Annabelle, which is her* [pointing to photograph], *we'd all play schools and I would get like all these water things, water balloons and do like little science experiments. Annabelle's my pupil, she is a very naughty pupil."* [Elizabeth: 225-234]

However, by far the majority of references to school were made as passing comments; for example, children would frequently indicate that they knew a particular friend from school; or that they attended a particular club or activity via school. Very few children spoke specifically about school itself, the exceptions being Sam, Shazia and Joe who all talked about how much they enjoyed it. Whilst the other children did not say as much about school, there was no evidence that they were anything but happy there.

Several children commented upon being able to easily visit friends and family; as these people were in close proximity, they were often allowed to visit by themselves; this meant that they were also developing their independence and responsibility:

> *"Yeah. This is at my nan's.. A lot, I go there every day."* [Hannah: 153-156]

> *"Yeah, she* [friend] *lives like a few streets down."* [Emma: 418]

> Angus:  *"Err…I just probably go round my friend's or something."*
> LW:  *"Where do your friends live then?"*
> Angus:  *"Err…near my school, near here."* [Angus: 126-128]

Similarly, the nearby play areas meant that they were also readily accessible:

> LW:  *"Where do you go with your friends then?"*
> Myan:  *"Well we usually take our bikes and ride along the paths and stuff like that and go to the park."*
> LW:  *"Where's the park then Myan?"*

Myan:      *"Oh it's near the community centre down there."* [Myan: 175-179]


LW:      *"Where's the field then Katie?"*
Anna:      *"Just out there"* [points through the window]. [Anna: 110-111]

The children knew the area where they lived very well; Joe was, for example, able to explain the exact location of the park:

> *"Erm…well you go down straight to where those houses over there are, across there on that diagonal path, go straight on till you get going up the path, then you turn left and then you go down that path and then turn left again and then there's a field in front of some houses, you go past that and there's the park."* [Joe: 1008-1013]

Other children, whilst they did not give such detailed descriptions, demonstrated throughout their interviews that they had a good knowledge of their local area; they were happy to travel within their local community within the parental boundaries which had been set.


### 5.3.2.1      Summary: 'It's Near': Community

In summary, the children's lives were focussed within a relatively small physical area. As a result, children had developed a network of friendships via their local neighbourhood, schools and clubs; in addition, they demonstrated knowledge of their immediate surroundings. The children's knowledge gave them self-assurance; their familiarity with the physical environment meant that they had the confidence to travel independently within their immediate area, to meet friends and to ride their bikes in the local vicinity. As a result, the asset of 'It's Near': Community impacted upon a range of others, including, 'I'm Growing Up': The Developing Child, 'My Friends': Friendships; 'Practice, Practice, Practice': Commitment and 'I Like Cubs; I Like Dancing': Self-identity.

### 5.3.3  External Asset:    'My Friends': Friendships

Friendships were an integral part of the children's lives. The children talked animatedly about the activities that they enjoyed with their friends and how they had influenced their interests. Many children had taken photographs of their friends, indicating the prominent part they played in their lives:

> *"And this is my friend Jenni, me and my friend Jenni."* [Anna: 184-185 ]

> *"Umm that's my friend Simone."* [Fleur: 59]

> *"This is my friend Harry."* [Gareth: 287]

Children did not appear to have any difficulties in forming friendships; Sam explained how he had used a strategy to make friends with other children in the immediate neighbourhood:

> *"Well, because when we was moving in* [to Sam's present house] *I kept shouting stuff out of the car and like just to make people notice us and then there's this boy who's just a couple of doors down and stuff and I made friends with him."* [499-502]

The children almost exclusively referred to friends who were of the same gender, the only exception being Elizabeth who talked about her female friends, but who also mentioned a 'boyfriend' on one occasion:

> *"Me and my friend Nathan, my boyfriend, we go down to the adventure* [playground] *or at the tennis courts but once it was closed so he had to come back here and then we all just stayed here and we played on the trampoline and stuff with Charlotte* [older sister] *and her friends."* [1060-1065]

It was clear that friendships had in some cases influenced the activities that children undertook; for example, some of the boys had started Cubs because their friends did; Gareth had started horse-riding at the age of five years of age because a school friend had begun lessons. Similarly, a friend introduced Fleur to gym and Luke to the 'out of school' football team:

LW: *"So how did you get to be part of this team [football] then?"*
Luke: *"Erm, well, it was at one of my friend's parties wasn't it? And someone was looking around for erm a couple more players and he wanted me to play."* [588-591]

Sometimes friends were a very integral part of children's lives; Hannah talked about her relationship with her friend:

LW: *And how often do you see her?*
Hannah: *All day, she always knocks for me, I'm her best friend.*
LW: *So what sort of things do you do together?*
Hannah: *We go to the park and play and sometimes we go to each other's for sleepovers.* [92-96]

The importance of friends was identified in other ways, for example, Hope described how she had written a story in which all of her best friends had a key role; several other children commented upon the sleepovers that they had with their friends.

Friendships were further fostered as the children lived locally to each other, so often went to extra-curricula clubs with each other and generated interests in the same activities:

LW: *"And who goes to Cubs with you?"*
Paul: *"Most of the boys in the class."* [40-44]

*"These are some of my friends from school and Cubs."* [Ben; 703]

Some children explained that they were allowed to play outside or go to the park if they were with friends, indicating that parents considered these activities to be more 'safe' if there was a group of children together. This perhaps further reinforced the importance of friendships to the children.

However, for Joe friendships were more challenging and he sometimes found it difficult to play with other children. Joe said that when he had friends at his house, they wanted to do different things to him; his friends wanted to play on the electronic games consoles, whereas Joe would prefer to:

*"Play with the* Lego*…umm, go upstairs in the loft, go into my room, play in my room…. I like to draw and I like to go on the upstairs computer and I like to read."* [421-426]

It is not possible to identify why Joe felt as he did, however, it is interesting to note that several of his hobbies were individual rather than team orientated (for example construction toys, computer games) – some of these echoing his father's interests. Joe appeared a very happy boy and talked excitedly about his family and about how much he enjoyed school.

Only one child did not to mention friendships at all during her interview – this was Bethany, her discussions were far more centred on her family.

### 5.3.3.1    Summary: 'My friends': Friendships

The children appeared to form friendships easily, but highly valued them. Friends were particularly influential in terms of activities undertaken, common interests developed and children were able to share these – this tended to be a world that adults were not part of. Children realised that friendships could also facilitate independence as they were more likely to be allowed to play outside if in the company of their peers; as a result, the asset of 'My Friends' clearly influenced others, in particular, 'I'm Growing Up': The Developing Child; 'Fun': Having Fun and 'I Like Cubs;  I Like Dancing: Self-identity.'

The positive relationships that children formed with their friends enhanced their confidence; they spoke about each other excitedly and with affection. The photographs that children had taken of their friends affirmed the importance in their lives.

## 5.4 'I'm Good': The Children's Asset Wheel

The aim of this doctoral work was to gain insight into children's wellbeing through the lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy'. A theoretical framework (Figure 1.1) was used to guide the research; Figure 5.32 diagrammatically demonstrates how this process led to the development of the '*I'm Good': The Children's Asset Wheel* [CAW]; Figure 5.33 depicts the CAW itself - a model that provides a summary of the findings from the study. The CAW depicts the child, the Stabilising Asset and eleven Core Individual Assets (eight internal and three external). This representation not only portrays the value of 'My family': Being a Family, and the relationship that it has with the Core Individual Assets, but also illustrates the connectivity that exists between all of the assets.

Overall, the children demonstrated a happy and positive approach to life that was underpinned by their assets - this positivity is fundamental to the concept of wellbeing. The CAW is a model that has been developed as a direct consequence of the research undertaken; it recognises the importance of the children's assets to their lives and their overall wellbeing, it is now explained in further detail.
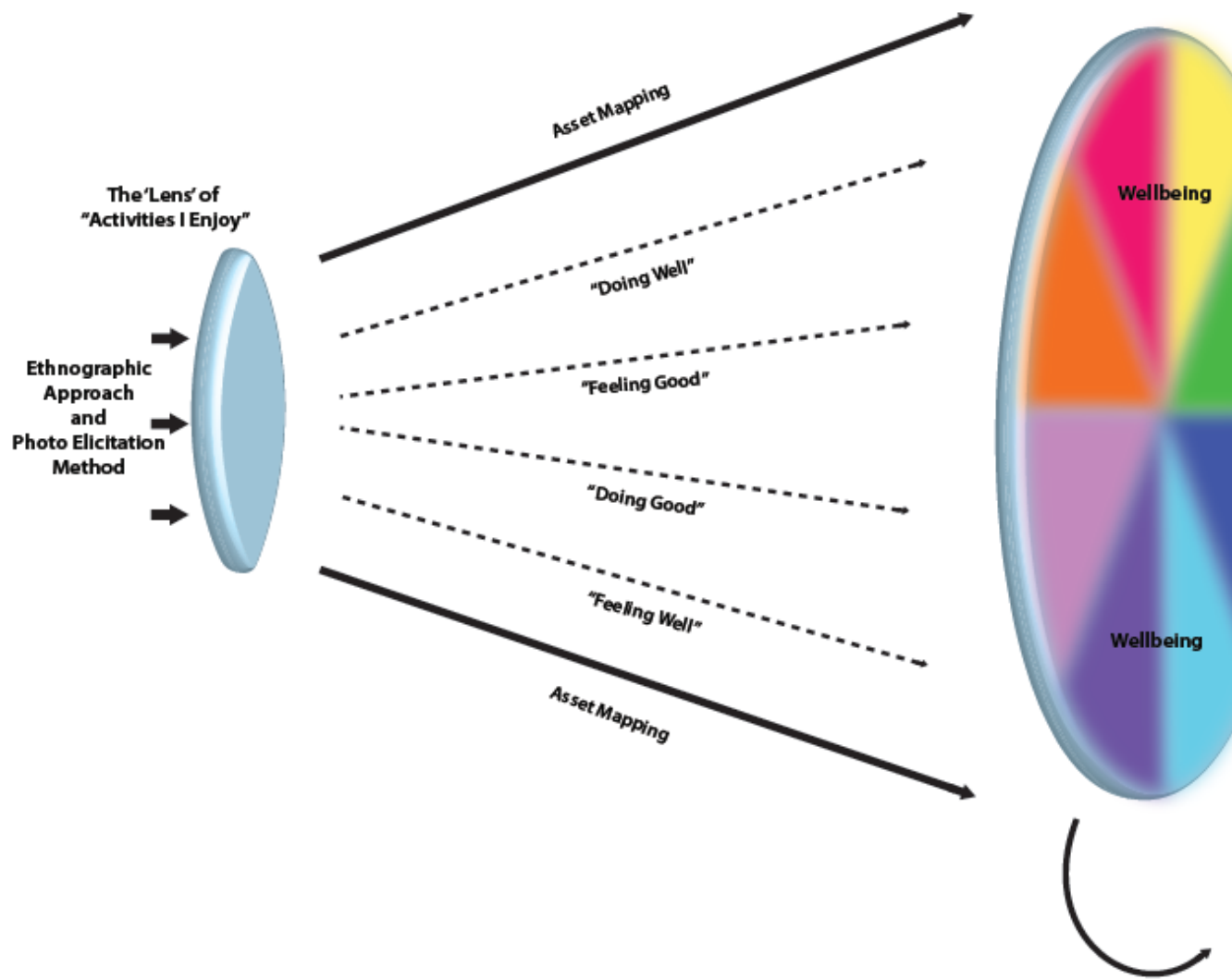
The 'Lens' of
"Activities I Enjoy"

Ethnographic
Approach
and
Photo Elicitation
Method

Asset Mapping

"Doing Well"

"Feeling Good"

"Doing Good"

"Feeling Well"

Asset Mapping

Wellbeing

Wellbeing

**Figure 5.32 The Theoretical Framework**

Figure 5.33 'I'm Good': The Children's Asset Wheel

## 5.4.1   'Me': The Child

The focus of the study was children's wellbeing; the assets were identified by the children themselves and were integral to their lives. It was therefore essential to acknowledge the central role of the children by placing them at the very core of the model. In order to recognise and value the voice of the child, each element of the model draws upon a term/phrase used by one or more of the children - this captures the essence of that aspect of the model from the child's perspective. In addition, the term that encapsulates the asset from a more academic perspective is also identified – for example, children primarily used the word 'Me' when referring to themselves; this expression therefore accompanies the word 'Child' at the centre of the model.

### 5.4.2 Eight Internal Assets

These are the assets that are 'internal' to the child, in other words they are qualities that are within the person. These assets are located near the centre of the model, surrounding the child who is depicted at the core; this position enables each asset to 'touch' the hub of the model and represents the fact that the child and internal assets are inseparable.

### 5.4.3 Three External Assets

These are assets that are 'external' to the child; they focus upon factors that are outside of the person. Whilst these assets may make an important and positive contribution to wellbeing, they are not an integral part of the child. As a result, the model places the external assets in a circular formation around the internal assets – this positioning represents the fact that the child is not in continuous contact with the external assets.

### 5.4.4 One Stabilising Asset

The concept of a Stabilising Asset has not previously been offered in the literature. This asset, 'My Family': Being a Family, facilitates stability and continuity in the child's life. Although the family structure varied between the children, this asset was fundamental to the life of each child. The family is seen

as an external asset as it is not internal to the child; however, its invaluable role is recognised by depicting it as an outer ring to the model – 'My Family': Being a Family is seen as the asset that supports and facilitates all of the other assets, providing a sense of security and protection. Whilst many children in this study had experienced family difficulties and breakdown, all of the children had stability from at least one family member throughout these challenges – for this reason, the stabilising role of 'My Family: Being a Family was very evident.

### 5.4.5  Circular structure

It is important to re-iterate that each of the External and internal assets is no more or less important; they are all of equal value. As a result, the circular structure of the model has purposely been developed to avoid the portrayal of a hierarchical format.  In addition, the assets proximity to each other in the CAW represents their potential relational effect.

### 5.4.6  The Title: 'I'm Good': Children's Asset Wheel

Finally, the name of the model also captures the child's voice; many of the children used the phrase 'I'm Good' when talking (particularly at the initial stage of the interview when I asked them how they were); it was felt that this term was an appropriate one to be reflected in the title of the model. In addition, the phrase 'Children's Asset Wheel' describes the overall focus in a clear, succinct manner.

### 5.5     Conclusion:

This chapter has presented a comprehensive account of the assets that emerged from the interviews conducted with the children; quotations have provided clear illustrations of key areas of consistency and some areas of differences, This has culminated in the presentation of a model: *'I'm Good': The Children's Asset Wheel.*

A critical discussion of the key findings, including the model, is presented in the following chapter.

**Chapter 6:   Discussion**

**6.0      Introduction**

This chapter provides a systematic and critical examination of the theoretical framework (Figures 1.1; 5.32) and its key components (asset mapping and the *'I'm Good': The Children's Asset Wheel* [CAW][23]) – a range of previously published literature is drawn upon to facilitate analytical and contextualised discussions. Firstly, however, the children's involvement and engagement with the whole research process is considered.

