PARENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

By

Bianca van der Walt

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Artium in Counselling Psychology to be awarded at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

April 2015

Supervisor: Mrs. L. Currin

Co-supervisor: Ms. A. Sandison
Acknowledgments

Special thanks and acknowledgements are extended to the following individuals who, through their encouragement, guidance and support, each contributed in a meaningful way to the completion of this study:

My supervisors, Lisa Currin and Alida Sandison for their advice during the completion of this study.

Brenda McEwan, for her unfailing support and enthusiasm.

Deidre Karfor, for her loyalty and support throughout this period.

Finally, a special thank you to the participants of this study for their willingness to take part in this study.
**Table of Contents**

Acknowledgements i
Table of Contents ii
Abstract ix

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview of Chapter 1
Motivation for the Study 1
Discipline 2
Ecological Systems Theory and Discipline 3
Aims and Objectives of the Study 4
Chapter Outline 4
Conclusion 5

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

Overview of Chapter 6
Perceptions of Discipline 6
Discipline and Cultural Beliefs 6
The Need for Discipline in Development 7
Methods of Discipline 8
Goals for Effective Parenting 9
Inductive vs Coercive Discipline Methods 11
Inductive discipline methods 11
  Time out 11
  Avoiding 12
  Distracting 12
PARENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Involve the child
Noticing good behaviour
Incentive charts
Marble Jar
Time In
Treasure Chest

Coercive Discipline Methods and Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment in South Africa

Developmental Considerations

Late toddlers (2 to 3 years)
Preschool children (3 to 5 years)

Influences on Parenting Methods

Conclusion

CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Overview of Chapter

Overview of the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem and Chronosystem

The Microsystem

Terminology of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of the microsystem

Setting
Roles
Dyad
Primary Dyad
Observational dyad
Joint activity dyad
Reciprocity
Balance of Power
PARENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Second Order Effect 24
Dynamics within the microsystem that influence discipline with young children 24
  Children’s characteristics 24
  Age 25
  Gender 26
  Structure of the family in South Africa 26
  Divorce and family conflict 27
  Parents’ characteristics and Parenting Styles 28

The Mesosystem 29
Terminology of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of the mesosystem 29
  Multisetting participation 29
  Ecological transition 29
  Primary link 29
  Supplementary links 30
  Indirect linkage 30
  Second order network 30
  Intersetting communications 30
  Intersetting knowledge 30
  Setting transition 30
  Solitary transition 30
  Solitary link 30
  Dual link 30
  Multiply 31

Dynamics within the mesosystem that influences discipline with young children 31
  Spousal Support 31
  Extended family and parents’ own experience of discipline 31
  Neighbourhood 32
  School 33
PARENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

The Exosystem 34

Dynamics within the exosystem that influence discipline with young children 34

Perceived pressures on parenting 34

Media 34

The Macrosystem 36

Dynamics within the macrosystem that influence discipline with young children 36

Socioeconomic Status 36

Culture 37

Legislation about corporal punishment in South Africa 38

The Chronosystem 38

Dynamics within the chronosystem that influence discipline with young children 38

Differences in Parenting Views over Time 38

Conclusion 39

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Overview of Chapter 40

Aims and Objectives of the Study 40

Research Methodology 40

Research Design 40

Validity and Reliability of the Research 41

Credibility 42

Triangulation 42

Iterative questioning 42

Thick description of the phenomenon being studied 42

Examination of previous research findings 43

Transferability 43
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Chapter 51
Sample and Interview Procedure 51
Overview of Themes and Subthemes 52

Question 1: Please describe your personal perception of disciplining children aged between 2 to 5 years 53

- The importance of discipline 54
- The establishment of boundaries at an early age 54

Question 2: Please describe what discipline methods you use with your own child aged between 2 to 5 years of age? 55

- Coercive methods of discipline 56
- Inductive methods of discipline 57
Question 3: Please tell me, based on your personal experience, what has influenced the discipline methods you use with your child of this age?

Microsystemic factors that influence discipline

- Age of the child
- Children’s behaviour
- Gender
- Parenting styles
- Family values

Mesosystemic factors that influence discipline

- Spousal support
- Extended family and parents’ own experience of discipline
- Neighbourhood
- School and peer group

Exosystemic factors that influence discipline

- Pressures on parenting
- Media

Macrosystemic factors that influence discipline

- Culture and Religion
- Legislation about corporal punishment in South Africa

Chronosystem factors that influence discipline
PARENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Differences in parenting over time 71

Media 72

Conclusion 72

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of Chapter 74

Review of the Aims and Methodology of the Study 74

Findings and Conclusions 74

Parents’ Perceptions about discipline 74

Discipline Methods Used with Young Children 75

Influences of Discipline 76

Microsystem 76

Mesosystem 78

Exosystem 78

Macrosystem 79

Chronosystem 80

Strengths and Limitations of the Study 80

Strengths of the Study 80

Limitations of the Study 81

Recommendations for Future Research 81

Conclusion 82

REFERENCE LIST

Reference List 83
PARENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

APPENDIX A: Interview Schedule 87
APPENDIX B: Letter to Participants 88
APPENDIX C: Information and Informed Consent 89
APPENDIX D: Audio Recordings 92

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Themes and Subthemes Obtained from the Data 52
Figure A: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development 21
Abstract

Little research is available in South Africa regarding discipline with young children in families. In order to understand the various influences acting upon discipline within a family, it is important to understand the influences acting upon the family system. The current research proposes to understand parents’ perceptions of disciplining children in the age range of 2 to 5 years, the methods they use and the factors they perceive as influencing their methods of discipline. The proposed study will make use of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development as the guiding theoretical framework in exploring and describing this research area. The study will use semi-structured interviews with parents to obtain qualitative data. The data obtained from the participants will be analysed by using content analysis.

KEYWORDS: Discipline methods, influences, perceptions, qualitative research, young children.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview of Chapter

This chapter introduces the study and provides a general orientation to the reader. It does so by discussing the motivation for the present study. Thereafter a theoretical understanding of discipline will be provided, as well as an introduction to Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development and discipline. An outline of the aims of the study will then be given, as well as an outline of the chapters that form the framework of the current study.

Motivation for the Study

With the passage of time, each era has held an opinion about youth and their influence on society. The following quote demonstrates typical concerns that one often hears about today’s youth, although it was written between 470-399BC. Socrates (470 – 399 BC) once wrote:

The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannise their teachers (Youth, n.d., para.1).

The above quote suggests that through the ages society assumes that the developing youth of the nation is ill equipped to maintain the social norms of the time. Concerns such as Socrates’s are not uncommon within our society today. Social norms and expectations are important systems of influence. They surround and shape family experiences and parenting behaviours (Halpenny, Nixon & Watson, 2010), and may include community and cultural values, and the associated social and legal policies in which they are embedded. It is important to understand how these dynamics change over time and how these changes affect the family as a whole, including the methods of discipline used within the home.

The importance of discipline has been widely documented in many countries. Research conducted in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australia has focused on
the links between parenting styles, parental discipline responses, children’s behaviour and children’s psychological well being (Halpenny et al., 2010). However, Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather and Richter (2004) stated that little information is available concerning parents’ attitudes towards discipline and the various discipline methods used in South Africa. Dawes et al. (2004) highlighted the need for research to be conducted in order to better understand discipline in the context of the family.

**Discipline**

Authors describe discipline and punishment in different ways. The researcher will identify a few definitions below in order to demonstrate various understandings of what discipline is. Firstly, Nieman and Shea (2004) asserted that the word discipline means to impart knowledge and skill, ultimately to teach. Morris and Myton (1986, as cited in Campbell, 1992) added that discipline is the ability to regulate one’s own behaviour. According to these authors, discipline aids the self-direction needed by children to interact effectively with others and within societal institutions. Regardless of whether one focuses on teaching knowledge and skills, or self-regulation, discipline should help a child to move from an external locus of control to an internal locus of control. This process helps a child to consider others and develop an appropriate manner for interacting with the world outside the family. Cloud and Townsend (1992) described discipline as an external boundary, designed to develop internal boundaries in individuals. Lessons learnt from discipline should aid in the implementation of better decision making in the future, therefore leading to personal growth.

Cloud and Townsend (1992) described punishment as a payment for wrong doing. They further explained that punishment and discipline have different relationships to time, where punishment looks back and focuses on wrong doing, discipline is seen as looking forward and creates learning opportunities for the future. In this way, discipline is seen as providing learning opportunities for children to monitor their own behaviour.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Discipline is often confused with punishment. Halpenny et al. (2010) described various discipline methods in two specific categories, namely inductive and coercive discipline. Halpenny et al. (2010) explained that inductive discipline methods include non-aggressive discipline methods, such as reasoning or discussing an issue with a child, using effective time out methods or grounding a child. Examples of coercive discipline, or punishment, were seen as more aggressive methods of discipline, and include methods such as yelling, name calling, insulting a child, corporal punishment or spanking, and more severe forms of physical punishment (Halpenny et al., 2010).

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development and Discipline

To understand a child’s behaviour, it is important that behaviour is not seen as isolated acts, but as reciprocal transactions with others in their lives (Brendtro, 2006). In the family, a parent influences the child, but the child also influences the parent. Once a child enters school, the teacher impacts the child but the child also impacts the teacher. Bronfenbrenner (1991, as cited in Brendtro, 2006, p.1) stated that:

In order to develop - intellectually, emotionally, socially and morally – a child requires participation in progressively more complex reciprocal activity, on a regular basis over an extended period in the child’s life, with one or more persons with whom the child develops a strong, mutual, irrational, emotional attachment and who is committed to the child’s well-being and development, preferably for life.

Attachment and reciprocal interaction is thus highlighted as pivotal to Bronfenbrenner’s theory. Therefore, within the context of the present study, discipline is explored, in the context of one surrounding influences that impact it.

These influences can be understood through 5 key circles of influence that surround each child. The most powerful circles make up the immediate life space of family, school and peer groups (Phelan, 2004, as cited in Brendtro, 2006). Furthermore, some children are involved in significant neighbourhood connections such as church, youth clubs and formal or informal
mentoring. Surrounding these circles of influence are broader cultural, economic and political influences. A child’s behaviour reflects transactions within their immediate circles of influence. Ideally, the family, school and peer groups all work in harmony to provide positive support and instil solid values. When these circles of influence operate in ways that conflict, it causes distress in children. In turn, Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that effective parenting roles within the family depend on role demands, stresses and supports from other settings, which all impact discipline practices used with children.

**Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The primary aim of the research was to explore and describe the perceptions of parents regarding discipline with their children in the 2 to 5 year age group. The objectives identified to meet this aim include:

1. To explore and describe the perceptions of parents about disciplining children.
2. To explore and describe the discipline methods that parents use with their children.
3. To explore and describe the perceptions parents have about the influences on the methods of discipline they use with their children.

**Chapter Outline**

This study is presented in 6 chapters. The structure of these chapters is as follows:

Chapter 1 provides a motivation and general orientation to the study.

Chapter 2 provides a review of research regarding discipline with young children.

Chapter 3 outlines Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development and specifically focuses on the influences of discipline within each sphere.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the research design and methodology that was used in this study.

Chapter 5 reports and discusses the findings of the current study.
Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of the study, along with the strengths and limitations of the research, and recommendations for future research.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided an outline for the current study. The motivation of the study, along with the theoretical understanding of discipline was discussed and introduction to the Ecological System Theory was provided. In addition, the outline of the aims, including the outline of the chapters that form the framework of the current study was also presented. The following chapter will be discuss the theoretical framework of discipline in detail.
Chapter 2: Discipline

Overview of Chapter

This chapter will address parents’ perceptions of discipline, various discipline methods used by parents and perceived influences that they feel influence the discipline process.

Perceptions of Discipline

Families set the stage for transmitting culture, values, attitudes, rules, and discipline to children. Children adopt family value systems, norms, and specific patterns of behaviour in various situations, and perform tasks in the same ways. Kersey (1990, as cited in Campbell, 1992) asserted that it is the responsibility of the adult family members to socialise children into society. Family socialising tasks include disciplining, solving problems, and reinforcing acceptable social behaviour. In order for important developmental milestones to be achieved, consistent discipline is needed to be practised by parents (Campbell, 1992).

However, Kersey (1990, as cited in Campbell, 1992) adds that many parents feel that they are not fully equipped with basic knowledge about disciplinary practices and sometimes question the type of discipline methods that they use in their family and when to employ them. Parents who understand and integrate contemporary culture, current child developmental theories, and knowledge of maturation processes are better able to develop realistic expectations and discipline methods and recognise the effect of their own child's uniqueness on parenting.

Discipline and Cultural Beliefs

If parents are to impart valuable understanding of their culture, values, attitudes and rules, it is important to understand the relationship between cultural beliefs and chosen methods of discipline. Chang et al. (2010) stated that cultures differ in the amount of value they place on different behaviours expected from children. That said, parents will engage in discipline
methods that will promote expected behaviours within that culture. Cultures also differ in their evaluations of what parenting practises are considered to be either physically or emotionally helpful or harmful. For instance, parents in countries with strong collectivist orientations, such as China, were found to emphasise the importance of behavioural inhibition and subjugation of individual wants for the good of the family. In contrast, parents from Western, individualist cultures, typically emphasise the importance of individual assertiveness and independence.

Given these differences, if specific discipline methods are accepted within a culture and are normative processes, children are less likely to question their parents’ reasons for the use of specific methods Chang et al. (2010). However, if a child believes that the discipline that they receive is not in line of that of their peers, they will reject the methods used and therefore will fail to internalise the parents’ intended disciplinary message. For this reason, similar discipline methods have different effects on children in different cultures (Chang et al., 2010).

Finally, Chang et al. (2010) found that in countries such as China and India, the use of authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices are related to relative differences in their valuing of the goals of social emotional development and honour of the family. When assessing the use of corporal punishment in various countries, Ember and Ember (2005, as cited in Chang et al., 2010, p. 488) stated that corporal punishment is most likely used among societies high in social stratification, political integration, long term use of an alien currency, undemocratic political decision making, and a culture of violence.