## 6.1    The children

The children who participated in this study undoubtedly made an invaluable contribution; without their commitment, motivation and enthusiasm, as well as the support of their families, this research would not have been feasible. Prout and James (1997) comment upon the importance of involving children when decisions may impact upon them; in addition, children benefit from involvement by gaining a sense of achievement, increased self-esteem (Kirby, 2004; National Youth agency, 2007) and enhanced communication skills (Participation Works, 2007; Carnegie UK Trust, 2008). However, it is acknowledged that it is essential to ensure that the selected research approach is suitable and that the data collection tools are both engaging and developmentally appropriate. Careful thought was given to the research approach with ethnography being drawn upon to facilitate the gaze through the lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy'. Whilst it is not possible to know how the overall findings may have differed if an alternative approach had been selected, there is strong evidence (for example, Corsaro and Molinari, 2000; Barker and Horton, 2008; Cross, 2009; Brewer and Sparkes, 2011; Lambert et al, 2011) to suggest that this is an established qualitative method that can enhance understanding of the child's perspective. This doctoral work would certainly concur with this stance – the findings provided a valuable insight into the children's lives and the assets associated with their wellbeing.

---

[23] In the remainder of this script, the theoretical framework (Figures 1.1 and 5.32) is referred to as a 'framework'; the CAW (Figure 5.33), an aspect of the framework, is referred to as a 'model'

The data collection tools used were carefully chosen (and affirmed by the children's reference group). Whilst these methods were more time consuming than others might have been, this meant that a trusting professional relationship was built with the children and their families, resulting in a positive experience for the participants. It is worthwhile reiterating that none of the children withdrew from the study, even though individual data collection took place over several weeks.

Many of the children commented upon how much they enjoyed their involvement in the study. During one interview, a child expressed a strong interest in writing; as a result he was offered the opportunity to contribute to a journal article that was in the process of being developed – this was duly completed (Whiting, 2009 – Appendix 3) and demonstrates that young children can, and do, enjoy being involved in research that is valuing and engaging. The central role that children played in this study underpinned the decision to place the 'child' at the centre of the CAW.

## 6.2    The theoretical framework

The use of a theoretical framework guides a study, but also helps to provide links with the already existing body of literature (Harris, 2006). Whilst it is acknowledged that there are challenges associated with the use of a theoretical framework as it could mean that only certain interpretations of the data or phenomena are presented, Harris (2006) advocates that qualitative studies do draw upon appropriate theory. Morgan (1997: 6) suggests a metaphor approach as this enables researchers to:

> *"Find fresh ways of seeing, understanding, and shaping situations that we want to organize or manage"*

A metaphor approach was used when developing the framework for this doctoral work and an affinity with the quote by Morgan was certainly felt. Whilst there are a range of existing frameworks that have guided previous studies (for example, Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1993; 1995 underpinned the work of Hanafin and Brooks, 2005), the literature search did not reveal a framework that

encapsulated the aim and focus of this research, there was therefore a need to develop a new one.

A fundamental aspect of the theoretical framework was the asset mapping process; this has previously and traditionally been used within a community context, primarily to improve the environments in which people live, (whether that pertains to physical or human resources). Although some child health related research (for example, Baker et al, 2007; Hufford et al, 2009) has utilised a community asset mapping approach, the literature search did not reveal any studies that had mapped the assets of children at an individual level. Analysis of the data from this study therefore necessitated the development of a new process (Chapter 4); constant comparative analysis was drawn upon with the definition of wellbeing, offered by White (2008; 2010), guiding the procedure.

This method proved effective and appropriate for the needs of this study and is now offered as an approach that could be applied to other situations. For example, it could be used in a similar manner within future research; alternatively, it is feasible that it could be used by health professionals to facilitate the mapping of assets for an individual (in particular, stages 1-3, Sections 4.4.1.1-4.4.2.1), or, to map core assets for a particular cultural group (stages 1-5, Sections 4.4.1.1-4.4.3.1).

There is now a growing interest in asset based approaches, for example, the document, 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives. The Marmot Review' [Marmot Review] (Marmot, 2010) suggests that:

> "*All LSPs[24] should implement effective participation strategies aimed at empowering individuals and promoting community development to enhance community assets and facilitate community solutions to health inequalities*" (Marmot, 2010: 162)

---

[24] Local Strategic Partnerships: *"Multi-agency partnerships bringing together different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors locally"* (Marmot, 2010: 159)

In addition, the North West partnership has indicated that their *"aim is to build on the immense assets of the region to secure the best health and well-being for all"* (Marmot, 2010: 164). This suggestion of an asset based strategy has been reinforced at both local (IDeA, 2010) and national (Cabinet Office, 2010) government levels. In addition, the government has already recognised the value of community asset based approaches and their relevance to the 'Big Society' initiative (Cabinet Office, 2010). Cormack Russell[25] has been commissioned by the Department of Health to offer his expertise in relation to this and has produced a podcast (Russell, 2011) in which he discusses its application. It could be argued that the links between the community asset-mapping and the 'Big Society' (Cabinet Office, 2010) are already clear and this may have implications for the future health and wellbeing of children. It is therefore important that the asset mapping process that was developed for this study is presented to the professional and scholarly community in order to stimulate debate at both an academic and practical level.

It is recognised that the theoretical framework that was produced (Figures 1.1; 5.32) only enabled a certain insight into children's wellbeing; however, it is suggested that it could also be applied to future studies since aspects could be modified to meet the needs of other research, for example:

- The lens of 'Activities that I Enjoy' could be altered; children's wellbeing, could, for instance, have been viewed through a relational ('People I Like') or a materialistic ('My Favourite Things') lens, perhaps giving an alternative insight.

- The phenomena under investigation could be altered – in relation to this doctoral work, the CAW could be rotated so that the focus of future work is one of the assets that emerged, for example, 'When I've Got Nothing To Do': Resourcefulness. Alternatively, the whole concept of wellbeing could be substituted for another, for example 'resilience'.

- Whilst asset mapping was a fundamental component of the theoretical framework, there was still a need to ensure that it was appropriately focused – the inclusion of a conceptual definition facilitated the emergence of the phenomena under investigation. For the purposes of this study, an intuitive definition of wellbeing was drawn upon, but this aspect could be changed depending upon the research being

---

[25] Managing Director of Nurture Development and a member of the Asset Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University, Chicago

conducted.

The development of the theoretical framework allowed the undertaking of this doctoral work from an informed perspective; it is acknowledged that no tool can ever totally explain a phenomena, but it is also recognised that *"it is impossible to observe and describe what happens in a natural setting"* (Mertz and Anfara, 2006: 195) without an underpinning framework – this one will be offered for academic debate and will be part of the planned research dissemination process.

Other key aspects of the theoretical framework will now be critically examined within the context of the study's findings and relevant literature.

## 6.3 Children's wellbeing

All of the children in this study displayed a positive and enthusiastic approach towards their lives; authors who have previously considered the concept of wellbeing have concurred with this positive perspective (for example, Andrews et al; 2002; Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project, 2008; [DEFRA] and National Statistics, 2010). Fattore et al (2009) comment that children's current wellbeing may impact upon their future lives, giving the example that those who are motivated and enjoy learning may develop a number of positive traits that may be influential for their future wellbeing. Uprichard (2008: 312) sums this up by suggesting that children are:

> *"present and future agents of their present and future lives and ultimately of the social world around them."*

This is an important viewpoint to consider since the overall aim must surely be for children to maintain their wellbeing into adulthood. Although there has been little consideration of the potential long-term benefits of children's wellbeing, Richards and Huppert (2011) presented their findings from a British longitudinal study in which data relating to a stratified sample of 5,362 people, who had been born in England, Scotland and Wales within a particular week in March

1946, had been analysed. The aim of the research was to ascertain whether positive wellbeing in childhood transferred into adulthood. Following data analysis, Richards and Huppert (2011: 83) concluded that:

> *"Children who were rated by teachers as being 'positive' at ages 13 or 15 years were significantly more likely than those who received no positive ratings to report satisfaction with their work in midlife, have regular contact with friends and family, and engage in regular social activities. Positive children were also much less likely to have a mental health problem throughout their lives."*

Although it is not possible to know whether the children's assets revealed within this study will have long-term benefits to wellbeing, the work by Richards and Huppert (2011) does affirm the potential impact and importance of wellbeing in childhood and the need, therefore, for current policy to focus upon it.

## 6.4 Examination of 'I'm Good': *The Children's Assets Wheel* [CAW] in relation to existing models

The theoretical framework used to guide this study facilitated the emergence of the children's assets and the development of the CAW. However, it is important to recognise that a range of models already exist that have either been applied to the concept of wellbeing (Bronfenbrenner 1994) or have specifically focussed upon it (for example, Dunn et al, 2008; White, 2008; 2010; Durayappah, 2010; New Economics Foundation [nef][26], 2011). However, models that relate to assets are limited with Morgan and Ziglio (2007; 2010) offering the only published framework. The contribution that the CAW may offer is now examined in relation to some of the key models that have already been presented within the literature.

### 6.4.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

---

[26] Nef is an independent 'think-and-do tank', its main focus is well-being

Whilst the work of Bronfenbrenner (1994) does not overtly and exclusively relate to children's wellbeing, it has been suggested that his model facilitates understanding of it (Underwood, 2007). In addition, his theory underpinned the study undertaken by Hanafin et al (2007) that focussed upon children's wellbeing.

Whilst not designed as a theory of child development (rather human development), Bronfenbrenner's model (1979; 1994; 2005) takes a biological and ecological view; it has a strong socio-cultural emphasis and it has been suggested that it allows the professional examination of children's development within the context of the society in which they are growing up (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). The model places the individual at the centre and considers the implications of the biological factors that are relevant to that person, such as gender and age. Bronfenbrenner (1994) proposed that the ecological system comprises of five structures, each one 'nested' inside the other, it is these structures that have been used to inform understanding of children's wellbeing. Bronfenbrenner suggested that the child's innate biological make-up as well as the immediate and wider environments are all factors that impact upon a child's maturation (Paquette and Ryan, 2001); as the child continues to develop, their interaction with the environment becomes increasingly complex.

Bronfenbrenner's work (1979; 1994; 2005) focused upon how the child's development is influenced by their surroundings, in particular their family (Blair and DeBell, 2011) – this led him to express concern about the impact of the change to society, in particular the effects that technology and parental work patterns have had on children and their development (Henderson, 1995). Interestingly, Bronfenbrenner (1994) also criticised the deficit approach to societal inequalities, suggesting that families need to fail before the necessary support is provided, a view that has been echoed by authors such as Edwards et al (2007) who are writing from an asset focussed perspective. Bronfenbrenner (1994) suggested that all of these societal changes have led to instability in family life and the fact that children no longer have consistent and on-going interactions with the key adults in their lives – all this, he argued, has

had a negative impact upon children's development, the effects being particularly apparent during adolescence (Addison, 1992).

There is no doubt that the work of Bronfenbrenner has made an enormous and invaluable contribution to the field of human development, especially that relating to the child. It is also understandable that his model has influenced research that has focussed upon wellbeing since authors concur with Bronfenbrenner's view that the child's environment can impact upon their wellbeing (Belsky, 1993; Jack, 2000; 2006); in addition, many definitions of wellbeing highlight the value of social relationships (for example, Andrews et al, 2002; Bornstein et al, 2003; DEFRA and National Statistics, 2010), a key aspect of Bronfenbrenner's model.

The findings from this doctoral study support aspects of Bronfenbrenner's work; most notably, both models place the individual at the hub, recognising their centrality to the world around them. In addition, they both acknowledge the potential impact of the child's family as well as factors that are internal and external to the child. However, the CAW offers a different dimension to that of Bronfenbrenner since it does not focus on biological components, nor is it a developmental model; instead, the CAW provides insight into the children's own perspectives and recognises the diversity of internal qualities that children may possess, in other words their internal assets – it is these that the CAW suggests underpin wellbeing.

### 6.4.2  Wellbeing models

In recent years, a range of models specifically relating to the concept of wellbeing have been published; for example, medical student wellbeing (Dunn et al, 2008); subjective wellbeing (Durayappah, 2010) and dynamic wellbeing (nef, 2011).

The generic Dynamic Model of Wellbeing offered by nef (2011) and based upon previous work (Thompson and Marks, 2008) has some relevance to this study. The model comprises of four boxes *("external conditions"; "personal resources"; "good functioning and satisfaction of needs"; "good feelings day-to-day and overall"* [nef, 2011: 13]), all of which are diagrammatically linked together. The model has some similarities with the CAW - these are highlighted in Table 7.1; in addition, both models recognise and represent the potential relationship that exists between the different attributes underpinning wellbeing. The four key elements of the model (nef, 2011) are recommended for use by the ONS so that wellbeing indicators can be developed; whilst nef (2011) confirm that some of the data gathered will be subjective, the implication is that this will almost certainly be quantitative in nature. Interestingly, nef (2011: 15) comment on the need to develop indicators for all four areas of the model; however, they state that measurement of "*personal resources*" (this refers to internal qualities) "*is unlikely to be carried out by the ONS in the short term*". This is unfortunate as nef (2011) admit that this is an important aspect of wellbeing; it could also be argued that the lack of focus in relation to personal resources is failing to acknowledge their crucial and integral contribution. The CAW has captured children's internal assets, recognising and valuing their centrality to wellbeing.

| Dynamic model of wellbeing | Relevance to the Children's Wellbeing Asset Wheel |
| --- | --- |
| **External Conditions:** For example, material conditions, work and productivity, income (levels of stability). | Three external assets are identified, one of which is 'Loads of Stuff': Personal Possessions; whilst this may initially appear to be similar to 'external conditions' (nef, 2011), the assets of 'Loads of Stuff' refers to children's personal belongings rather than environmental and materialistic resources. |
| **Personal Resources:** For example, health, resilience, optimism, self- | Eight internal assets are identified, some similarities are evident, for example, 'By Myself': Self-Worth; |

| | |
|---|---|
| esteem. | 'I'm Proud': Pride. |
| **Good Functioning and Satisfaction of Needs:** For example, to be autonomous, competent, safe and secure, connected to others. | This element has similarities with the external assets of 'It's Near': Community; 'My Friends': Friendships and the Stabilising Asset of 'My Family': Being a Family. |
| **Good Feelings Day-to-Day and Overall'**: For example, happiness, joy, contentment, satisfaction. | This has similarities with the internal asset of 'Having Fun': Capacity to Enjoy. |

**Table 6.1:** Similarities between the Dynamic Wellbeing Model (nef, 2011) and the Children's Wellbeing Asset Wheel

Models relating explicitly to children's wellbeing have also being developed, but are less prevalent than more generic ones. For example, Konu and Rimelä (2002) presented a Finnish School Well-being Model that was based upon Allardt's (1976) sociological theory of welfare; the model is portrayed from a student perspective and focuses upon four key areas – "*school conditions", "social relationships", "means for self-fulfilment"* and *"health status"* (page 83)*; each of these areas contain several sub categories that are relevant to student school life; the model also takes into account the potential influence of the student's home life as well as their community. Konu and Rimelä (2002), suggest that the model can be used by both pupils and teachers in an objective or subjective manner to assess wellbeing. Whilst this is one of the few models that has been developed for young people, the context is firmly focussed on school life, with each of the four key areas being related to that environment; in addition, the model has been designed *for* students rather than *by* them; the nature of the model also suggests that its use is more appropriate for the secondary school age range.

Fattore et al (2009) presented 'A model of children's well-being' following their data analysis; this was developed in order to depict the themes and the connections that they had with each other. At the centre of the model are three overlapping circles which represent the dimensions of wellbeing ("*positive sense of self", "agency" and "security"*); these are surrounded by the titles of the six themes that also emerged ("*material and economic resources", "physical health", "adversity", "activities", "physical environment"* and *"social responsibility"*, page 62) – they are placed in this position as they represent the more traditional aspects of wellbeing and the more tangible factors in children's

lives. The model also represents the relationship and connection that the children had with different people and situations. Interestingly, the authors comment upon the fact that *"positive and negative experiences were seen to be intrinsic to well-being"* (Fattore etal, 2009: 62); whilst this doctoral work does not concur with the negativity, it is acknowledged that this may be attributable to the fact that an asset based approach was utilised.

The model by Fattore et al (2009) offers a valuable contribution since it was based upon a qualitative wellbeing study with children and young people; a number of key areas are identified, whilst these are not 'assets', they have some commonalties with the findings from this research (specific relevant themes will be discussed within sections 6.5 and 6.6 when the internal and external assets within the CAW are considered). Despite its strengths, this model does have some weaknesses; firstly, and importantly, it was based upon work with children and young people who were aged between 8-15 years – this breadth in terms of cognitive development could therefore mean that the model may not be fully representative of the views of all participants. Secondly, the perspective of the children and young people is not overtly demonstrated within the model; and thirdly, as this was an Australian study, the findings may not have the same relevance for children living elsewhere – future research may help to clarify this. Finally, whilst the authors do talk about the importance of informing policy as well as child wellbeing indicators, the potential practical application of the model is not discussed.

Whilst the wellbeing models that have already been presented within the literature (such as the work by Konu and Rimelä, 2002; Fattore et al, 2009; nef, 2011) are important, the CAW offers a different perspective. Firstly, it is a detailed child specific model that has been developed as a direct result of working with children who were within a similar age and developmental spectrum; secondly, it has captured the child's perspective, and thirdly, it is the first model that has depicted the internal and external assets that inform children's wellbeing.

### 6.4.3 Asset models:

Whilst asset based literature has grown considerably in recent years, models that are directly related to assets within a health context are very limited. Morgan and Ziglio (2007; 2010) have offered an asset based public health model aimed at reducing health inequalities. Their work makes a crucial contribution to the growing body of asset based literature; however, the framework has a specific focus as it aims to *"revitalise the evidence-base for public health by helping politicians, policy makers, researchers and practitioners rethink how to conceptualise the concept of health"* (Morgan and Ziglio, 2010: 13); in other words, the model presents an innovative approach to public health rather than identifying specific assets. The CAW is the first model that has encapsulated children's assets from their perspective; this new knowledge has the potential to stimulate academic debate.

### 6.4.4 Potential strengths and challenges: 'I'm Good': The Children's Wellbeing Assets Wheel

This is the first presentation of the CAW and it is acknowledged that there are likely to be challenges as well as strengths associated with it. Most notably, it is acknowledged that the CAW has emerged as a result of one small-scale study with a group of similar aged children from comparable socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, applicability to other situations may be limited.

Criticisms have been made about the Search Institute's list of developmental assets in relation to, for example, their prescriptiveness (Howard et al, 1999); the CAW is not designed as a checklist; rather it represents the assets, and their potential relationships to each other; the model is designed to be viewed as a complete entity that is comprised of different inter-related segments. The wheel has been developed to provide a range of professionals with insight into the assets that underpin children's wellbeing.

Despite some of the possible challenges, the model has a key strength - it has been developed to reflect children's perceptions; as such, it has the potential to

support future research as well as contribute to the already existing body of knowledge.


## 6.5 Core Individual Assets: Internal

Morgan & Ziglio, (2007; 2010) have described different levels of assets (individual; community and organisational/institutional); this study focussed upon those at an individual level (interpreted as those assets that were identified by one or more individual children). Whilst authors such as Rotegård et al (2010) have considered internal and external qualities within the context of an assets definition, the Search Institute (2006) has gone further by identifying a comprehensive list of both internal and external assets for children and young people (Search Institute, 2006). Although it is acknowledged that the work of the Search Institute has not focussed specifically on children's wellbeing, the relationship of the assets to the concept has been considered (Mannes et al, 2005). [Section 2.3.4.2 addresses developmental assets in more detail].

Whilst the CAW presents internal assets that have not been recognised by the Search Institute (2006), (these include, 'Fun': The Capacity to Enjoy[27]; 'When I've Got Nothing To Do': Resourcefulness; 'I Can': Being Physically Active), other studies, whilst not asset based, have highlighted some similarities with the findings from this doctoral work. Fattore et al (2007; 2009), in their research that focussed upon children's wellbeing, revealed three themes that were of particular relevance; firstly, Fattore et al (2009: 66) discuss "*positive sense of self"* – this has some commonality with the asset of 'By Myself': Self-worth since the authors describe how this theme included the importance of having some personal space and time alone to relax (the term 'self-worth' is actually used by the authors when defining the category); this finding is also supported by Counterpoint Research (2008). Secondly, Fattore et al (2009: 66-67) explain that the theme of "*activities – freedom, competence and fun"* refers to organised

---

[27] The Search Institute (2006) do make a brief reference to fun, but this is in specific relation to the child being able to "engage in reading for fun"

as well as informal activities with friends and family, these activities contributed to:

> *"children's sense of well-being. This was not so much because of the activity itself, but because the activity was a means to experience fun, freedom from constraints…and develop competence".*

Both Counterpoint Research (2008) and Ipsos Mori and Nairn (2011) concur that children want to be active and have fun. Fattore et al (2009) continue by commenting upon the practise that children often undertook in order to develop their skills in relation to an activity; in addition, the authors identify a separate theme, "*physical health*" which embraces children's desire to be physically active.

In summary, Fattore et al (2009) found that children's wellbeing was underpinned by fun, positive sense of self, commitment to practising skills and physical activity. This study is one of very few qualitative ones that have focused upon children's wellbeing; it is therefore particularly noteworthy that these attributes have similarity with four of the internal assets revealed in this doctoral research ('Having Fun': The Capacity to Enjoy; 'I Can': Being Physically Active; 'By Myself: Self-Worth and 'Practise, Practise, Practise': Commitment).

Rotegård et al, (2010) following a concept analysis of health assets, suggested that there were two key related concepts – resiliency and resourcefulness. Whilst resiliency was not an asset that emerged from this study, interestingly, resourcefulness did. Children's resourcefulness has been acknowledged by other authors such as Zauszniewski et al (2002) who reported that children who displayed positive thinking patterns were more likely to demonstrate resourcefulness, something that this study would concur with.

Three other internal assets emerged from this research ('I'm Proud': Pride; 'I Like Cubs; I Like Dancing': Self-identity; 'I'm Growing Up': The Developing Child). Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith (2005) commented that children's age and gender, in their wellbeing study, influenced the participants' views and opinions;

in addition, the research undertaken by Parry et al (2010) that focussed upon children and young people's wellbeing in Wales, revealed a theme entitled *"Identity and belonging: I am Welsh it makes me feel proud"* (page 28) - however, this was the only reference to this area, neither sense of pride or identity was associated with any other categories. Similarly, whilst some children used the word 'proud' to describe the photographs that they were annotating (Nic Gabbhain and Sixsmith, 2005), this was not a concept that emerged following completion of the data analysis procedure. The Search Institute's (2006) internal asset of 'positive identity' has some similarities with the assets 'I'm Proud: Pride and 'I Like Cubs; I Like Dancing': Self Identity; in addition, the fact that the Search Institute (2006) has produced a list of *developmental* assets, suggests that there is some commonality with the asset 'I'm Growing Up: The Developing Child. However, the focus of each of the Search Institute's assets are quite specific and do not fully reflect the child's perspective.

In summary, earlier literature has acknowledged the value of the concepts encapsulated in the internal assets of the CAW. However, their recognition as assets that underpin children's wellbeing has not previously been recognised; similarly, the holistic inter-relational presentation of the eight internal assets has not been offered before.

### 6.6    Core Individual Assets: External

The CAW incorporates three external assets ('My friends': Friendships; 'Loads of Stuff': Personal Possessions; 'It's Near': Community). Similarly, Fattore et al (2009) found in their research that family, friends and the local community were all important in terms of children's wellbeing.

The Search Institute (2006) has presented four key areas that encompass their external assets – the assets focus on a particular set of behaviours, some relate directly to the child, others to family, friends and school. However, there is one key area of commonality between the developmental assets (Search Institute,

2006) and the CAW – both suggesting that the child's local community is an important external asset. Mannes et al (2005) discuss how the developmental assets can be used to facilitate the building of an asset based community that has the potential to enhance the overall wellbeing of children, young people and their families.

The impact that the local community can have on children and their wellbeing has been previously acknowledged (Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2005; Sellstrom and Bremberg, 2006; Counterpoint Research, 2008; Fattore et al, 2009; Parry et al, 2010). Eriksson et al (2010) conducted a Swedish qualitative study that aimed to identify how the local neighbourhood was perceived by children (11-12 years of age) who lived in rural areas and how social capital in their immediate community impacted upon their wellbeing. The seven focus groups centred around four key categories (page 5) – "*community attachment*" (including the sense of belonging, the role of the school, community perceptions); "*community participation*" (including local clubs and activities); "*social networks*" (such as friends, family and neighbours) and "*trust*" (both at an individual and more generic level). The findings from the work by Eriksson et al (2010) identified some issues similar to those highlighted by children in this study, in particular the building of social networks and community participation. In summary, Eriksson et al (2010: 9) commented that:

> *"the children described the familiarity of the local communities as creating a trustworthy and secure atmosphere."*

The concept of familiarity with the neighbourhood is something that clearly emerged from this study, enabling children to develop independence and responsibility within parental boundaries.

A range of work has identified the value of children's friendships in relation to their wellbeing (Nic Gabhainn & Sixsmith, 2005; Counterpoint Research, 2008; Fattore et al, 2009; DEFRA and National Statistics, 2010; Parry et al, 2010; Rees et al, 2010; Ipsos Mori and Nairn, 2011). Similarly, this doctoral research revealed the asset of 'My Friends': Friendships. Despite this, there is little consideration within the literature of friends as 'assets'; they are briefly mentioned within the external developmental assets (Search Institute, 2006),

but they are not recognised within their own right. Other authors have also alluded to friends in an asset related context - Ridge (2002: 142) refers to them being a "*social asset*" but this has not been further examined. The value of children's friendships has been explored within the wider literature (for example, Dunn, 2004; Troutman and Fletcher, 2010) with it being associated with positive attributes such as enhanced social behaviour (Cillessin et al, 2005). Troutman and Fletcher (2010) found that friendships were more likely to be maintained if they crossed different contexts (for example, school, neighbourhood and extracurricular activities) as this provided children with the opportunity to interact within a variety of different circumstances. This finding supports the asset of 'My Friends': Friendships that emerged from this study – frequently the children reported that they went to school, Cubs and rode their bikes in the local neighbourhood with the same group of friends. The CAW acknowledges the value of friendships as external assets and as such the contribution that they may make to wellbeing.

Interestingly, Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith (2005: 39) in their study that focussed upon children's wellbeing, commented that there was "*considerable discussion regarding the category 'possessions', 'music' and 'books'*"; they continue by stating that:

> *"'possessions' were characterised as being part of you, 'things that you own and control' and 'things you own and love'".*

Similarly, Fattore et al (2007; 2009), said that the theme *"material resources"*, included items that were very much valued by children but which had little monetary worth. These authors' comments support the findings from this doctoral study and reinforce the value of personal possessions to young children. Whilst the availability and relevance of material resources in children's lives has been considered elsewhere within the literature (for example, Backett-Milburn et al, 2003; Huston and Bentley, 2010), the importance of children's personal possessions (many of which may have little monetary value) has not received the same attention and there has been little examination of their positive contribution to children's lives.

In summary, the concepts underpinning the three external assets have all been previously discussed within the literature; the value of the local community has been considered within both asset based and wellbeing literature. Friendships are well recognised as underpinning wellbeing, but there is little consideration of their contribution as assets. Finally, whilst material resources have been examined elsewhere, less attention has been given to the value of children's personal possessions with few authors commenting upon this within a children's wellbeing context; the value of personal possessions have not previously been highlighted from an asset perspective - the CAW has therefore affirmed some previous findings but has also revealed new insights.

## 6.7     Stabilising Asset: 'My Family': Being a Family:

The term 'Stabilising Asset' has not previously been presented within the literature. In the context of this study, it embraces four key areas ('Family Membership'; 'Family Influence'; 'Togetherness' and 'Being Busy') which together form the asset, 'My Family': Being a Family; this recognises the different family attributes and roles, all of which provide stability and underpin children's wellbeing.  Although the children in this study were from a range of different structural family backgrounds, they had all experienced consistency and stability from one or more parents, as well as other family members (such as grandparents) throughout their lives – hence the term 'Stabilising Asset'.

A range of eminent authors and organisations (for example, Richards, 1995; Bernardes, 1997; Rutherford, 1998; United Nations, 1998; European Parliament, 2000) have all acknowledged the potential impact of the family on children's growth, nurturing and development. In addition, research into the concept of attachment has suggested that children who feel secure are more likely to adhere to rules and boundaries set by parents (Thompson, 2006); in addition, responsive parenting fosters responsive and co-operative children (Kochanska et al, 2005; Kochanska et al, 2008). The developmental asset framework (Search Institute, 2006) refers to the family, in particular the parents, in relation to both internal and external assets, recognising its importance.

The acknowledgement of the family's contribution to children's wellbeing has been recognised within the literature and was one of the key findings from the work by Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith (2005); Counterpoint Research (2008); Fattore et al (2009); DEFRA and National Statistics (2010); Parry et al (2010); Rees et al (2010); Ipsos Mori and Nairn (2011). Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith (2005) also comment upon the importance of pets in the children's lives - they suggest that this had not been previously identified; interestingly, other later work (Counterpoint Research, 2008; Hicks et al, 2011; Ipsos Mori and Nairn, 2011) have all commented on children's interest in animals/pets – something that this doctoral study has also supported.

The value of the family to overall wellbeing was examined by Åstedt-Kurki et al (1999) who conducted a phenomenological Finnish study in which nineteen families with children were interviewed in order to ascertain their perceptions of family health. The overall perception of wellbeing was related to the family time that was spent together; the families made efforts to do activities collectively, such as the sharing of meals and going on holiday. This finding is similar to 'Togetherness' that emerged as an integral component of the Stabilising Asset in this doctoral study. In addition, Åstedt-Kurki et al (1999) make reference to the fact that some family members identified that they valued time alone by themselves – this finding has resemblance with the internal asset 'By Myself': Self-Worth that emerged from this study and the theme of *"positive sense of self"* revealed by Fattore et al (2009).

In summary, the family emerged as being fundamental to the children's lives and their wellbeing; as such it has been recognised as a 'Stabilising Asset'.

## 6.8    Conclusion

In this chapter, a critical discussion of the key aspects of the study, including the theoretical framework and the CAW, has been presented. The invaluable contribution of the children to the development of the model has been acknowledged and supports the view of The Children's Society (2011: 5):

*"Models of children's well-being that have not benefitted from the insights of children and young people are unlikely to establish what matters most to them in their lives."*

The theoretical framework including the Children's Asset Wheel offers a new contribution to the already existing knowledge base and has the potential to inform academic debate as well as future research and policy development by providing the much needed *'child-centred approach to subjective well-being'* (The Children's Society, 2011: 5).

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### 7.0 Introduction

Through the use of an ethnographic approach, a photo elicitation method and a guiding theoretical framework, this study sought to provide insight into children's wellbeing. The research findings have highlighted commonalities with other previously published material, whilst also adding new knowledge to the existing body of literature - this concluding chapter summarises this contribution as well as acknowledging the limitations of the study and identifying the plans for disseminating the work. Finally, concluding comments are offered.

### 7.1 Contribution to new knowledge and understanding:

This study has provided several areas of new knowledge, these were indicated in Chapter 6; however, this section gives an overall summary of that contribution.