The Need for Discipline in Development

Effective discipline has been recognised as a tool for raising secure, mature, and happy individuals (Campbell, 1992). Evans, Savage and Socolar (2007, as cited in Campbell, 1992)
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

stated that children learn social parameters through discipline, and need the security of clearly stated rules before they can explore their own personal freedom. They further explained that disciplinary practices can influence important developmental outcomes such as healthy emotional development, relationship building, and the ability to modulate their own behaviour and to know right from wrong within the laws of society. Healthy discipline methods have found to also enhance other developmental outcomes such as self esteem, learning natural consequence of their actions and the development of healthy problem solving skills (Curwin & Mendler, 1990, as cited in Campbell, 1992).

Viktor Frankl (1946, p.45, as cited in Creed and Salvesen, 2010) wrote, “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom”. This quote encapsulates Cloud and Townsend’s (1992) beliefs that by teaching children discipline, they are given a gift of great value. By teaching responsibility and the delay in gratification in the early years of life, children learn autonomy in order to better prepare themselves for the tasks of adulthood.

Methods of Discipline

There are two categories of discipline methods, namely inductive and coercive (Halpenny et al., 2010). Creighton, Ghate, Hazel, Field and Finch (2001) stated that 70% of parents living in Britain believe in using inductive discipline methods, such as praise and encouragement, when disciplining their children. About 40% of parents believe it is not acceptable to spank a child and about 50% find it sometimes necessary, if for instance, children are engaging in dangerous behaviour. In an Irish study (Halpenny et al., 2010) it was found that 50% of parents reported using inductive discipline methods with their children, such as discussing an issue with their children or using time out, as opposed to corporal punishment or spanking. In a South African context, 43% of parents with children under the
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

age of 18 use inductive methods, while 57% use corporal punishment or spanking. It is reported that 33% use severe physical punishment, for instance, being hit with a belt or stick (Dawes et al., 2004).

Goals for Effective Parenting

Nieman and Shea (2004), Campbell (1992), and Cloud and Townsend (1992) agree that part of parenting involves the task of raising children and providing them with the necessary developmental skills and emotional care to further their physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. Children do best when parents are warm and supportive, spend generous amounts of time with their children, monitor their children’s behaviour, trust their children to follow rules, encourage open communication, and react to misbehaviour with discussion rather than harsh punishment (Amato & Fowler, 2002). Kaye (1986, as cited in Campbell, 1992) acknowledged that disciplining children is one of the most important yet difficult responsibilities of parenting, yet many parents do not receive guidance or assistance with parenting skills in either formal or informal settings.

Campbell (1992) explained that the success of discipline depends on the child feeling valued as a person and the child’s perception of parental attitudes. Kersey (1990, as cited in Campbell, 1992) added that coercive discipline methods destroys the bond of trust and mutual respect between parent and child, and as such urged parents to use inductive parenting techniques. To have a positive influence, discipline should instil a sense of greater trust between the child and the parent. Kersey further explained that discipline needs to be given by an adult with an affective bond with the child. Furthermore it needs to be consistent, close to the behaviour needing change, perceived as ‘fair’ by the child, developmentally appropriate, and with the aim of personal growth for the child. Positive discipline, or inductive discipline, is about teaching and guiding children and should not be seen as forcing
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

them to ‘obey’. As with all other interventions aimed at pointing out inappropriate behaviour, the child should always know that the parent loves and supports them. Trust between the parent and child should be maintained and constantly built upon.

One of the major obstacles to achieving these goals is inconsistency, as this confuses children, regardless of their developmental age. It can be particularly hard for parents to be consistent role models. Telling children to “Do as I say, but not as I do” does not achieve effective discipline. Parental disagreements about child rearing techniques, as well as cultural differences between parents, can result in inconsistent disciplining methods (Nieman & Shea, 2004).

Creed and Salvesen (2010), as well as Nieman and Shea (2004) stressed the importance of age appropriate discipline. Creed and Selvesen (2010) made the following suggestions on how to approach discipline:

1. Identify that a particular behaviour needs to change.
2. Explain and define boundaries to the child as it is important that they understand and are able to conceptualise boundaries set out in a family.
3. Be aware that boundaries with children need to be clear, predictable and age appropriate.
4. Focus on the behaviour at hand and set realistic and achievable demands for the child.
5. The parent should be aware of their own personal characteristics that they contribute to the discipline process, such as body language and tone of voice. It is important to be clear and decisive when setting boundaries, without entering controlling behaviour.
6. Understand differences in a child’s behaviour, for instance, the difference between defiance, an accident and ignorance.
7. Be clear and concise, without repeating requests multiple times.
8. Clarify, teach and model more appropriate or desired behaviour.
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

9. Never withhold affection from a child. This builds love and unity in the relationship between a parent and child. Children need to know that although they are being disciplined, they are loved and accepted at all times.

10. Empathise with the child and try and reflect their emotional experience of the situation.

11. Be consistent. This provides security and an opportunity for the child to internalise the values being taught. Inconsistency causes confusion and frustration in a child.

Inductive vs Coercive Discipline Methods

Discipline methods are broken into two categories, inductive and coercive discipline methods. Inductive methods include methods such as reasoning with a child, removing privileges and time out, whereas coercive methods of discipline include methods such as corporal punishment or spanking, name calling, threatening and shouting (Halpenny et al., 2010).

Inductive discipline methods

Inductive discipline methods are commonly used in disciplining children, such as reasoning or discussing an issue with a child. Various inductive methods of discipline will be discussed below, including measures that can aid in children’s understanding of discipline.

Time out. Time out is one of the most effective disciplinary methods used with young children, aged 2 years through primary school years. The time out strategy is effective because it keeps the child from receiving attention that may inadvertently reinforce inappropriate behaviour (Nieman and Shea, 2004). Tiedmarsh (2000, as cited in Creed and Salvesen) explained that in order for time out to be effective, it should take place away from stimulated areas, such as a room without toys and a television set, and should never be done in a child’s bedroom, as this is the child’s safe space.
CHaPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

Nieman and Shea (2004) suggested further steps to help make time out effective:

1. Introduce time out as a discipline strategy with a child before they are 24 months old.
2. Prepare the child by helping them to understand how the discipline is associated with the inappropriate behaviour.
3. The length of time for time out should be 1 minute per year of the child, where it’s not exceeding 5 minutes.
4. Once a child is in time out, they should remain in time out, without conversation with the parent for the allocated time. This time should not be used to ‘teach’ or ‘preach’ to the child and there should be no communication during the allocated time out period.
5. Once the time out period is over, it is important for the parent to ensure that the child understands why they were in time out and help them understand the consequences of their inappropriate behaviour.
6. When the time out period is over, the child should be encouraged to move onto a new activity, without making references to the inappropriate behaviour.

Avoiding. If a child consistently acts out in particular situations, Tiedmarsh (2000, as cited in Creed and Salvesen) suggested avoiding those specific situations for a period of time, and helping the child to learn the necessary skills for them to cope with those particular situations. This method is most effective with toddlers.

Distracting. Similar to the above suggestion, this method should be used if a child is sensitive to particular situations and is prone to acting out, Tiedmarsh (2000, as cited in Creed and Salvesen) also suggests redirecting the child from the situation at hand. This method is also most effective with toddlers.

Involve the child. By involving the child in the discipline process, it helps them to understand that inappropriate behaviour has consequences. Involvement should be used with
children over the age of 4. A parent can negotiate with their child about rewards and consequences for various types of behaviour. This facilitates the child understanding that they are responsible for their own actions and by knowing the consequences, allows the child to make their own choices (Tiedmarsh, 2000, as cited in Creed and Salvesen).

**Noticing good behaviour.** Tiedmarsh (2000, as cited in Creed and Salvesen) stated that parents should highlight good behaviour and encourage their child in their efforts to listen, as this helps them gain confidence in their own abilities and helps them to trust their own judgment.

**Incentive charts.** Creed and Salvesen (2010) suggested that making an incentive chart that a child would find interesting, saying that this helps motivate a child, creates a positive learning experience and also helps them to learn how to regulate their own behaviour.

**Marble Jar.** This concept is similar to using an incentive chart. Two jars are half filled with marbles and a smiley face is drawn on the one and a frown face on the other. Marbles are transferred from one jar to another as a reward for positive behaviour but also consequences for negative behaviour. It is recommended that a parent discuss the rewards and consequences for when the jars are filled to the top with marbles. This is seen as a positive motivator as it includes the child in the discipline process, has a visual dynamic, and helps the child monitor and understand their own behaviour (Creed and Salvesen, 2010).

**Time In.** This includes setting time aside for a parent to have quality, alone time with their child. This technique helps with emotional bonding between the parent and child and facilitates a nurturing environment. It also provides an opportunity for a parent to model behaviour for their child, where the child can learn desired family belief systems and cultural values (Tiedmarsh, 2000, as cited in Creed and Salvesen).
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

**Treasure Chest.** This is a positive reinforcement measure that helps reward a child’s positive behaviour. A box is decorated with a variety of decorations that the child finds motivating. They then choose different reinforcers to put into the box and discuss reward procedures with the parent. When a child is rewarded, they then choose a ‘prize’ from the box, therefore reinforcing positive behaviour (Creed & Salvesen, 2010).

**Coercive Discipline Methods and Corporal Punishment**

Coercive discipline methods are also commonly used by parents. These methods include threatening, spanking, name calling, shouting, withdrawal of affection and physical punishment, to name a few. In a study conducted by Halpenny et al. (2010) found that shouting, yelling or swearing at a child was the most common coercive discipline methods used in this category. Withdrawing affection was the least common method used in this category. Halpenny et al. (2012) further found that approximately 25% of their participants reported using physical punishment with their child in the past year. The most common forms of corporal punishment reported were slapping a child on the bottom or on the hands, legs or arms, and shaking, grabbing or pushing a child. Corporal punishment or spanking was indicated to be used most often with children between the ages of 2 and 9.

Halpenny et al. (2010) discovered a relationship between parenting behaviours and child behaviour, with increased use of corporal punishment with participants whose children presented with behaviour difficulties such as hyperactivity or behaviours associated with conduct disorder.

Creighton et al. (2001) stated that statistics from Britain indicate that attitudes towards discipline were closely linked with behaviours. Parents who thought physical punishment was acceptable were five times more likely to report having used it with their own child in the past year, than those who did not find it acceptable. However, this means there is still a
substantial percentage of parents who use physical punishment despite the fact that they disapproved of it in principle.

The use of corporal punishment in South Africa. The influence of parenting on childhood development has been widely researched in many countries. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted in South Africa. One aspect that has been researched is the use of coercive discipline methods, such as spanking, with young children in a family context. Dawes et al. (2004) conducted a study that included the use of spanking and found that the line between the physical punishment of children and the physical abuse of children is unclear. They further explained that legislation in South Africa is not clear enough regarding the boundaries of discipline and that there is no law that explicitly describes regulations relating to discipline practices in South Africa. This ambiguity has now been addressed in the Children’s Act No.38 of 2005.

The Children’s Act No.38 of 2005 (Government Gazette, 2010, p.10) states that abuse, in relation to a child, means any form of harm or ill treatment deliberately inflicted on a child, and includes:

1. Assaulting a child or inflicting any other form of deliberate injury to a child.
2. Sexually abusing a child or allowing a child to be sexually abused.
3. Bullying by another child.
4. A labour practice that exploits a child.
5. Exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child psychologically or emotionally.

The above law protects children from abuse and corporal punishment but very little information is available in South Africa to assist parents with appropriate methods of discipline. Dawes et al. (2004) stated that when looking at the prevalence of spanking in a
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

South African context, the common age at which children are spanked was 3 years of age, while the age of children who are hit with objects was 4 years of age.

Dawes et al. (2004) stressed that attitudes towards child rearing underlie the use of different discipline techniques. It is important that attitudes are understood if interventions to promote age appropriate discipline methods are to be developed. Because there is little available research in South Africa explaining how discipline is used with young children within the family, the proposed study aims to understand parents’ perceptions of discipline, what discipline methods are currently used with young children, and the influences that affect discipline within a family context. By understanding the above mentioned areas, effective future interventions can be developed in order to assist South African families with the use of appropriate discipline methods with young children.

Developmental Considerations

As this study focuses on the discipline of children in the 2 to 5 year age group, it is important to understand the development of children in this age group, in order to establish the difference between age appropriate and age inappropriate behaviour for this age group. Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages of development can be used to explain the development of children between the ages of 2 to 5 years, namely, through the stages of Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt (2-3 years old) and Initiative vs Guilt (3-5 years old). These stage are to be viewed to understand the developmental skills that children learn, such as autonomy, and to understand normal behaviour that is often seen in these stages as age appropriate, such as frustration and tantrums. The understanding of age appropriate behaviour is important to help set out age appropriate expectations and discipline methods. Information suggested by Nieman and Shea (2004) on ways of approaching discipline within the age range specified in the study, is also included.
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

**Late toddlers (2 to 3 years).** Erikson (1963, as cited in Cockcroft et al., 2002) explained that in the second year of development, children progress through the development stage of Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt (2-3 years old). Because children are still largely dependent on their care givers at this stage, they may experience shame and doubt about their own autonomy. At this stage, children seek out achieving activities that require autonomous action such as eating by themselves, dressing and potty training.

As children go through this stage, they experience frustration, as they begin to realise their own limitations. This frustration may be exhibited in behavioural outbursts or temper tantrums. This behaviour does not necessarily express anger or wilful defiance. Nieman and Shea (2004) encourage parents to have empathy for their children by understanding the origins of certain outbursts. It is vitally important for parents to understand their child’s pattern of reactions in order to understand if an outburst is a result of developmental frustration or defiance, in order to intercede with appropriate discipline methods. Nieman and Shea (2004) highlight that communication is a key component in helping a child deal with frustration and in helping a child overcome and learn how to cope with various situations.