### 7.1.1 The development of a theoretical framework

The framework (Figures 1.1; 5.32) that underpinned and guided this study is new and innovative; it has the potential to be drawn upon by researchers to inform future studies. However, in addition, professionals may be able to successfully utilise the theoretical framework, including the CAW, when working with specific individuals, groups or communities to facilitate understanding of different situations. For example, a School Nurse working with children who are not undertaking sufficient physical activity and who are overweight could utilise the framework to enhance understanding of children's assets. By working with the children and engaging them in developmentally appropriate activities, this would enable the nurse to learn about the child's life, what they enjoy and what is important to them. The CAW would act as a framework to guide thinking and the identification of the assets (both external and internal) within the children's lives. Finally, the nurse would liaise with the children and families to provide health promoting advice that is relevant to them as individuals. The framework has the potential to be utilised in this manner and to be adapted to other circumstances; however, it is acknowledged that further work would be required to confirm its application to the practical setting.

### 7.1.2 The introduction of an asset mapping approach at an individual level

Whilst community asset mapping is well established and there are guidelines available to facilitate this process; asset mapping at an individual level has not previously been articulated. This study has offered a clearly documented procedure that has the potential to inform both practitioners and researchers

### 7.1.3 The development of the 'I'm Good: Children's Asset Wheel'

The model provides enhanced understanding of children's assets at an individual level; clarification has been offered in terms of the focus of both internal and external assets. In addition, the concept of a Stabilising Asset has been introduced. This model has the potential to inform future research as well as practitioners.

### 7.1.4 The emergence of the assets

The study revealed one Stabilising Asset as well as eight internal and three external assets; whilst some of these areas have received consideration within the generic literature, their recognition as assets is much more limited. The family ('My Family: Being a Family'), the local community ('It's Near': Community) and friendships ('My Friends': Friendships) (although the latter to a lesser extent), have been considered within both asset based literature and in relation to wellbeing. However, whilst the value of other areas identified within the CAW have been recognised in earlier literature, they have not previously been offered as assets that underpin children's wellbeing, most notably the internal asset of 'When I Have Got Nothing To Do: Resourcefulness'; their overall presentation provides a new and important insight.

### 7.1.5 Assets: The inter-relationship

Whilst other literature has provided valuable contributions in relation to children's assets (most notably, the Search Institute, 2006), the potential relationships that assets have with one another has not previously been documented - this is important since assets could otherwise be reduced to a 'checklist', meaning that they would have more in common with a deficit rather than asset based approach. The CAW incorporates the assets that emerged from this study and has represented them in an integrated holistic manner.

## 7.2    Dissemination of the study findings

Dissemination of results is a central part of the research process (Locke et al, 2000); this should be undertaken in a thorough manner to facilitate the potential

implementation of findings (Nieswiadomy, 2002). Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, it is advisable to report findings to participants (Macnee, 2004; Nieswiadomy, 2002). Therefore, all the children involved in the study were provided with a developmentally appropriate précis of the research (Appendix 12).

Two of the key strategies that are commonly utilised to aid wider dissemination are conference presentations and publication via journals (Polit & Beck, 2006). This has already begun (Appendix 16) and further submissions are in preparation to facilitate the sharing of the research with the professional and academic community.  Papers will be prepared for submission to a range of journals and will primarily focus upon aspects of the methodology, including the theoretical framework, the asset-mapping approach and the development of the *'I'm Good: Children's Asset Wheel'*.

## 7.3    Limitations:

Having considered the contribution of this research, this is perhaps an appropriate point to reflect upon some of the limitations.  This was a study based upon the experiences of twenty children in one small area of England.  It is acknowledged that the children were from similar socio-economic backgrounds, and therefore, the extent to which the findings might have a wider application is a potential limitation of the research. Whilst qualitative methodological approaches do not seek to produce findings which are generalisable to a larger population, it is hoped that this study will offer insights which have relevance beyond the experiences of this small cohort of children.

When the research was conducted, the children were aged between 9-11 years of age. Their perceptions of their lives and experiences were true and accurate at the time of data collection; however, as a consequence of children's rapid progression in terms of cognitive development, their views may have altered and the findings may no longer fully represent their lives.

Whilst all children, in all the school classes that were approached, were invited to participate in the study, it has to be recognised that only children who felt confident to do so, and who had the consent of their parents, eventually became involved in the research. In addition, only children who were present when I visited the school were verbally invited to be involved in the study; whilst additional envelopes (containing the information sheets) were left with teachers, I am aware that there may have been children who wished to participate but who were unable to avail themselves of the opportunity.

The children's interviews were all conducted in their own homes; whilst this was their choice and provided a familiar and comfortable setting, there were times when there were family distractions and it is acknowledged that this could have interrupted a child's train of thought, perhaps influencing the conversation and the findings.

Asset mapping is a new approach that has not previously been clearly documented; it is recognised that there are some disadvantages to it (Rütten et al, 2008); most notably, it is not feasible to know if all of the children's assets were identified. Future research may help to further clarify the strengths and weaknesses of asset mapping.

Finally, an important limitation is perhaps personal inexperience in the field of qualitative research. A number of authors have identified the potential challenges which must be addressed by researchers, including doctoral students (Beck, 2003; Pope et al, 2000; Li and Seale, 2007); however, a full programme of research education, guidance and preparation at the University of Hertfordshire has been integrated throughout the doctoral programme – this has undoubtedly facilitated learning and enhanced the academic rigour of the study. In addition, supervision is absolutely essential for doctoral level research - Phillips and Pugh (1994) highlight the need for supervisors to give critical feedback as work progresses.  Regular supervision has been provided throughout the development and operationalisation of this work; this has provided a structured framework of ongoing critical commentary and support throughout the research journey.

**7.4 Suggestions for future research:**

This qualitative study that drew upon ethnography did not seek to find 'answers', rather it aimed to gain insight into children's wellbeing. As a consequence of the research, other areas that would merit further investigation have emerged:

- The theoretical framework has the potential to be applied to other contexts and situations; research that draws upon it would provide further insight into its value. The application of the framework to practical situations is certainly warranted, perhaps evaluating its efficacy.

- Further studies to examine the applicability of constant comparative analysis, as an asset mapping process, to other situations would facilitate academic debate in terms of this approach and help to examine whether the procedure could make a positive contribution within other arenas.

- Finally, further work to explore whether the assets identified in the CAW are present within different groups of children, would be valuable; in particular, studies with children of different ages, or those from more diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds would be very beneficial.

**7.5 Concluding remarks**

A number of important contributions have been made, by a range of authors, to the literature underpinning assets, asset mapping and children's wellbeing – this study has added to that body of work; however, there is also a clear need to consider how this knowledge can be further drawn upon so that it can inform the work of health professionals. Literature pertaining to assets and asset

mapping is emerging rapidly and the approach is now entering the public domain - for example, newspaper articles such as Harris (2011) have considered community asset based initiatives. In addition, the government has recognised the value of asset based approaches (particularly from a community perspective) within key strategies such as the 'Big Society' initiative (Cabinet Office, 2010); whilst government focus is primarily community based, it could be argued that this has the potential to impact upon the health and wellbeing of children and their families. In addition, concurrent to the political influence, health assets are gaining in prominence within academia with conferences (for example, *"Assets Across the Life Course for Health and Wellbeing"* (http://www.healthassetsconf.org.uk) in September 2011) providing an opportunity for critical debate. This wider sharing of knowledge will increase the 'enlightenment' (Weiss, 1979) of the public, health professionals and policy makers; this, in turn, will facilitate further consideration and application of asset based approaches to the enhancement of children's wellbeing.

Despite the positive growth of asset based literature, there is still much work to be undertaken. It is clear that children's wellbeing is a priority within the UK with the current government continuing to focus upon it. In order that wellbeing is enhanced, it requires the commitment and expertise of those working directly with children and their families. Whilst it could be argued that the wellbeing of children is fundamental to the role of all of those who work with them, there are key practitioners who have specific responsibility for the promotion of the health and wellbeing of children and for whom an asset based strategy may prove to be beneficial. For example, the DH (2007: 5), in their review of the role of the HV, suggested that the aim was:

> *"To improve the health and wellbeing of children, families and communities, and address some of the key public health issues facing society today"*

Similarly, School Nurses are highlighted in the Healthy Child Programme (DH and DCSF, 2009), the fundamental aim of which was to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and young people. However, two clear messages have emerged from this study, and have been supported by the already published literature; firstly, if health professionals and policy makers really wish to draw

upon an asset based approach, this will almost certainly necessitate work on a small group or even individual basis – the potential resource implications should not be underestimated and need to be overtly considered. Secondly, a crucial aspect of any asset based approach is the involvement of people in decisions and processes that have the potential to impact upon them. Without this participation, there is a danger that there will not be true representation of the assets that are most important for that particular person/group – this could mean that policy makers/practitioners will continue to drive the wellbeing agenda forward without the support of those who really matter. It may therefore be appropriate for practitioners to think carefully about the circumstances in which an asset based approach would be appropriate, there should not be a suggestion that this is for every situation.

As more asset based work is undertaken, it is essential that it is debated particularly as there are aspects that deserve further clarification, in particular the use and interpretation of associated terms (for example, organisational, institutional and individual assets). A critical discussion within a wider arena is especially important since asset based approaches may initially be time consuming, costly and be met with understandable resistance from some professionals. If it is viewed as the way forward, there needs to be full engagement with policy-makers, children and practitioners; in addition, clear strategies for evaluating the methods employed need to be in place. However, a more positive approach to wellbeing could potentially enhance the future for our children and none of us should shy away from the challenges.

# References

Aamodt, A. M. (1982) Examining ethnography for nurse researchers. *Western Journal of Nursing research* 4(2) 209-221

Abbott, D. A., Berry, M. & Meredith, W. H. (1990) religious belief and practice: A potential asset in helping families. *Family Relations* 39(4) 443-448

Addison, J. T. (1992). Urie Bronfenbrenner. *Human Ecology* 20(2) 16-20

Alderson, P. & Morrow, V. (2004) *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people.* Barnardo's: Ilford, Essex

Alderson, P. & Morrow, V. (2011) The ethics of *research with children and young people. A practical handbook.* Sage Publications: London

Allardt, E. (1976) Dimensions of welfare in a comparative Scandinavian study. *Actà Sociologica* 19(3) 227–239

Ammerman, A. & Parks, C. (1998) preparing students for more effective community interventions: Asset assessment. *Family & Community Health* 21(1) 32-45

Andersson, G. (2005) Family relations, adjustment and well-being in a longitudinal study of children in care. *Child & Family Social Work* 10(1) 43-56

Andrews, A., Ben-Ariah, A., Carlson, M., Damon, W., Dweck, C. Earls, F., Garcia-Coll, C., Gold, R., Halfon, N., Hart, R. Lerner, R. M., McEwen, B.. Meaney, M. Offord, D., Patrick, D., Peck, M., Trickett, B., Weisner, T. & Zuckerman, B. (2002) *Ecology of child well-being: Advancing the science and the science-practice link.* Center for Child Well-Being: Georgia

Anfara, V. A. & Mertz, N. T. (2006)(Eds) *Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research.* Sage Publications: California

Antonovsky, A. (1979) *Health, stress and coping.* Josey-Bass: San Francisco

Antonovsky, A. (1987) Unravelling the mystery of health. How people manage stress and stay well. Josey-Bass: San Francisco

Antonovsky, A. (1996) The salutogenic model as a theory to guide health promotion. *Health Promotion International* 11(1) 11-18

Ariès, P. (1962) *Centuries of childhood.* Cape: London

Assets for health and wellbeing across the life course. International Conference at the British Lending Library, London: 26-27th September 2011. Hosted by the University of Hertfordshire. Details available from: http://www.healthassetsconf.org.uk Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Åstedt-Kurki, P., Hopia, H. & Vuori, A. (1999) Family health in everyday life: A qualitative study on well-being in families with children. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 29(3) 704-711

Backett-Milburn, K. Cunningham-Burley, S. & Davis, J. (2003) Contrasting lives, contrasting views? Understandings of health inequalities from children in different social circumstances. *Social Science & Medicine* 57(4) 613-623

Bailey, J. (2008) First steps in qualitative data analysis: transcribing. *Family Practice* 25(2) 127-131

Baker, I. R., Dennison, B. A., Boyer, P. S., Sellers, K. F., Russo, T. J. & Sherwood, N. A. (2007) An asset-based community initiative to reduce television viewing in New York state. *Preventive Medicine* 44(5) 437-441

Banks, M. (2001) *Visual methods in social research*. Sage Publications: London

Barkauskas, V. H. (1983) Effectiveness of public health nurse home visits to primarous mothers and their infants. *American Journal of Public Health* 73(5) May 573-580

Barker, J. C. & Horton, S. B. (2008) An ethnographic study of Latino preschool children's oral health in rural California: Intersections among family, community, provider and regulatory sectors. *BMC Oral Health* 8(8) Available from: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2362117/?tool=pubmed Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Barker, J. & Weller, S. (2003) "Is it fun?" Developing child centred research methods. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23(1/2) 33-58

Barlow, K. (1985) The Peckham Experiment. *Medical History 29*(3): 264-271

Bartley, M., Schoon, I., Mitchell, R. & Blane, D. (2010) Resilience as an asset for healthy development. Chapter 6. In Morgan, A., Davies, M. & Ziglio, E. (2010)(Eds) *Health assets in a global context.* Springer: New York

Barton, T. D. (2008) Understanding Practitioner Ethnography. *Nurse Researcher* 15(2) 7-18

Bauer, G., Davies, J. K. & Pelikan, J. (2006) The EUPHID Health Development Model for the classification of public health indicators. *Health Promotion International* 21(2) 153-159

Beck, C. M. (2003) Initiation into qualitative data analysis. *Journal of Nursing Education* 42(5) 231-234

Beckwith, S., Dickinson, A. & Kendall, S. (2008) The "con" of concept analysis. A discussion paper which explores and critiques the ontological focus, reliability and antecedents of concept analysis frameworks. *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 2008 45(12) 1831-1841

Beiser, M. (1971) A study of personality assets in a rural community. *Archives of General Psychiatry* 24(3)244-254

Belsky, J. (1993) Etiology of child maltreatment: a developmental ecological analysis. *Psychological Bulletin* 114(3) 413-434

Bengel, J., Strittmatter, R., & Willmann, H. (1999). *What Keeps People Healthy? The current state of discussion and the relevance of Antonovsky's salutogenic model of health.* Federal Centre for Health Education: Cologne

Benson, P. L. (1996) *Developmental Assets Among Minneapolis Youth: The Urgency of Promoting Healthy Community.* Search Institute: Minneapolis

Benson, P. L. (2003) Developmental assets and asset building community: Conceptual and empirical foundations. In Lerner, R. & Benson, P.L. (Eds) *Developmental assets and asset building communities: Implications for research, policy and practice.* (pgs 19-43) Kluwer Academic: New York

Berg, A. & Halberg, I. R. (1999) Effects of systematic clinical supervision on psychiatric nurses' sense of coherence, creativity, work-related strain, job satisfaction and view of the effects from clinical supervision: a pre-post test design. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* 6(5) 371-381

Bernardes, J. (1997) *Family studies: An introduction.* Routledge: London

Blair, M. & Debell, D. (2011) Reconceptualising health services for school-age children in the 21st century. *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 96(7) 616-618

Blum, R. W., McNeely, C. & Nonnemaker, J. (2002) Vulnerability, risk, and protection. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 31(1) supplement 1 28-39

Boeije, H. (2002) A purposeful approach to constant comparative method in the analysis of qualitative interviews. *Quality & Quantity* 36(4) 391-409

Borland, M., Hill, M., Laybourne, A. & Stafford, A. (2001) *Improving consultation with children and young people in relevant aspects of policy making and legislation in Scotland.* University of Glasgow: Glasgow

Bornstein, M. H., Davidson, L., Keyes, C. L. M., Moore, K. & The Centre for Child Well-Being (2003)(Eds) *Well-Being: Positive Development Across the Life Course.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers: Mahwah, New Jersey

Botelho, R. & Fiscella, K. (2005) Protect children from environmental tobacco smoke, but avoid stigmatization of parents: a commentary on Pyle et al. *Families, Systems & Health: The Journal of Collaborative Family Health Care* 23(1) 17-20

Bowling, A. (2002) *Research methods in health.* 2nd Ed. Open University Press: Buckinghamshire

Boyce, W. T., Jensen, E. W., James, S. A., & Peacock, J. L (1983) The family routines inventory: Theoretical origins. *Social Science Medicine* 17(4) 193-200

Boyden, J. & Ennew, J. (1997)(Eds) *Children in focus: A manual for experiential learning in participatory research with children.* Rädda Barnen: Stockholm

Bradshaw, J., Bloor, K., Huby, M., Rhodes, Sinclair, I., Gibbs, I., Noble, M., McLennan, D. & Wilkinson, K. (2009) *Local index of child well-being. Summary report.* Communities and Local Government Publications: West Yorkshire

Brewer, J. D. & Sparkes, A. C (2011) Young people living with parental bereavement: Insights from an ethnographic study of UK childhood bereavement service. *Social Science & Medicine* 72(2) 283-290

Bricher, G. (1999) Children and qualitative research methods: a review of the literature related to interview and interpretive processes. *Nurse Researcher* 6(4) 65-78

British Broadcasting Corporation (2008) *Parents bemoan state of childhood.* Available from:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7271051.stm Accessed on 17th September 2011

Broome, M. (1999) Consent (assent) for research with pediatric patients. *Seminars in Oncology Nursing* 15(2) 96-103

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The ecology of human development.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1993) The ecology of cognitive development: Research models and fugitive findings In: Wozniak, R. H. and Fischer, K. W. (Eds)

*Development in context acting and thinking in specific environments.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. Publishers: New Jersey [pages 3-44]

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994) Ecological models of human development. In Gauvain, M. & Cole, M. (2009)(Eds) *Readings on the development of children.* 5th Ed. Worth: New York

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995) Development ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In Moen, P., Elder, Jr G. H. and Luscher, K. (Eds) *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development.* American Psychological Association: Washington DC [pages 619-647]

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005) Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development. Sage: Thousand Oaks, California

Brooks, A-M. & Hanafin, S. (2005) Measuring child well-being: An inventory of key indicators, domains and indicator selection criteria to support the development of a national set of child well-being indicators. The National Children's Office: Dublin, Ireland. Available from: http://www.omc.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2FResearch%2FmeasuringwellBeing.htm Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Buchbinder, M., Longhofer, J., Barrett, T., Lawson, P. & Floersch, J. (2006) Ethnographic approaches to child care research. *Journal of Early Childhood Research* 4(1) 45-63

Burke, C. & Grosvenor, I. (2004) *The school I'd like.* Routledge Falmer: London

Burman, E. (1994) *Deconstructing developmental psychology.* Routledge: London

Burns, N. & Grove, S. K. (2005) *The practice of nursing research. Conduct, critique and utilization.* 5th Ed. W. B. Saunders: Philadelphia

Cabinet Office (2010) *Building the big society.* The Cabinet Office: London Available from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/building-big-society Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Cameron, E., Mathers, J. & Parry, J. (2006) 'Health and well-being': Questioning the use of health concepts in public health policy and practice. *Critical Public Health* 16(4) 347-354

Carnegie UK Trust (2008) *Final report of the Carnegie young people initiative. Empowering young people.* Carnegie UK Trust: Fife

Carter, S. M. & Little, M. (2007) Justifying method, taking action: Epistemologies, methodologies, and methods in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10) 1316-1328

Catford, J. & Nutbeam, D. (1984) Towards a definition of health education and health promotion. *Health Education Journal* 43(20) 38

Charlesworth, L. Wood, J. & Viggiani, P. (2011) Middle childhood. In Hutchison, E. D. (Ed) *Dimensions of human behaviour. The changing lifecourse.* 4ᵗʰ Ed. Sage Publications: Los Angeles, California

Children Act (1989) The Stationery Office: London

Children Act (2004) Available from: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/part/1 Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Chiovitti, R. F & Piran, N. (2003) Rigour and grounded theory research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing.* 44(4) 427-435.

Christensen, P. H. (2002) Why more 'quality time' is not on the top of children's lists: The qualities of time' for children. *Children & Society* 16(2) 77-88

Christensen, P. & James, A. (2000)(Eds) *Research with children: Perspectives and practices.* Falmer Press: New York

Christensen, P. H. (2004) Children's participation in ethnographic research: Issues of power and representation. *Children & Society* 18(2) 165-176

Christner, J. G., Takagishi, J. C., Dabrow, S. & McCoy, R. (2004) Lessons learned from community site administrators involved in pediatric community rotations. *Ambulatory Pediatrics 4(1)* supplement 121-123

Cillessin, A. H.N., Jiang, X. L., West, T. V. & Laszkowski, D. K. (2005) Predictors of dyadic friendship quality in adolescence. *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 29(2) 165-172

Clarke, K. A. (2009) Use of a research diary: learning reflectively, developing understanding and establishing transparency. *Nurse Researcher* 17(1) 68-76

Close, H. (2007) The use of photography as a qualitative research tool. *Nurse Researcher* 25(1) 27-36

Close, H. (2008) Personal communication; May 2008

Coad, J. (2007) Using art-based techniques in engaging children and young people in health care consultations and/or research. *Journal of Research in Nursing* 12(5) 487-497

Coad, J. (2008) Personal communication; May 2008

Coad, J. & Coad, N. (2008) Children and young people's preference of thematic design and colour for their hospital environment. *Journal of Child Health Care* 12(1) 33-48

Coad, J. & Evans, R. (2008) Reflections on practical approaches to involving children and young people in the data analysis process. *Children & Society* 22(1) 41-52

Cochrane, J. R. (2006) Religion in the health of migrant communities: Asset or deficit? *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32(4) 715-736

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007) *Research methods in education.* 6th Ed. Routledge: London

Collier, J. (1957) Photography in anthropology: a report on two experiments. *American Anthropologist* 59(5) 843–859

Collins English Dictionary online definition of 'asset'. Available from: http://www.collinslanguage.com/results.aspx?context=3&reversed=False&action=define&homonym=0&text=asset Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Collins Dictionary & Thesaurus (2000) Harper Collins: Aylesbury

Cook, T. & Hess, E. (2007) What the camera sees and from whose perspective: Fun methodologies for engaging children in enlightening adults. *Childhood* 14(1) 29-45

Córdova, A. (2009) Methodological note: Measuring relative wealth using household asset indicators. *AmericasBarometer Insights* 6 Available from: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Corsaro, W. & Molinari, L. (2000) Entering and observing in children's worlds: A reflection on a longitudinal ethnography of early education in Italy. In Christensen, A. & James, A. (Eds) *Research with children: Perspectives and practices.* Pgs 179-200. Falmer Press: London

Counterpoint Research (2008) *Childhood wellbeing. Qualitative research study.* Department for Children, Schools and Families: London

Creswell, J. W. (1994) *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Sage Publications: California

Creswell, J. W. (1998) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Sage Publications: California

Cronin de Chavez, A., Backett-Milburn, K., Parry, O. & Platt, S. (2005) Understanding and researching wellbeing: Its usage in different disciplines and potential for health research and health promotion. *Health Education Journal* 64(1) 70-87

Cross, B. (2009) Hearing out children's narrative pathways to adulthood. Young people as interpreters of their own childhood in diverging working-class Scottish communities *Childhood* 16(3) 335-53

Cunningham, H. (2006) *The invention of childhood.* BBC Books: London

Currie, C. (2001) Socioeconomic circumstances among school-aged children in Europe and North America. In Vleminckx, K., Smeeding, T. M. (Eds) *Child well-being, child poverty, and child policy in modern nations.* Policy Press: Bristol

Currie, C. E., Elton, R. A., Todd, J. & Platt, S. (1997) Indicators of socioeconomic status for adolescents: the WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey. *Health Education Research* 12(3) 385–397

Currie, C., Roberts, C., Morgan, A., Smith, R., Settertobulte, W., Samdal, O. & Barnekow Rasmussen, V. (2004)(Eds) *Young people's health in context Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: International report from the 2001/2002 survey. Health Policy for Children and Adolescents, No. 4.* World Health Organization: Denmark

Cutcliffe, J. R. & McKenna, H. P. (1999) Establishing the credibility of qualitative research findings: The plot thickens. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 30(2) 374-380

Darbyshire, P., MacDougall, C. & Schiller, W. (2005) Multiple methods in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research* 4(4) 417-436

Datan, N., Antonovsky, A. & Maoz, B. (1981) *A time to reap; The middle age of women in five Israeli subcultures.* John Hopkins: Baltimore

Davies, C. A. (1999) *Reflexive ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others.* Routledge: Oxford

Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M. (2008) Hedonia, eudaimonia, and well-being: An introduction. *Journal of Happiness Studies* 9(1) 1-11

Delbar, V. & Benor, D. E. (2001) Impact of a nursing intervention on cancer patents' ability to cope. *Journal of Psychosocial Oncology* 19(2) 57-75

Denzin, N. K. (1970) *The research act in sociology.* Butterworths: London

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005) (Eds) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research.* 3rd Ed. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks

Department of Children Schools and Families (2007a) *The Children's plan. Building futures.* The Stationery Office: London

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007b) *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities.* The Stationery Office: London

Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department of Health (2009) *Healthy lives, brighter futures – the strategy for children and young people's health.* Department of Health: London

Department for Education (2011a) *Healthy schools.* Available from: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/pastoralcare/a0075278/healthy-schools Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Department for Education (2011b) *Every child matters.* Available from: http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/earlysupport/esinpractice/a0067409/every-child-matters Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Department for Education and Skills (2004) *Every child matters: Next steps.* Department for Education and Skills: London

Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health (2004) *National services framework for children, young people and maternity services: Core Standards.* The Stationery Office: London

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs & National Statistics (2010) *Measuring Progress: Sustainable Development Indicators 2010.* Department for Environment, Food and Rural: London. Available from: http://sd.defra.gov.uk/2010/07/measuring-progress-sustainable-development-indicators-2010/ Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Department of Health (2007) *Facing the future. A review of the role of health visitors.* Department of Health: London

Department of Health (2010a) *Healthy lives, healthy people. Our strategy for public health in England.* The Stationery Office: London

Department of Health (2010b) *Our health and wellbeing today.* The Stationery Office: London

Department of Health (2010c) *Achieving equity and excellence for children.* The Stationery Office: London

Department of Health (2011) *Health Visitor implementation plan 2011-15. A call to action.* Department of Health: London

Department of Health and Children (2000) *Our children – their lives.* Stationery Office: Dublin

Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Healthy child programme.* Department of health: London

DiCicco-Bloom, B. & Crabtree, B. F. (2006) The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education* 40(4) 314-321

Dickersin, S. (1990) The existence of publication bias and risk factors of its occurrence. *Journal of the American Association* 263 1385-1389

Dines, A & Cribb, A. (Eds)(1993) *Health promotion: Concepts and practice.* Blackwell Scientific Publications: Oxford

Directgov (2009) *Aimhigher: helping you into higher education.* Available at: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/DG_073697 Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Donaldson, P. J. (2001) Using photographs to strengthen family planning research. *Family Planning Perspectives* 33(4) 176-179

Doss, J. R., Vesley, S. K., Oman, R. K., Aspy, C. B., Tolma, E., Rodine, S. & Marshall, L. (2006) A matched case-control study: investigating the relationship between youth assets and sexual intercourse among 13- to 14-year-olds. *Child: Health, Care and Development* 33(1) 40-44

Downie, R. S., Tannahill, C. & Tannahill, A. (2002) *Health promotion: Models and values.* 2nd Ed. Oxford University Press: Oxford

Dunn, J. (2004) *Children's friendships. The beginnings of intimacy.* Blackwell Publishing: Oxford

Dunn, L. B., Iglewicz, A. & Moutier, C. (2008) A conceptual model of medical student well-being: Promoting resilience and preventing burnout. *Academic Psychiatry* 32(1) 44-53

Durayappah, A. (2010) The 3P model: A general theory of subjective well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies* 11 125-130 Available from: http://www.psychologytoday.com/files/attachments/4859/the3pmodel.pdf Accessed on 5th April 2011

Dyson, A. & Meagher, N. (2001) Reflections on the case studies: Towards a rationale for participation? Chapter 8 In Clark, J., Dyson, A., Meagher, N., Robson, E. & Wootten, M. (Eds) *Young people as researchers. Possibilities, problems and politics.* National Youth Agency: Leicester

Economic Social Research Council (2010) *Recognition of Professional Doctorates.* Available from: http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/recognition_of_professional_doctorates_(appendix%25202)_tcm6-9063.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Edwards, O. W., Mumford, V. E., Shillingford, M. A. & Srra-Roldan, R. (2007) Developmental assets: A prevention framework for students considered at risk. *Children & Schools* 29(3) 145-153

Egger, M., Zellwegger-Zahner, T., Schneider, M., Junker, C., Lengeler, C. & Antes, G. (1997) Language bias in randomised controlled trials. *Lancet* 350(1997) 326-329

Ellen, R.F. (1984) *Ethnographic research. A guide to general conduct.* Harcourt Brace & Company: London

Emerson, J. (2004) *What is asset mapping? Social design notes*. Available from:
http://www.backspace.com/notes/2004/06/what-is-asset-mapping.php
Accessed 11th February 2010

Epstein, I., Stevens, B., McKeever, P. & Barychel, S. (2006) Photo elicitation interview (PEI): using photos to elicit children's perspectives*. International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5(3) 1-9

Erdner, A., Andersson, L. Magnusson, A. & Lutzen, K. (2009) Varying views of life among people with long-term mental illness. *Journal of Psychiatric & Mental Health Nursing* 16(1) 54-60

Ereaut, G. & Whting, R. (2008) *What do we mean by 'wellbeing'? And why might it matter? Research report number: DCSF-RW073.* Department of Children, Schools and Families: London

Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society.* Norton: New York

Eriksson, M. & Lindström, B. (2005) Validity of Antonovsky's sense of coherence scale: a systematic review. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 59* (6) 460-466

Eriksson M. & Lindström, B. (2008) A Salutogenic Interpretation of the Ottawa Charter. *Health Promotion International* 23(2) 190-199

Eriksson, M. & Lindström, B. (2010) Bringing it all together: The salutogenic response to some of the most pertinent public health dilemmas. Chapter 18. In Morgan, A., Davies, M. & Ziglio, E. (2010)(Eds) *Health assets in a global context.* Springer: New York

Eriksson, M., Lindström, B. & Lilja, J. (2007) A sense of coherence and health. Salutogenesis in a societal context: Åland, a special case? *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 61(8) 684-688

Eriksson, U., Asplund, K. & Sellström, W. (2010) Growing up in rural communirty – children's experiences of social capital from perspectives of wellbeing. *Rural and Remote Health* 10(1322) 1-12 Available from:
http://www.rrh.org.au/publishedarticles/article_print_1322.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

European Parliament, Council of the European Union and European Commission (2000) *Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union.* Official Journal of European Communities C364: Nice

Evans, J. (2011) *Findings from the national well-being debate.* Office for National Statistics: London

Evans, A. E., Sanderson, M., Griffin, S. F., Reininger, B., Vincent, M. L., Parra-Medina, D., Valois, R. F. & Taylor, D. (2004) An exploration of the relationship between youth assets and engagement in risky sexual behaviours. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 35(5) 424.e21-424.e30

Ewles, L. & Simnett, I. (2003) *Promoting health: a practical guide.* 5th Ed. Bailliere Tindall: London

Fargas-Malet, M., McSherry, D., Larkin, E. & Robinson, C. (2010) Research with children: Methodological issues and innovative techniques. *Journal of Early Childhood Research* 8(2) 175-192

Fattore, T., Mason, J. & Watson, E. (2007) Children's conceptualisations of their well-being. *Social Indicators Research* 80(1) 5-29

Fattore, T., Mason, J. & Watson, E. (2009) When children are asked about their well-being: Towards a framework for guiding policy. *Child Indicators Research* 2(1) 57-77

Fetterman, D. M. (1989) *Ethnography step by step.* Newbury Park: Sage

Finfgeld-Connett, D. (2006) Qualitative concept development: Implications for nursing research and knowledge. *Nursing Forum* 41(3) 103-112

Fink, A. (1998) *Conducting research literature reviews, from paper to the internet.* Sage: London.