**Preschool children (3 to 5 years).** Erikson (1963, cited in Cockcroft et al., 2002) explained that the following stage, Intitiative vs Guilt, involves children seeking out opportunities to implement the skills learnt in the previous stage and to master specific skills. At this stage, most children are able to accept reality and limitations, act in ways to obtain others’ approval, and are self-reliant for their immediate needs. However, they have not yet internalised many rules and struggle to engage effective problem solving skills, as these skill develops at a later stage of development. Children require good behavioural models after which to pattern their own behaviour and start watching the people in their environment in
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

order to model how they should behave. Consistency should apply not only in the rules and actions of the primary caregiver, but in other adults who care for the child.

Nieman and Shea (2004) recommend that effective discipline methods used at this stage include time out and redirection. Time out is effective for this age group as children have gained some sense of autonomy but also start challenging their own boundaries; time out helps them to develop more complex skills and independence. Children are also ready to start learning social boundaries and how to modify their own behaviour. Redirection or small consequences related to and immediately following the misbehaviour are discipline methods that can be used. Furthermore, approval and praise are the most powerful motivators for good behaviour (Nieman & Shea, 2004).

Influences on Parenting Methods

Chang et al. (2010) indicate that family values and culture strongly influences the methods used to discipline children. Parents are more likely to choose methods that are normative in their culture, that will reinforce the expected behaviour and values upheld by the culture. Discipline decisions are also influenced by a variety dynamics, such as the parents’ personality, the social contextual characteristics of the family, and the child’s characteristics (Dekovic, Junger, Van Aken, Van Aken & Verhoeven, 2007).

Halpenny et al. (2010) found that over 75% of parents believed that their personal work responsibilities, in conjunction with perceived partner support and financial security, impacted substantially on raising their children. Conflict between work, social, and family pressures have been found to effect parents’ attitudes toward parenting. McBride (1985, as cited in Campbell, 1992) found that many parents make the decision to become a parent with little understanding of the financial and personal commitment involved. The decision to have children is often based on the perceived psychological enjoyment of parenting without a full
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

realisation of the multiple demands. Campbell (1992), found that 33% of the fathers felt financial pressures in the role of the provider and either held two jobs or worked overtime. Some middle class fathers felt overworked and overburdened with their jobs and parenting responsibilities, the stress associated with increased financial demands, influences discipline used with the home (Gilliss, Highley, Roberts, & Martinson, 1989, as cited in Campbell, 1992).

Conclusion

Although, discipline has been well researched on a global level, little is known about discipline in South Africa (Halpenny, et al., 2010). Discipline is seen as important in a child’s life in order to facilitate effective personal growth in areas such as learning boundaries, developing autonomy, understanding and abiding by social norms within their culture, the establishment of healthy relationships and also healthy emotional development (Campbell 1992; Chang et al., 2010; Friedman, 1986, as cited in Campbell, 1992). These skills play an important part in children developing into secure, mature and happy adults (Friedman, 1986, as cited in Campbell, 1992). Discipline should be conducted by a trusted care giver, preferably a parent. The process of discipline should instil trust between the parent and child and should be seen as a guidance process in the child’s life. It is recommended that age appropriate, inductive methods of discipline be used and that focus should be paid on consistency in discipline (Creed & Salvesen, 2010; Kersey, 1990, as cited in Campbell, 1992).

There are various influences that act upon a family and influence the discipline methods used with children. Some influences include the family’s culture, socioeconomic status, financial demands placed on the family, the neighbourhood that that they live in and the
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REVIEW: DISCIPLINE

challenges of dual roles such as being a working parent. Better understanding of these influences will be addressed by discussing these influences in depth, in the following chapter.
Chapter 3: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development

Overview of Chapter

Bronfenbrenner (1979) studied factors that contribute to behavioural concerns regarding children. For the purposes of this study, Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development will be used in order to gain a holistic understanding of the influences that impact discipline.

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development is a theory that was designed to understand the different spheres of influence that impact human development. The spheres include the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem. This chapter will highlight the various influences of discipline within each sphere. Each of these spheres will now be discussed.

Figure A: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development (p316, Cockcroft et al., 2002)
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Microsystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained that the microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing individual in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics. It involves the immediate situation that directly affects the individual and the complex relations between the individual and important figures such as parents, siblings, friends, classmates and teachers. The microsystem is assembled from three basic elements: the activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the individual.

A key point to note is that the relevant features of any environment include not only its objective properties but also the way in which these properties are perceived by the individuals in that environment. How the individual perceives their immediate environment is of great importance (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Terminology of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of the microsystem. The following terminology will be discussed in order to understand various dynamics that occur within the microsystem: setting, roles, dyads, primary dyads, observational dyad, joint activity dyad, reciprocity, balance of power, second order effect.

Setting. A setting is explained as being a place where individuals can readily engage in face to face interaction such as at home, school and playground (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Roles. A role is a set of activities and relations expected of an individual occupying a particular position in society and of others in relation to that individual. Roles are usually identified by the labels used to designate various social positions in a culture. These are typically differentiated by age, sex, kinship relation, occupation, social status, ethnicity and religion. Associated with roles, are role expectations about how the holder of the position is to act and how others are to act towards them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**Dyad.** A dyad is characterised by reciprocal relations, where the participants are able to mutually affect the nature of interaction to the extent that if one member of the pair undergoes a process of development, the other member does as well. The dyad is important for two reasons, it constitutes a critical context for development and it serves as the basic building block of the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Primary Dyad.** A primary dyad is one that continues to exist phenomenologically for both participants even when they are not together. The two participants experience strong emotional feelings and continue to influence one another’s behaviour even when apart, for example, a parent and child. A child is more likely to acquire skills, knowledge and values from a person with whom a primary dyad has been established (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Observational dyad.** An observational dyad occurs when one participant pays close and sustained attention to the activity of another, who in turn, acknowledges the interest being shown. An example of this can be seen where a child observes a parent engaging in an activity, such as making a snack for them, while making occasional comments to the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Joint activity dyad.** A joint activity dyad occurs where two individuals perceive themselves as doing something together. This process presents favourable conditions for a child to learn activities from the individual they are interacting with. An example of this would include storytelling, where a parent reads to a child, and the child answers questions asked by the parent (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Reciprocity.** Reciprocity occurs in any dyadic relation where one individual is influenced by another. For instance, as a child interacts with their parent, the child is influenced by their parent’s behaviour and vice versa. During this process, children develop by learning interactive skills and concepts of interdependence. It is for this reason that dyadic interaction,
specifically joint dyad relationships are incredibly influential in a child’s life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Balance of Power.** Although dyadic processes are reciprocal, one member may be more influential during interactions. For children, participation in dyadic interaction provides the opportunity for learning, both to conceptualise and to cope with differential power relations. This is generally seen where a parent is more influential in their child’s life, therefore giving the child an opportunity to learn from them. The balance of power ultimately shifts towards the child, as learning takes place (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Second Order Effect.** When a primary dyad is influenced by a third party or individual, it is known as a second order effect. This occurs when a third individual is present and alters the behaviour of the individuals in the primary dyad. This can be seen where the presence of one parent alters the disciplinary behaviour of the other parent therefore creating the second order effect. An example of this is when a parent refrains from using a particular discipline method, such as spanking, as they know that their partner will disagree with the method of discipline (Perke, 1978, as cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Dynamics within the microsystem that influence discipline with young children.** Various influences that affect discipline, that occur within the microsystem, are addressed here to better understand discipline with young children. The following influences will be discussed: Children’s characteristics, structure of families in South Africa, divorce, parents’ characteristics and parenting styles.