Fontana, A. & Frey, J. (2005) The interview: from neutral stance to political involvement. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research.* 3rd Ed. Sage: Thousand oaks, California.

Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008) *Final Project report.* The Government Office for Science: London

Forsgärde, M., Westman, B. & Nygren, L. (2000) Ethical discussion groups as an intervention to improve the climate in interprofessional work with the elderly and disabled. *Journal of Interprofessional Care* 14(4) 351-361

France, A. (2000) *Youth researching youth: The triumph and success of a peer research project.* Youth Work Press/Joseph Rowntree Foundation: York

Fraser, S., Lewis, V., Ding, S., Kellett, M. & Robinson, C. (2004)(Eds) *Doing research with children and young people.* Sage Publications: London

French, J. (1985) To educate or promote health? *Health Education Journal* 44(3) 115-116

French, S. A., Leffert, N., Story, M., Neumark-Sztainer, D., Hannan, P. & Benson, P. L. (2001) Adolescent binge/purge and weight loss behaviours: Associations with developmental assets. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 28(3) 211-221

Friedli, L. (2005) Guest Editorial. Promoting mental health in the United Kingdom: A case study in many parts. *Advances in Mental Health (Incorporating the Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health)* 4(2) 52-57

Froggatt, K. A. (2001) The analysis of qualitative data: processes and pitfalls. *Palliative Medicine* 15(5) 433-438

Frønes, I. (1993) Editorial: Changing childhood. *Childhood* 1(1) 1-2

Fulkerson, J. A., Story, M., Mellin, A., Leffert, N., Neumark-Sztainer, D. & French, S. A. (2006) Family dinner meal frequency and adolescent development: Relationships with developmental assets and high-risk behaviors. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 39(3) 337-345

Fuller T., Guy, D. & Pletsch, C. (2002) *Canadian Rural Partnership asset mapping: A handbook*. Canadian Rural Partnership: Canada. Available from: http://www.planningtoolexchange.org/resource/asset-mapping-handbook Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Gibson, F., Aldiss, S., Horstman, M., Kumpunen, S. & Richardson, A. (2010) Children and young people's experiences of cancer care: A qualitative research study using participatory methods. *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 47(11) 1397-1407

Glaser. B. G (1992) *Emergence vs forcing: Basics of grounded theory analysis.* Sociology press: Mill Valley, CA

Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research.* Aldine de Gruyter: New York

Glazer, G. L. & Pressler, J. L. (1989) Schlotfeld's health seeking model. In Fitzpatrick, J. J. & Whall, A. L. (Eds) *Conceptual models of nursing. Analysis and application.* 2nd Ed. Appleton & Lange: Norwalk, Connecticut

Goldman, K. D. & Schmalz, K. J. (2009) "Oh, the places you'll go!" Assessing work preferences and personal assets. *Health Promotion Practice* 10(1) *6*-9

Goodenough, T., Williamson, E., Kent, J. & Ashcroft, R. (2003) 'What did you think about that?' Researching children's perceptions of participation in a longitudinal genetic epidemiological study. *Children & Society* 17(2) 113-125

Goodin, R. D. (1983) The ethics of destroying irreplaceable assets. *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 21(1) 55-66

Graham, A. & Kilpatrick, R. (2010) Understanding children's educational experiences through image-based research (pages 89-106). In Scott Jones, J. & Watt, S. (Eds) *Ethnography in social science practice.* Routledge: London

Greene, S. & Hogan, D. (2005)(Eds) *Researching children's experience. Approaches and methods.* Sage Publications: London

Greenhalgh, T. & Peacock, R. (2005) Effectiveness and efficiency of search methods in systemic reviews of complex evidence: audit of primary sources. *BMJ* 331(7524) 1064-1065

Grieg, A., Taylor, J. & Mackay, T. (2007) *Doing research with children.* 2nd Sage Publications Ltd: London

Gritz, E. R., Tripp, M. K., James, A.S., Carvajal, S. C., Harrist, R. B., Mueller, N. H., Chamberlain, R. M. & Parcel, G. S. (2005) An intervention for parents to promote preschool children's sun protection: effects of Sun Protection is Fun! *Preventive Medicine* 41(2) 357-366

Groft, J. N., Hagen, B., Miller, N. K., Cooper, N. & Brown, S. (2005) Adolescent health: a rural community's approach. *Rural and Remote* 5(366) 1-15

Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. (1998) Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds) *The landscape of qualitative research.* Sage Publications: California.

Haber, J. (2002) Legal and ethical issues. In LoBiondo-wood, G. & Haber, J. (2002)(Eds) *Nursing research. Methods, critical appraisal, and utilization.* Mosby, Inc: St. Louis

Hammersley, M. (1990) *Reading ethnographic research: A critical guide.* Longmans: London

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in practice.* 2nd Ed. Routledge: New York

Hanafin, S. & Brooks, A-M. (2005) *The Delphi technique: A methodology to support the development of a national set of child well-being indicators.* The Stationery Office: Dublin Available from: http://www.dcya.gov.ie/documents/research/TheDelphiTechnique.pdf Accessed on September 2011

Hanafin, S., Brooks, A-M., Carroll, E., Fitzgerald, E., Nic Gabhainn, S. & Sixsmith, J. (2007) Achieving consensus in developing a national set of child well-being indicators. *Social Indicators Research* 80(1) 79-104

Harper, D. (2002) Talking about pictures: a case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies* 17(1) 13-26

Harris, E. L. (2006) Mary Douglas's typology of grid and group. In Anfara, V. A. & Mertz, N. T. (2006)(Eds) *Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research.* Sage Publications: California

Harris, K. (2011) Isn't all community development asset-based? *The Guardian* 23rd June 2011. Available from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/voluntary-sector-network/2011/jun/23/community-development-comes-age Accessed 3rd September 2011

Harris, L. & Woodhouse, J. (2009) Addressing the health and well-being of children and young people in care: Developing the 'health dashboard' in Torbay. *Adoption & Fostering* 33(3) 95-98

Heady, L. & Olveira, A. (2008) *On the bright side: Developing a questionnaire for charities to measure children's well-being.* NFC: London

Hegelund, A. (2005) Objectivity and subjectivity in the ethnographic method. *Qualitative Health Research* 15(5) 647-668

Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and time.* SCM Press: London.

Hek G (1996) Critical evaluation. *Journal of Community Nursing* 10(6) 4-6.

Hek, G., Langton, H., & Blunden, G. (2000) Systematically searching and reviewing the literature. *Nurse Researcher* 7(3) 40-57

Henderson, Z. P. (1995). Renewing our social fabric. *Human Ecology 23*(1) 16-19.

Hendrick, H. (1997) Constructions and reconstructions of British childhood: An interpretive survey, 1800 to the present day. In James, A. & Prout, A. (Eds) *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood.* Routledge Falmer: London

Hertz, R. (1996) Ethics, reflexivity and voice. *Qualitative Sociology* 19(1) 3-10

Hewitt-Taylor, J. (2001) Use of constant comparative analysis in qualitative research. *Nursing Standard* 15(42) 32-42

Hicks, S. Newton, J., Haynes, J. & Evans, J. (2011) *Measuring children's and young people's well-being.* Office for National Statistics: London

Hill, M. (1997) Participatory research with children. Research review. *Child and Family Social Work* 2(3) 171-183

Hilton, A. (1987) *The ethnographic perspective. Module 7. Research awareness.* London: Distance Learning Centre, South Bank Polytechnic

Hinds, P., Chaves, D. & Cypess, S. (1992) Context as a source of meaning and understanding. In Morse, J. (Ed) *Qualitative health research.* Sage Publications: London

HM Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 22: Deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy and get more children and young people taking part in high quality PE and sport.* The Stationery Office: London

HM Treasury (2002) *Spending Review: Public Service Agreements White Paper.* HM Treasury: London

Hocking, G. (2003) Oxfam Great Britain and sustainable livelihoods in the UK. *Community Development Journal* 38(3) 235-242

Hodgson, I. (2005) Engaging with cultures. Reflections on entering the ethnographic field. *Nurse Researcher* 9(1) 41-51

Hogston, R. (1995) Quality nursing care: a qualitative enquiry. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 21(1) 116-124

Holloway, I. (1997) *Basic concepts for qualitative research.* Blackwell Science: Oxford

Holmes, S. (1996) Systematic search offers a sound evidence base. *Nursing Times* 92(4) 37-39

Holt, J. (1975) *Escape from childhood.* Penguin: Harmondsworth

Hood, S. P., Kelley, P. & Mayall, B. (1996) Children as research subjects: A risky enterprise. *Children & Society* 10(2) 117-128

Howard, S., Dryden, J. & Johnson, B. (1999) Childhood resilience: Review and critique of literature. *Oxford Review of Education* 25(3) 307-323

Hufford, L., West, D.C. & Paterniti, D. A. (2009) Community-based advocacy training; Applying asset-based community development in resident education. *Academic Medicine* 84(6) 765-770

Hughes, C. C. (1992) "Ethnography": What's in a word - process? Product? Promise? *Qualitative Health Research* 2(4) Nov 439-450

Hurworth, R. (2003) Photo-interviewing for research. *Social Research* Update Spring 40(1) 1-4

Husserl, E. (1973) Experience and judgement. Investigations in a genealogy of logic. Routledge and Kegan Paul: London

Huston, A. C. & Bentley, A. C. (2010) Human development in societal context. *Annual Review of Psychology* 61 411-37 Available from:

http://www02.homepage.villanova.edu/michael.j.mason/Development.pdf
Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Hutchison, E. D. (2011) (Ed) *Dimensions of human behaviour. The changing lifecourse.* 4th Ed. Sage Publications: Los Angeles, California
Improvement and Development Agency (2010) *A glass half-full: How an asset approach can improve community health and well-being.* Improvement and Development Agency: London

Ingleton, C. & Seymour, J. E. (2001) Analysing qualitative data: examples from two studies of end-of-life care*. International Journal of Palliative Care* 7(50) 227-233

Ipsos Mori and Nairn, A. (2011) *Children's well-being in UK, Sweden and Spain: The role of inequality and materialism.* Ipsos Mori: London

Jack, G. (2000) Ecological influences on parenting and child development. *British Journal of Social Work* 30(6) 109-120

Jack, G. (2006) The Area and community components of children's well-being. *Children & Society* 20(5) 334-347

James, A. (1996) Learning to be friends: Methodological lessons from participant observation among English schoolchildren. *Childhood* 3(3) 313-330

James, A. (2001) Ethnography in the study of childhood. In Atkinson, P.,Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J. & Lofland, L. (Eds) *Handbook of ethnography.* Sage Publications: London

James, A., Jenks, C. & Prout, A. (1998) *Theorizing childhood.* Polity Press: Cambridge

James, A. & Prout, A. (1997)(Eds) *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood.* Routledge Falmer: London

Jootun, D., McGhee, G. & Marland, G. (2009) Reflexivity: promoting rigour in qualitative research. *Nursing Standard* 23(23) 42-46

Kaplan, I. & Howes, A. (2004) 'Seeing with different eyes': exploring the value of participative research using images in schools. *Cambridge Journal of Education* 34(2) 143-155

Kegler, M. C., Oman, R. F., Vesley, S. K., McLeroy, K. R., Aspy, C. B., Rodine, S. & Marshall, L. (2005) Relationships among youth assets and neighbourhood and community resources. *Health Education & Behavior* 32(3) 380-397

Keyes, C. L., Shmotkin, D. & Ryff, C. D. (2002) Optimizing well-being: The empirical encounter of two traditions *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 82(6) 1007-1022

Kidd, D. (1906) *Savage childhood.* Adam and Charles Black: London

Kirby, D., Short, L., Collins, J., Rugg, D., Kolbe, L., Howard, M., Miller, B., Sonenstein, F. & Zabin, L. S. (1994) School-based programs to reduce sexual risk behaviour: A review of effectiveness. *Public Health Reports* 109(3) 339-360

Kirby, P. (2004) *A guide to actively involving young people in research: For researchers, research commissioners, and managers.* INVOLVE: Hampshire

Kirby, P. & Bryson, S. (2002*) Measuring the Magic? Evaluating and researching young people's participation in public decision making.* Carnegie Young People Initiative: London

Klein, J. D., Sabaratnam, P., Auerbach, M. M., Smith, S. M., Kodjo, C., Lewis, K., Ryan, S. & Dandino, C. (2006) Development and factor structure of a brief instrument to assess the impact of community programs on positive youth development: The Rochester Evaluation of Asset Development for Youth (READY) Tool. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 39(2) 252-260

Kleinman, A. (1992) Local worlds of suffering: An interpersonal focus for ethnographies of illness experience. *Qualitative Health Research* 2(2) May 127-134.