**Children’s characteristics.** Discipline methods used by parents may be mediated by attributions regarding a child’s behaviour and perceptions of a child’s characteristics (Arbuckle, Baradan, Lamb, Mackinnon & VOLLING, 1992, as cited in Halpenny et al., 2010). Seventy five percent of mothers reported that their attitudes towards coercive discipline
methods were largely attributed to their child’s reaction to a discipline method or their child’s characteristics (Halpenny et al, 2010). This may be seen in research findings that children who are viewed as defiant or aggressive experience higher frequency of coercive methods of discipline, along with children who have low impulse control and engage in dangerous activities (Miller, 1995, as cited in Halpenny et al., 2010).

Forster (2001, as cited in Halpenny et al., 2010) described children and parents as affecting each other’s behaviour in a transactional manner. Within this transaction a child is disciplined for behaviour that their parents deem inappropriate and the child responds by accepting the discipline. If, however, the child rejects the discipline, it may lead to an increased response in discipline from the parents. If this cycle repeats itself, an increase in negative behaviour from the child is also seen, leading to a breakdown in discipline. Because of the transactional nature, it is important to understand the role of both individuals when addressing discipline methods used with children.

Age. Miller (1995, as cited in Halpenny, 2010) stated that the age of a child influences the discipline process. He explained that younger children are more likely to experience more incidents of coercive discipline than older children, however, there is also evidence that indicates that older children are more likely to experience more severe coercive discipline than younger children. In England and North America, parental use of spanking is reported as most often used among children of toddler and preschool age (Halpenny et al., 2010). Children in this age group demonstrate high activity levels, exploratory behaviour and independence, together with negativism, low impulse control and limited understanding of harm and danger. Parents indicated that these behaviours lead to a higher frequency of disciplinary incidents.
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**Gender.** The gender of a child plays an important part in discipline. Bronfenbrenner (1961, p.256., as cited in Darling, 2007) wrote that “affiliative companionship, nurturance, principled discipline, affection, and affective reward appear to foster the emergence of leadership in sons but discourage it in daughters”. Darling (2007) described how certain discipline methods predicted different outcomes for boys and girls. Darling did not attribute these differences to qualities of boys and girls or to the different socialised expectations of both genders, but interpreted the discipline methods as differing in effect because their meaning differed in the context of the culture. First, he noted that disciplinary practices used with girls tended to be more ‘love orientated’ or inductive in nature, than the ‘punishment orientated’ or more coercive discipline methods used with boys. Whereas inductive discipline tends to induce high compliance and sensitivity to social cues, coercive discipline tends to foster greater independence. Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that the nature of these discipline methods would move girls toward dependence and a greater adherence to conform to social norms and boys toward independence and autonomy.

**Structure of the family in South Africa.** Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that instability and unpredictability within a family negatively impacts a child’s development. If the relationships in the immediate microsystem break down, the child will have fewer opportunities to develop skills needed to explore other parts of their environment. Children looking for the affirmations that should be present in their relationship with their parent, but not receiving them, are at higher risk to seek affirmation from inappropriate places, such as seeking acceptance with an inappropriate peer group (Addison, 1992, as cited in Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

South African statistics regarding the context of families and how it influences discipline show that coercive discipline is most often found in families who have a low socioeconomic
status, or parents who have little to no formal education, are single or are very young in age (Foster, 2001, as cited in Halpenny et al., 2010). A 2008 census done in South Africa explained further contexts of families (Eddy & Holborn, 2011). It indicated that 35% of children lived with both of their biological parents, 40% lived with their mother, 2.8% lived with their father and 22.6% lived with neither of their biological parents. Rates of marriage and co-habitation also differed significantly between population groups. In 2003, 21% of Africans were married or co-habitating, compared to 36% of coloured individuals, 51% of Indians and 58% of caucasion individuals. An age breakdown of urban single parents indicated that 13% were between the ages of 16 and 24 years, 33% between 25 and 34 years, 24% between 45 and 64 years and 24% between 35 and 44 years.

Dawes et al. (2004) described corporal punishment within South African families, saying that 56% of married couples use coercive discipline methods such as corporal punishment with their children, compared to 59% of previously married couples, 58% of single parents who have never married, and 68% of co-habiting parents, where the highest statistic for severe physical coercive discipline methods was 72% of couples who were previously married.

**Divorce and family conflict.** Bronfenbrenner (1979) explored the effects of divorce on children, and found that many divorced parents communicated less and are less consistent in their discipline with their children. In keeping with the principle of reciprocity, the same pattern is mirrored in the behaviour of the children toward their parents. The children’s negative behaviour following a divorce was often attributable to emotional turmoil in the divorced parents. Many children found it difficult to express themselves, integrate in a school setting and form sustainable relationships.
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Similar findings were noted when assessing families who had a high level of conflict within the family. Children raised in these families presented with similar symptoms as those from divorced families. Eddy and Holborn (2011) stated that with only 35% of children in South Africa growing up with both of their biological parents, we should be alerted to the risk that conflict in families is damaging the prospects of the younger generation.

**Parents’ characteristics and Parenting Styles.** A wide range of parental characteristics influence a parent’s use of particular discipline methods such as personality, physical health and coping skills. In addition, parenting values and beliefs have shown to influence parents’ discipline practises. Parents who believe that using inductive discipline methods positively influences a child’s development are less likely to adopt coercive strategies as a discipline response (Bates, Dodge, Pettit, Pinderhughes, Zelli, 2000, as cited in Halpenny et al., 2010). In situations depicting children’s negative behaviours, mothers who used coercive discipline methods were less focused on empathetic goals and attributed child aggression and behaviours to less external sources, than mothers who used inductive methods. Mothers who used coercive discipline methods as their main implementation of discipline were also more likely to respond with greater anger and embarrassment across all child rearing scenarios (Coplan, Hastings, Lagace-Seguin & Moulton, 2002, as cited in Halpenny et al., 2010).

Alternatively, Bronfenbrenner (1979) found that mother-child dyads embedded in a three person family system were characterised by more effective socialisation patterns. There was better communication between parent and child, and the mothers engaged in more explanation and reasoning, made more frequent demands for mature, independent behaviour, showed greater consistency in discipline, and were more affectionate with their children. The children themselves correspondingly exhibited more self-control, more consideration for others, a greater capacity to defer gratification, and higher levels of intellectual and academic
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

performance. It was also found that the presence of an adult with whom the mother has a positive relationship enables her to function more effectively in interactions with her child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained that the mesosystem comprises of interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates, for instance, the relations among home, school, neighbourhood and peer group. Bronfenbrenner (1979) further explained that the mesosystem is formed whenever the individual moves into a new setting. The sphere of the mesosystem also accommodates linkages and interconnections between the different facets of microsystems. Examples of such systems include extended family of the child, and social relationships on the level of peer group (Bronfenbrenner 1979, as cited in Cockcroft, Hook & Watts, 2002).