Kobassa, S.C. (1982a) Commitment and coping in stress resistance among lawyers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 42 (4) 707-717

Kobassa, S.C. (1982b) The hardy personality: Toward a social psychology of stress and health. *N Sanders, G. S. & Suls, J. (Eds) Social psychology of health and illness.* Erlbaum: Hillsdale, New Jersey

Koch, T. (1994) Establishing rigour in qualitative research: the decision trail. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 19(5) 976-986

Koch, T. (2006) Establishing rigour in qualitative research: the decision trail. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 53(1) 91-100

Kochanska, G., Aksan, N. & Carlson, J. J. (2005) Temperament, relationships, and young children's receptive cooperation with their parents. *Developmental Psychology* 41(4) 648-660

Kochanska, G., Barry, R. A., Aksan, N. & Boldt, L. J. (2008) A developmental model of maternal and child contributions to disruptive conduct: The first six years. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 49(11) 1220-1227

Kohlberg, L. (1984) *Essays on moral development. Vol. 2, The psychology of moral development : the nature and validity of moral stages*. Harper Row: New York

Kolm, S-C. (2002) *On health and justice*. Available from:

http://mora.rente.nhh.no/projects/EqualityExchange/Portals/0/articles/kolm4.pdf
Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Konu, A. & Rimpelä, M. (2002) Well-being in schools: A conceptual model. *Health Promotion International* 17(1) 79-87

Kretzmann, J. P. & McKnight, J. L. (1993) *Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets.* Institute of Policy Research. ACTA Publications: Chicago

Kretzmann, J., McKnight, J. & and Puntenney, D. (1996a) *A Guide to Mapping and Mobilizing the Economic Capacities of Local Residents.* ACTA Publications: Chicago

Kretzmann, J., McKnight, J. & and Puntenney, D. (1996b) *A Guide to Mapping Local Business Assets and Mobilizing Local Business Capacities.* ACTA Publications: Chicago

Kumar, R. (1999) *Research methodology. A step-by-step guide for beginners.* Sage Publications: London

Kuhn, T. S. (1970) *The structure of scientific revolutions* 2nd Ed. University of Chicago Pres: Chicago

Lamb, G. S. & Huttlinger, K. (1989) Reflexivity in nursing research. *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 11(6) 765-772

Lambert, V., Glacken, M., McCarron, M. (2011) Communication between children and health professionals in a child hospital setting: A child transitional communication model. Journal of Advanced Nursing 67(3) 569-582

Land, K. C., Lamb, V. L. & Mustillo, S. K. (2001) Child and youth well-being in the United States 1975-1988: Some findings from a new index. *Social Indicators Research* 56(3) 241-320

Laugharne, C. (1995) Ethnography: Research method or philosophy? *Nurse Researcher* 3(2) Dec 45-54

Leininger, M. (1985) *Qualitative research methods in nursing.* Orlando: Grune & Stratton Inc.

Leininger, M. (1994) Evaluation criteria and critique of qualitative research studies. In Morse, J. (Ed) *Critical issues in qualitative health research methods.* Sage Publications Ltd: Thousand Oaks

Leitch, R. & Mitchell, S. (2007) Caged birds and cloning machines: how student imagery 'speaks' to us about cultures of schooling. *Improving Schools* 10(1) 53-71

Lerner, R. & Benson, P. L. (2003)(Eds) *Developmental assets and asset building communities: Implications for research, policy and practice.* Kluwer Academic: New York

Le Vine, R. A., Dixon, S., Le Vine, S., Rickman, A., Leiderman, P. H., Keefer, C. H. & Brazelton, T. B. (1994) *Child care and culture: Lessons from Africa.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge

Li, S. & Seale, C. (2007) Learning to do qualitative analysis: An observational study of doctoral work. *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10) 1442-1452

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. (1985) *Naturalistic inquiry.* Sage Publications: Beverley Hills

Lincolnshire.gov.uk (2008) Community asset mapping project. Available from: http://parishes.lincolnshire.gov.uk/.../Final_project_document__Wrangle_Parish_Council Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Lindström, B. & Eriksson, M. (2005) Glossary. Salutogenesis. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community* 59(6) 440-442

Lindström, B. & Eriksson, M. (2006) Contextualizing salutogenesis and Antonovsky in public health development. *Health Promotion International* 21(3) 238-244

Lindström, B. & Eriksson, M. (2009) The salutogenic approach to the making of HiAP/healthy public policy: illustrated by a case study. *Global Health Promotion* 16(1) 17-28

Lindström, B. & Eriksson, M. (2010) *The hitchhiker's guide to salutogenesis. Salutogenic pathways to health promotion.* Global Working Group on Salutogenesis: Helsinki

Lindström, B. & Eriksson, M. (2011) From health education to healthy learning: Implementing salutogenesis in educational science. *Scandanavian Journal of Public Health* 39(Suppl 6) 85-92

Locke, L. F., Wyrick Spirduso, W. & Silverman, S. J. (2000) *Proposals that work. A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals.* 4th Ed. Sage Publications: London

Lofland, J. & Lofland, L. H. (1971) *Analyzing social settings. A guide to qualitative observation and analysis.* 2nd ed. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Løhre, A., Lydersen, S. & Vatten, L. J. (2010) School wellbeing among children in grades 1-10. *BMC Public Health* 10 526. Available from: http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/10/526 Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Mackenzie, A. E. (1994) Evaluating ethnography: Considerations for analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 19(4) 774-781

Macnee, C. L. (2004) *Understanding nursing research. Reading and using research in practice.* Lippincott Williams & Wilkins: Philadelphia

Mail Online (2008) *How politically-correct policies are spoiling our schools, by parents.* Available from: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-522748/How-politically-correct-policies-spoiling-schools-parents.html#ixzz1YCzKFwMZ Accessed on 17th September 2011

Malinowski, B. (1954) *Argonauts of the Southern Pacific.* 2nd ed. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

Mannes, M. Roehlkepartain, E. C. & Benson, P. L. (2005) Unleashing the power of community to strengthen the well-being of children, youth, and families: An asset-building approack. *Child Welfare* 84(2) 233-250

Margalit, M., & Efrati, M., (1996) Loneliness, coherence and companionship among children with learning disorders. *Educational Psychology* 16(1) 69-79

Marmot, M. (2010) *Fair society, healthy lives. The Marmot review. Executive summary.* The Marmot Review: London

Mathur, A. & Kamat, D. (2005) Travel risks: how to help parents protect infants and young children *Consultant* 45(8) 900-902

Mayall, B. (1994) Introduction. In Mayall, B. (Ed). *Children's childhoods observed and experienced.* Falmer Press: London

McBrien, B. (2008) Evidence-based carte: Enhancing the rigour of a qualitative study. *British Journal of Nursing* 17(20) 1286-1289

McGarry, J. (2007) Nursing relationships in ethnographic research: what of rapport? *Nurse Researcher* 14(3) 7-14

McHaffie, H. E. (2000) Ethical issues in research. In Cormack, D. (Ed) (2000) *The research process in nursing.* 4th Ed. Blackwell Science: Oxford

McKenzie, D. (2005) Measuring inequality with asset indicators. *Journal of Population Economics* 18(2) 229-260

McKnight, J. L. (1997) A 21st-century map for healthy communities and families. *Families in Society* 78(2) 117-127

McSweeney, P. (1990) How to conduct a literature search. *Nursing Times* 4(3) 19-22

Mead, M. ([1930] 1968) *Growing up in New Guinea.* Penguin: Middlesex

Meade, M. O. & Richardson, W. S. (1997) Selecting and appraising studies for a systematic review. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 127(7) 531-537

Mertz, N. T. & Anfara, V. A. (2006) Conclusion: Coming full circle. In Anfara, V. A. & Mertz, N. T. (2006)(Eds) *Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research.* Sage Publications: California

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, M. A. (1984) *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods.* Newbury Park: Sage

Moos, R. H. (1984) Context and coping: Toward a unifying conceptual framework. *American Journal of Community Psychology* (1) 5-25

Moos, R. H. (1985) Creating healthy human contexts: Environmental and individual strategies. In Rosen, J. C. & Solomon, L. J. (Eds) *Prevention in health psychology.* University Press of New England: Hanover

Morgan, A. (2006) Needs Assessment. In Macdowell W et al (eds) *Health promotion practice.* McGraw-Hill Education, Open University Press: Berkshire

Morgan, G. (1997) *Images of organization.* 2nd Ed. Sage: Thousand Oaks, California

Morgan, A. & Ziglio, E. (2007) Revitalising the evidence base for public health: an assets model. *Promotion & Education* 14Supplement 2 17-22

Morgan, A. & Ziglio, E. (2010) Revitalising the public health evidence base: An asset model. In Morgan, A., Davies, M. & Ziglio, E. (2010)(Eds) *Health assets in a global context.* Springer: New York

Morrow, V. (2001) Using qualitative data to elicit young people's accounts of community and neighbourhood: some ideas for community health initiatives. *Health Education Research: Theory and Practice* 16(3) 255-268

Morrow, V. Mayall, B. (2009) What is wrong with children's well-being in the UK? Questions of meaning and measurement. *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law* 31(3) 217-229

Morse, J. M. & Field, P. A. (1996) *Nursing research. The application of qualitative approaches.* 2nd ed. Chapman & Hall: London

Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K. & Spiers, J. (2002) Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods.* 1(2) 1-19

Moss, J. (2008) Visual methods and policy research. In Thomson, P (2008)(Ed) *Doing visual research with children and young people.* Routledge: London

Muecke, M. A. (1994) On the evaluation of ethnographies. In Morse, J. M. (1994)(ed) *Critical issues in qualitative research methods.* Newbury Park: Sage

Murphey, D. A., Lamonda, K. H., Carney, J. K., & Duncan, P. (2004) Relationships of a brief measure of youth assets to health-promoting and risk behaviours. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 34(3) 184-191

Naidoo, J. & Wills, J. (2009) *Foundations for health promotion.* 3rd Ed. Balliere Tindall: London

Nash, J. K. (2002) Neighborhood effects on sense of school coherence and educational behaviour in students at risk of school failure. *Children and Schools* 24(2) 73-89

New Economics Foundation (2011) *Measuring our progress. The power of well-being.* New Economics Foundation: London

Nic Gabhainn, S. & Sixsmith, J. (2005) *Children's Understandings of Well-being.* National Children's Office, Department of Health and Children: Dublin Available at: http://www.dcya.gov.ie/documents/research/ChildrenUnderstandingofWellBeing.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Nic Gabhainn, S. & Sixsmith, J. (2006) Children photographing well-being: Facilitating participation in research. *Children & Society* 20(4) 249-259

Nieswiadomy, R. M. (2002*) Foundations of nursing research.* 4th Ed. Pearson Education Inc, New Jersey

Noblit, G. W. & Hare, R. D. (1988) *Meta-ethnography: Synthesizing qualitative studies* (Qualitative research methods series 11). Newbury Park: Sage

Office of Learning Technolofies (2006) *Community learning asset mapping. A guide book for community learning networks.* Human Resources Development: Canada

Office for National Statistics (2011) *Understanding well-being.* Available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/well-being/wellbeing/understanding-wellbeing/understanding-well-being.html Accessed on 2nd September 2011

Offredy, M. & Vickers, P. (2010) *Developing a healthcare research proposal. An interactive student guide.* Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester

Office for Standards in Education and Department for Education and Skills (2008) *Tellus3: Children and young people survey.* Ofsted: London. Available from: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/tellus3-national-report Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Oliffe, J. L, Bottorff, J. L. (2007) Further than the eye can see? Photo elicitation and research with men *Qualitative Health Research* 17(6) 850-858

Oman, R. F., Vesley, S. K., McLeroy, K. R., Harris-Wyatt, V., Apsy, C. B., Rodine, S. & Marshall, L. (2002) Reliability and validity of the youth asset survey (YAS). *Journal of Adolescent Development* 31(3) 247-255

Oman R. F, Vesely S., Aspy C. B, McLeroy K. R, Rodine S., Marshall L. (2004) The potential protective effect of youth assets on adolescent alcohol and drug use. *American Journal of Public Health* 94(8) 1425-1430

Palmer, S. (2006) *Toxic childhood. How the modern world is damaging our children and what we can do about it.* Orion: London

Pan, R. J., Littlefield, D., Valladolid, S. G., Tapping, P. J. & West, D. C. (2005) Building healthier communities for children and families: Applying asset-based community development to community pediatrics. *Pediatrics* 115(4) supplement 1185-1187

Paquette, D. & Ryan, J. (2001) *Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.* Available from: http://pt3.nl.edu/paquetteryanwebquest.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Parahoo, K. (2006) *Nursing research. Principles, process and issues.* 2nd Ed. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke

Parry, O., Warren, E., Madoc-Jones, I., Baker, S-A., Hughes, C., Pithouse, A. & Crowley, A. (2010) *Voices of children and young people in Wales study: A qualitative study of wellbeing among children and young people under 25 years of age.* Welsh Assembly Government Social Research: Cardiff. Available from: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/110328voicescyp.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Participation Works (2007) *How to use creative methods for participation.* National Children's Bureau: London

Payne, G., Dingwall, R., Payne, J. & Carter, M. (1981) *Sociology and Social Research.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Peat, J. & Mellis, C., Williams, K. & Xuan, W. (2002) *Health science research: A handbook of quantitative methods.* Sage Publications: London

Pellatt, G. (2005) Ethnography and reflexivity: emotions and feelings in fieldwork. *Nurse Researcher* 10(3) 28-37

Phillips, E. M. & Pugh, D. S. (1994) *How to get a PhD: A handbook for students and their supervisors.* 2nd Ed. Open University Press: Buckingham

Phillips-Howard, P., Bellus, M. A., Briant, L. B., Jones, H., Downing, J., Kelly, I. E., Bird, T. & Cook, P a. A. (2010) Wellbeing, alcohol use and sexual activity in

young teenagers: Findings from a cross-sectional survey in school children in North West England. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention and Policy* 5 27 Available from:
http://www.substanceabusepolicy.com/content/pdf/1747-597X-5-27.pdf
Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Piaget, J. (1952). *The Origins of Intelligence in Children.* International University Press. (Original work published 1936): New York

Piaget, J. (1969) The theory of stages in cognitive development. McGraw-L-Hill: New York

Pink, S. (2001) *Doing Visual Ethnography Images, Media and Representation in Research.* Sage Publications: London

Playle, J. (2000) Developing research questions and searching the literature. *Journal of Community Nursing* 14(2) 20-24

Pogue, D. (2005) Parents report: surfing the web, spam, typos, protect your child. *Parents* 80(6) 148-151

Polit, D. F. & Beck, C. T. (2006) *Essentials of nursing research. Methods, appraisal, and utilization.* 6th Ed. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins: Philadelphia

Pope, C., Ziebland, S. & Mays, N. (2000) Qualitative research in health. Analysing qualitative data *BMJ* 320(7227) 114-116

Porter, S. (2007) Validity, trustworthiness and rigour: reasserting realism in qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 60(1) 79-86

Price, J. H., Dake, J. A. & Kucharewski, R. (2002) Assessing assets in racially diverse, inner-city youths: Psychometric properties of the Search Institute asset questionnaire. *Family Community Health* 25(3) 1-9

Prout, A. & James, A. (1997) A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood? Provenance and problems. In James, A. & Prout, A. (Eds) *Constructing and reconstructing childhood. Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood.* 2nd Ed. Falmer Press: London

Prout, A. & Hallett, C. (2003) Introduction. In  Hallett, C. & Prout, A. (Eds) *Hearing the voices of children. Social policy for a new century.* Routledge Falmer: London

Punch, S. (2002) Research with children: The same or different from research with adults? *Childhood* 9(3) 321-341

Qvortrup, J. (2000) Mascroanalysis on childhood. In Christensen, P. & James, A. (Eds) *Research with children.* Falmer: London

Ragucci, A. T. (1972) The ethnographic approach and nursing research. *Nursing Research* 21(6) 485-490.

Rees, G., Bradshaw, J., Goswami, H. & Keung, A. (2010) *Understanding children's well-being: A national survey of young people's well-being.* The Children's Society: London

Reinharz, S. (1983) Experiential analysis: a contribution to feminist research. In Bowles, G. & Klein, R. (Eds) *Theories of women's studies.* Routledge and Kegan Paul: London

Reiss, D. (1981) *The family's construction of reality.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts

Resnick, M. D., Bearman, P.S., Blum, R. W., Bauman, K. E., Harris, K. M., Jones, J., Tabor, J., Beuhring, T., Sieving, R. E., Shew, M., Ireland, M. Bearinger, L. H. & Udry, J. R. (1997) Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *Journal of the American Journal of Public Health* 278(10) 823-832

Richards, M. (1995) Family relationships: Relationships within families. *The Psychologist* 8(2) 70-72

Richards, R. D. (2009) Young visual ethnographers: Children's use of digital photography to record, share and extend their art experiences. *International Art in Early Childhood Research Journal* 1(1) 1-16

Richards, H. M. & Schwartz, L. J. (2002) Ethics of qualitative research: Are there special issues for health services research? *Family Practice* 19(2) 135-135

Richards, M. & Huppert, F. A. (2011) Do positive children become positive adults? Evidence from a longitudinal birth cohort study. *Journal of positive Psychology* 6(1) 75-87

Ridge, T. (2002) Childhood Poverty and Social Exclusion: From a Child's Perspective. The Policy Press: Bristol.