Terminology of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of the mesosystem. The following terminology will be discussed in order to understand various dynamics that occur within the mesosystem:

**Multisetting participation.** This is a type of communication that occurs when the same individual engages in activities in more than one setting, for example, when a child spends time both at home and at the day care centre (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Ecological transition.** This is a transition that occurs when there is a transition from one setting into another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Primary Link.** The individual is referred to as the primary link. This link occurs when an individual participates in more than one setting within the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**Supplementary links.** Other individuals who participate in the same two settings are referred to as supplementary links (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Indirect linkage.** The second type of interaction is called the indirect linkage. This occurs when the same individual does not actively participate in both settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Second order networks.** When 2 indirect linkages establish an additional connection, through a third party, who serves as an intermediate link between individuals, a second order network is established. In this case, individuals in the two settings are no longer meeting face to face (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Intersetting communications.** This is the third type of interaction. These are messages transmitted from one setting to the other with the intent of providing specific information to individuals in other settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Intersetting knowledge.** This refers to information or experiences that exist in one setting about the other. Such knowledge may be obtained through intersetting communication or from sources external to the particular settings involved, for example, lending book from the library (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Setting transition.** The most important link between two settings is the one that establishes the existence of a mesosystem in the first instance. This is called the setting transition and it occurs when the individual enters a new environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Solitary link.** If an individual enters an environment alone, the link that is established is referred to as a solitary link (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Dual link.** If an individual is accompanied by another individual, the link can be described as a dual link (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**Multiply linked.** A mesosystem in which there is more than one individual, both of whom are active in both settings, is referred to as multiply linked. One hypothesis explains that the developmental potential of a setting in a mesosystem is enhanced if the individual’s initial transition into that setting is not made alone but with one or more individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Dynamics within the mesosystem that influences discipline with young children.** As previously mentioned, Bronfenbrenner (1979, as cited in Brooks-Gunn, Leventhal, 2000) stressed the importance of understanding various influences in a child’s life and stressed looking at multiple contexts such as schools, peers and neighbourhoods, as well as the relations among these contexts; he explained that risk and protective factors occur at multiple levels. Various influences that affect discipline, occurring within the mesosystem, will be addressed in order to better understand discipline with young children. The following influences will be discussed: Spousal support, extended family, parents’ own experience of discipline and neighbourhood and school influences.

**Spousal Support.** A key factor of enhancing the role of parents and contributing to positive experiences of parenting is the support received from a spouse or partner (Kolar, Kolar & Soriano, 2001, as cited in Halpenny et al., 2010). This is related to the second order effect mentioned by Bronfenbrenner (1979), as the presence of one parent may influence the other parent’s discipline interaction with the children in the family. Agreement and consistency among parents with regards to their parenting methods is vitally important for children to understand boundaries within the family.

**Extended family and parents’ own experience of discipline.** Halpenny et al. (2010) explained that the intergenerational transmission of discipline methods and attitudes is a significant factor in influencing parents’ responses to the discipline of their children. If
parents were disciplined in a specific manner, while they were growing up in their nuclear family, they will most likely continue similar discipline methods with their own children. Halpenny et al. (2010) reported that many parents who had been smacked on the bottom, hands, arms or legs and parents who had been hit with an object, were significantly more likely to have used similar discipline methods with their own children. Parents who had generally not been smacked in this way and had experienced an inductive discipline environment during their childhood were significantly less likely to use coercive discipline methods with their own children.

Alternatively, although many parents indicated that they often replicated discipline methods used in their own nuclear family, a small margin of parents also indicated that they chose to use different discipline methods than those used in their own upbringing. These parents chose to use different methods for reasons such as disagreeing with certain discipline methods used by their own parents, reading books about alternative methods of discipline or attending parenting classes. These views help indicate that cycles of intergenerational transmission of parenting behaviours and discipline methods can be altered and patterns of behaviour are not contingent on past experiences.

*Neighbourhood.* Bronfenbrenner (1979, as cited in Brooks-Gunn, Leventhal, 2000) states that neighbourhood resources are typically characterised by structural dimensions such as socioeconomic status and culture. Eddy and Holborn (2011) added that neighbourhood resources such as police presence and access to resources that provide stimulating learning and social environments such as parks, libraries, community centres, as well as various community outreach programs influence children’s lives. Community organisations also play a part, including the presence of adult role models, supervision and monitoring and structure and routine within the neighbourhood.
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

In addition, a family’s access to extended family and friends within the neighbourhood provides a protective factor for families, specifically when aid is needed, for example child care. This support is seen as helping reduce parental stress and therefore, reducing the negative effects of parental stress experienced by children in the family (Eddy and Holborn, 2011).

Eddy and Holborn (2011) also found that children’s behaviour is strongly influenced by negative behaviour that they witness in their neighbourhood, along with the peers that they have in their life. In addition, children who have seen family members or friends intentionally hurt one another are three times more likely to carry weapons and twice as likely to have been in a fight or threaten someone with a weapon, than children who have not been exposed to violence. In the South African context, it is reported that 51% of children have personally witnessed violence in their neighbourhood and families. The influence of violence compromises positive parenting methods. Parents who live in dangerous neighbourhoods tend to display less warmth and to use stronger coercive and inconsistent discipline methods than similar parents in safer neighbourhoods. An understanding of this occurrence is that parents who are faced with violence in their community experience chronic tension and stress, and discipline reactively, thereby using more coercive discipline methods, in an inconsistent manner (Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2001, as cited in Foster et al., 2001).

School. Curwin et al. (2008) stated that the beginning years of school, starting at the early preschool years, are important because the reputations children establish and the view which they develop of themselves as pupils, will influence learning later in primary school.

Many children with chronic behaviour problems are often stigmatised for their behaviour and believe that they cannot be successful in a school environment. As a result, these children are at higher risk of experiencing academic and social difficulties (Curwin et al., 2008).
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

In addition, children who presented with high levels of aggression during preschool years struggled to relate to children their own age and struggled to adjust in a schooling environment in later years (Curwin et al., 2008).

The Exosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained that the exosystem includes one or more settings that do not involve the developing individual as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing individual. He further explained that the exosystem involves social settings beyond the individual’s immediate experience that nevertheless affects them. It is an extension of the mesosystem, which includes other specific social structures, both formal and informal, that impinge upon the immediate settings in which the person is found (Bronfenbrenner 1979, as cited in Cockcroft, Hook & Watts, 2002).

Dynamics within the exosystem that influence discipline with young children. The two influences that occur within the exosystem that will be discussed include perceived pressures on parenting and mass media and agencies of government.

Perceived pressures on parenting. Halpenny et al. et al. (2010) found that 56% of parents indicated that combining work and parenting roles was challenging and that the difficulty of juggling these two roles impacted their parenting skill. Halpenny et al. (2010) also found financial pressures impacted their parenting skills, as their increased stress levels influenced them to discipline reactively. Other key pressures for parents were concerns about the physical and psychological well being of their children, and concerns about their educational outcomes (Halpenny et al. et al., 2010).