Riley, R. G. & Manias, E. (2004) The uses of photography in clinical nursing practice and research: a literature review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 48(4) 397-405

Roberts, T. (2009) Understanding ethnography. *British Journal of Midwifery* 17(5) 291-294

Robertson, A. & Minkler, M. (1994) New health promotion movement: A critical examination. *Health Education Quarterly* 21(3) 295-312

Robertson, M. & Boyle, J. (1984) Ethnography contributions to nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 9(1) 43-49

Rodgers, B. L. (2000) Beyond analysis: further adventures in concept development. In Rodgers, B. L. & Knafl, K. A. (Eds) *Concept development in nursing foundations, techniques, and applications.* Saunders: Philadelphia

Rogers, S., Muir, K. & Evenson, C. R. (2003) Signs of resilience: assets that support deaf adults' success in bridging the deaf and hearing worlds. *American Annals of the Deaf* 148(3) 222-232

Rolfe, G. (2006) Validity, trustworthiness and rigour: quality and the idea of qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 53(3) 304-310

Rose, K. (1994) Unstructured and semi-structured interviewing. *Nurse Researcher* 1(3) Mar 23-32

Rosenthal, T. T. (1989) Using ethnography to study nursing education. *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 11(1) 115-127

Rotegård, A. K. & Ruland, C. M. (2009) Representation of patients' health asset concepts in the International Classification of Nursing Practice (ICNP). *Studies in Health Technology and Informatics* 146 314- 319. Available from: http://booksonline.iospress.nl/Content/View.aspx?piid=12673    Accessed    3rd September 2011

Rotegård, A. K., Moore, S. M., Fagermoen, M. S. & Ruland, C. M. (2010) Health assets: A concept analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 47(4) 513-525

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2010) *Safeguarding Children and Young people: roles and competences for health care staff. Intercollegiate document.* Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health: London

Rubin, D. M., Downes, K. J., O'Reilly, A. L., Mekonnen, R., Luan, X. & Localio, R. (2008) Impact of kinship care on behavioural well-being for children in out-of-home care. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 162(6) 550-556

Russell, C. (2011) *Asset based community development and the big society.* Available from: http://vimeo.com/15218724 Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Rütten, A., Abu-Omar, K., Frahsa, A. & Morgan, A. (2009) Assets for policy in health promotion: overcoming political barriers inhibiting women in difficult life situations to access sport facilities. *Social Science & Medicine* 69(11) 1667-1673

Rütten, A., Abu-Omar, K., Levin, L., Morgan, A., Groce, N. & Stuart, J. (2008) Research note: social catalysts in health promotion implementation. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 62(6) 560-565

Rutherford, D. (1998) Children's relationships. In Taylor, J. & Woods, M. (eds) *Early childhood studies. An holistic introduction.* Arnold: London

Ryan, R. M. & Deci, E. L. (2001) on happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology* 52 141-166. Available from: http://www.uic.edu/classes/psych/Health/Readings/Ryan,%20Happiness%20-%20well%20being,%20AnnRevPsy,%202001.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Ryff, C. D. & Singer, B. (1998) The contours of positive human health. *Psychological Inquiry* 9(1) 1-28

Ryff, C. D., Singer, B. H. & Love, G. D. (2004) positive health: Connecting well-being with biology. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of Biological* Sciences 359 1383-1394. Available from: http://rstb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/359/1449/1383.full.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Saan, H. (1986) Health promotion and health education: Living with a dominant concept. *Health Promotion* 1(3) 253-255

Sabaratnam, P. and Klein, J. D. (2006) Measuring youth development outcomes for community program evaluation and quality improvement: Findings from dissemination of the Rochester Evaluation of Asset Development for Youth (READY) Tool. *Journal of Public Health Management* 12 Supplement 6 S88-S94

Sagy, S. (2002) Moderating factors explaining stress reactions: comparing chronic-without-acute-stress and chronic-with-acute- stress situations. *Journal of Psychology* 136(4) 407-419

Sandelowski, M. (1986) The problem of rigour in qualitative research. *Advances in Nursing Science* 8(3) 27-37

Sandelowski, M. (1993) Rigour or rigour mortis: the problem of rigour in qualitative research revisited. *Advances in Nursing Science* 16(2) 1-8

Sandelowski, M. & Barroso, J. (2002) Reading qualitative studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1(1) article 5 Available from: https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/viewFile/4615/3764 Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Scales, P. C. (1999) Reducing risks and building developmental assets: Essential actions for promoting adolescent health. *Journal of School Health* 69(3) 113-119

Scales, P. C., Benson, P. L., Roehlkepartain, E. C., Sesma Jr., A. & van Dulmen, M. (2006a) The role of developmental assets in predicting academic achievement: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Adolescence* 29(5) 691-708

Scales, P. C., Benson, P. L. & Mannes, M. (2006b) The contribution to adolescent well-being made by nonfamily adults: An examination of developmental assets as contexts and processes. *Journal of Community Psychology* 34(4) 401-413

Schatzman, L. & Strauss, A. (1973) *Field research: Strategies for a natural sociology.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Schlotfeldt, R. M. (1975) The need for a conceptual framework. In Verhonick, P. (Ed) *Nursing Research 1*, pages 3-23. Little, Brown: Boston

Scott, G., McKay, A., Sawers, C. & Harris, R. (1999) *Research findings No. 1: What can we afford? – A woman's role, considering the welfare implications of money management.* Scottish Poverty Information Unit, Glasgow Caledonian University: Glasgow

Scott, J. (2000) Children as respondents. The challenge for quantitative methods. In Christensen, P. & James, A. (Eds) *Research with children. Perspectives and Practices.* Pages 98-119. Routledge Falmer: London

Search Institute (2006) *40 Developmental assets for middle childhood (ages 8-12).* Available from:
http://www.search-institute.org/system/fies/40Assets_MC_0.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Search Institute (2011) *Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors Survey*. Available from:
http://www.search-institute.org/survey-services/surveys/attitudes-behaviors
Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Sellstrom, E. & Bremberg, S. (2006) The significance of neighbourhood context to child and adolescent health and wellbeing: A systematic review of multilevel studies. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health* 34(5) 544-554

Seymour, H. (1984) Health education versus health promotion – a practitioner's view. *Health Education Journal* 43(2) 37-38

Shenton, A. K. (2004) Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information* 22(2) 63-75

Silverman, D. (2005) *Doing qualitative research*. 2nd Ed. Sage: London
Silverman, D. (2006) *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction.* 3rd Ed. Sage: London

Sinclair, R. (2004) Participation in practice: Making it meaningful, effective and sustainable. *Children & Society* 18(2) 106-118

Sindhu and Dickson (1997) The complexity of searching the literature. *International Journal of Nursing Practice* 3(4) 211-217

Smith, R. (2000) Order and disorder: The contradictions of childhood. *Children & Society* 14 3-10

Sointu, E. (2005) The rise of an ideal: Tracing changing discourses of wellbeing. *Sociological Review* 53(2) 255-274

Sparkes, A. C. (2001) Myth 94: qualitative health researchers will agree about validity. *Qualitative Health Research* 11(4) 538-552

Speller, V. (1985) Defining health promotion: service implications. *Health Education Journal* 44(2) 96

Spradley, J. P. (1972) Foundations of cultural knowledge. In Spradley, J. P. (1972) (ed) *Culture and cognitions: Rules, maps and plans*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company

Spradley, J. P. (1979) *The ethnographic interview.* Wadsworth Group/Thomson Learning: Belmont, California

Stephens, M. A. P., Kinney, J. M., Norris, V. k. & Ritchie, S. W. (1987) Social networks as assets and liabilities in recovery from stroke by geriatric patients. *Psychology and Aging* 2(2) 125-129

Strauss, A. L. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge University Press: New York

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques.* Sage Publications: Newbury Park

Streubert Speziale H. J. & Carpenter, D. R. (2006) *Qualitative research in nursing. Advancing the humanistic imperative.* 4th ed. Lippincott: Philadelphia

Sullivan, A. & Sheffrin, S. M. (2003) *Economics: Principles in action.* Upper Saddle River, New Jersey Pearson Prentice Hall: New Jersey

Sun, J. & Stewart, D. (2007) Development of population-based resilience measures in the primary school setting. *Health Education* 107(6) 575-599

Tannahill, A. (1985) What is health promotion? *Health education Journal* 44(4) 167-168

The Children's Society (2011) *How happy are our children: measuring children's well-being and exploring economic factors.* The Children's Society: London

The Lancet (2007) Child wellbeing in rich countries. Editorial. *The Lancet* 369(9562) 616

The National Youth Agency (2007) *Involving children and young people – an introduction.* The National Youth Agency: Leicester

Thomas, J. (1993) *Doing critical ethnography. Qualitative research methods series 26.* Newbury Park: Sage

Thomson, P (2008) *Doing visual research with children and young people.* Routledge: London

Thompson, R. A. (2006) The development of the person: Social understanding, relationships, conscience, self. IN Damon, W. & Lerner, R. M. (Series Eds) *Handbook of child psychology* (Volume Ed: Eisenberg, N.) *Social, emotional, and personality development* (pgs: 348-365). Wiley: New York

Thompson, S. & Marks, N. (2008) *Measuring well-being in policy: Issues and applications. Report commissioned by the Foresight Project on mental capital and well-being.* Government Office for Science: London

Tones, K. (1990) Why theorise? Ideology in health education. *Health Education Journal* 49(1) 2-6

Troutman, D. R. & Fletcher, A. C. (2010) Context and companionship in children's short-term versus long-term friendships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 27(8) 1060-1074

Turley, R. L., Margan, F. M. & Morgan, H. M. (2011) *Children and young people's wellbeing monitor for Wales: Evidence review.* Welsh Assembly Government Social Research: Cardiff Available from: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/110328evidencereviewmonitoren.pdf Accessed on: 3rd September 2011

UK National Statistics (2009) Available from: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/population/index.html Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Underwood, A. (2007) *Children's health and well-being.* Open University Press: Maidenhead

UNICEF (2007) *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries, Innocenti Report Card 7.* UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: Florence, Italy

UNICEF (2010) *The children left behind: A league table of inequality in child well-being in the world's rich countries.* Available from: www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publications/rc9.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

United Nations (1998) *Fiftieth anniversary of the universal declaration of human rights.* United Nations: Geneva

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Available from: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Uprichard, E. (2008) Children as 'being and becomings': Children, childhood and temporality. *Children & Society* 22(4) 303-313

Van Ootegem, L. & Verhofstadt, E. (2011) Using capabilities as an alternative indicator for well-being. *Social Indicators Research* Available from: http://www.springerlink.com/content/y7k5870571v71818/ Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Van Teijlingen, E. & Hundley, V. (2002) The importance of pilot studies. *Nursing Standard* 16(40) 33-36

Veale, A. (2005) Creative methodologies in participatory research with children. In Greene, S. & Hogan, D. (2005)(Eds) *Researching children's experiences: approaches and methods.* Sage Publications: London

Vélez, C. E., Wolchik, S. A., Tein, J. Y. & Sandler, I. (2011) Protecting children from the consequences of divorce: A longitudinal study of the effects of parenting on children's coping processes. *Child Development* Jan 82(1) 244-257

Vesley, S. K., Wyatt, V. H., Oman, R. F., Aspy, C. B., Kegler, M. C., Rodine, S., Marshall, L. & McLeroy, K. R. (2004) The potential protective effects of youth assets from adolescent sexual risk behaviors. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 34(5) 356-365

Vinson, J. A. (2002) Children with asthma: Initial development of the child resilience model. *Pediatric Nursing* 28(2) 149-158

Vivar, C. G., McQueen, A., Whyte, D. A. & Armayor, N. C. (2007) Getting started with qualitative research: developing a research proposal. *Nurse Researcher* 14(3) 60-73

Waksler, F. (1991) Studying children: phenomenological insights. In Waksler, F. (Ed). *Studying the social worlds of children.* Falmer Press: London

Wall, C., Glenn, S., Mitchinson, S. & Poole, H. (2005) Using a reflective diary to develop bracketing skills during a phenomenological investigation. *Nurse Researcher* 11(4) 20-28
Wang, C. C. & Pies, C. A. (2004) Family, maternal, and child health through photovoice. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 8(2) 95-101

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale [WEMWBS] (2006) © *NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh.* Available from: http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/1467.aspx Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Waters, A. L. (2008) An ethnography of a children's renal unit: Experiences of children and young people with long-term renal illness. *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 17(23) 3103-14

Waterman, A.S. (1993) Two conceptions of happiness: Contrasts of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 64(4) 678-691

Weiss, C. H. (1979) The many meanings of research utilization. *Public Administration Review* 39(5) 426-431

Welsh Assembly Government (2011) *2011 Children and young people's wellbeing monitor for Wales.* Welsh Assembly Government Social Research: Cardiff. Available from: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/110328cypmonitoren.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Werner, E. E. & Smith, R. S. (1982) *Vulnerable but invincible: A study of resilient children.* McGraw-Hill: New York

White, S. (2008) *But what is wellbeing? A framework for analysis in social and development policy and practice.* Available from: http://info.brad.ac.uk/acad/bcid/research/Regeneration/Conference_papers/Sarah_White_Wellbeing.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

White, S. (2010) Analysing wellbeing: A framework for development practice. *Development in Practice* 20(2) 158-172

Whitehead, M. (1989) *Swimming upstream: Trends and prospects in education for health.* King's Fund Institute: London

Whitehead, T. L. (2005) *Basic classical ethnographic research methods.* Ethnographically Informed Community and Cultural Assessment Research Systems (EICCARS) Working Paper Series. Available at: http://www.cusag.umd.edu/documents/WorkingPapers/ClassicalEthnoMethods.pdf Accessed on 3rd September 2011

Whiting, L. (2008) Semi-structured interviews: guidance for novice researchers. *Nursing Standard* 22(23) 35-40

Whiting, L. (2009) Involving children in research. *Paediatric Nursing* 21(5) 32-36
Wolcott, H. (1980) How to look like an anthropologist without really being one. *Practising Anthropology* 3(2) 56-59

Wolcott, H. F. (1994) *Transforming qualitative data: description, analysis and interpretation.* Sage: Newbury Park, CA

Wong, D. L., Hockenberry-Eaton, M., Wilson, D., Winkelstein, M. L. & Ahmann, E. (1999) *Whaley & Wong's Nursing care of infants and children.* 6th Ed. Mosby: St. Louis

World Health Organization (1948) *Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61*

*States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.* Available from: http://www.who.int/suggestions/faq/en/index.html Accessed on 3rd September 2011

World Health Organization (1984) *Health promotion. A discussion document on the concept and principles*. World Health Organization: Copenhagen

World Health Organization (2005) *The European health report 2005. Public health action for healthier children and populations. Executive summary*. WHO: Copenhagen

Yin, R. K. (2002) *Case study research, design and methods*. Sage: Newbury Park, California

Zauszniewski, J. A., Chung, C., Chang, H. J. & Krafcik, K. (2002)  Predictors of resourcefulness in school-aged children. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 23(4) 385-401