Media. Television is seen as a powerful influence in children’s development of value systems and shaping behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Supporting this assertion, Bronfenbrenner (p 170, 1974, as cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979) stated:

Like the sorcerer of old, the television set casts its magic spell, freezing speech and action and turning the living into silent statues so long as the enchantment lasts. The primary danger of the television lies not so much in the behaviour it produces as the behaviour it prevents, the talks, the games, the family festivities and arguments through which much of the child’s learning takes place and his character is formed.

The effects of viewing television and its effects on communication amongst family members has been studied. Bronfenbrenner (1979) found that 78% of the respondents indicated that no conversation occurred during viewing except at specified times, such as commercials, and 60% reported that no activity was engaged in while viewing. The nature of the family’s social life, while watching a television a programme could be described as parallel rather than interactive, and the television seemed to dominate family life when it was on. This process is seen as hindering communication skills from being learnt, along with causing a breakdown in socialised patterns in the family.

When assessing the level of exposure children have had to violence, as a consequence of watching television, researchers found that children view over 200,000 acts of violence, including 16,000 murders, by the time that are 18 years of age (Curwin, 2008). Curwin (2008) added that 75% of children in Grade 4 state that they have seen an R-rated movie, 65% indicated that they had played violent content video games and 84% explained that they had witnessed at least 1 murder on television within the past year. Children who are emotionally sensitive, struggle to monitor their own behaviour, or have poor impulse control, are at higher risk of being influenced by television violence. This exposure compromises children’s ability to learn problem solving skills, and to use aggression to solve conflict instead (Curwin, 2008).
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Macrosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained that the macrosystem refers to consistencies, in the form and content of lower order systems that exist at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies. He further described the macrosystem as referring to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the socioeconomic, social, educational, legal and political systems. The laws, values, traditions and customs of a particular society are found at this level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, as cited in Cockcroft, Hook & Watts, 2002). These cultures and subcultures can be expected to be different from each other but relatively homogenous internally, by the types of settings they contain, the kind of settings that individuals enter into at successive stages of their lives, the content and organisation of activities, roles and relations found within each type of setting and the extent and nature of connections existing between settings entered into or affecting the life of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Dynamics within the macrosystem that influence discipline with young children. The following influences within the macrosystem will be discussed: Socioeconomic status, culture and legislation regarding corporal punishment in South Africa.

Socioeconomic Status. Research has indicated that parents who live in poverty stricken and dangerous neighbourhoods are more at risk of using coercive methods of discipline (Eddy & Holborn, 2011). In one of his papers, ‘Socialisation and Social Class,’ Bronfenbrenner (1958, as cited in Darling, 2007) attempted to bring coherence to contradictory evidence concerning the discipline used by ‘middle’ and ‘working class’ parents. Bronfenbrenner argued that parenting practices had shifted with recommendations of child development experts and pediatricians but that the adaption of expert advice was not uniform across society. Because ‘middle class’ parents placed greater trust in experts, their
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

practices were closely linked to the patterns of expert advice. The practices of ‘working class’ parents shifted more slowly, lagging behind by 10 to 15 years before moving towards ‘middle class’ norms. As expert advice changed from discipline centered to support centered, class differences shifted as well.

Eddy and Holborn (2011) described rising economic concerns as an area of concern in South Africa. In 2010, 48% of people between the ages of 15-24 years were unemployed. This is also the age group where 13% of South African families are single parents. Compounding research indicates that this age group is high risk for using coercive discipline as the main form of discipline. They continue to explain that the effects of so many young people being without work, raises stress levels within families and may lead to breakdown within the family. Further South African statistics obtained in 2008, indicate that only 34% of children under the age of 18 years live in a household where an adult is employed. Over two thirds of children in South Africa grow up in families where there is no regular income. This raises alarm for the effects of financial stress on families.

**Culture.** This area was covered in the previous chapter therefore only key points will be discussed in the section. It has been noted that cultures differs in the value of appropriate behaviours expected from children, therefore, parents will engage in discipline methods that will promote expected behaviours within that culture (Chang et al., 2010). In addition, if certain discipline methods are accepted within a culture and are normative processes, children are less likely to evaluate their parents’ reasons for the use of specific methods. However, if children perceive the methods to be different to those experienced by their peers, they are more likely to reject discipline methods. Little is known about different discipline practises in various cultures in South Africa and therefore more research is needed in order to better understand how these dynamics effect children.
CHAPTER 3: BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Legislation about corporal punishment in South Africa. Some research has been conducted in South Africa regarding the use of corporal punishment with children. Researchers know the common age of children who are smacked in South Africa is three years of age, while the age of children who are hit with objects is four years of age (Dawes et al., 2004). Attitudes towards child rearing lie behind the use of different discipline techniques, and it is important that these be understood if interventions to promote age appropriate discipline methods are to be developed.

The Chronosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979, as cited in Cockcroft, Hook & Watts, 2002) explained that the dimension of time is a fundamental influence on the way systems interact. He explained that time is important as it entails the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life course and refers to the unique socio-historical placement of the individual.

Dynamics within the chronosystem that influence discipline with young children. The main dynamic that will be focused on includes the differences in parenting views over time.

Differences in parenting views over time. Halpenny et al. (2010) found that 70% of parents indicate that parenting has changed over the past 20 years. This was specifically related to parental monitoring about what is happening in their children’s lives, parental responsibilities and added personal pressures, all of which was found to impact their parenting skills (Halpenny et al., 2010).

Daly (2004, as cited in Halpenny et al., 2010) also highlighted a major shift in contemporary parenting when compared to a generation ago, most notably a change in parental authority and a change in the extent to which the parental role is supported by society. Similarly, and more specifically, perceptions of reduced parental control in the
present study reinforce the notion that permissive parenting styles adopted by some parents are one of the key challenges faced by parents today.

In addition, when parents were asked about characteristics they would want to teach their child through discipline, the answers included benevolence, self direction, and being trustworthy (Ahtonen & Tulviste, 2007, as cited in Halpenny et al., 2010).

**Conclusion**

The understanding of discipline in a South African context is important, yet little research has been conducted in this area. It is evident that discipline cannot be fully understood without exploring the various influences that effect discipline with children in a family context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This chapter discussed the influences of discipline, within the context of the spheres found in Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development. These spheres included the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem.

This theory provides an effective way for the researcher to explore specific influences that act upon discipline in a systemic way, and represents a holistic understanding of how these influences contribute to perceptions and methods of discipline used within the home. The following chapter will discuss the methodology used in the study.
Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

Overview of Chapter

This chapter presents an overview of the research design and methodology that was used in this study. The information that has been included describes the aims and objectives of the study and the research methodology, which comprises of the research design, validity and reliability, participants and sampling, research procedure, data analysis and interpretation and ethical considerations of the study.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the study was to explore and describe the perceptions of parents regarding discipline with their children in the 2 to 5 year age group. The objectives identified to meet this aim include:

1. To explore and describe the perceptions of parents about disciplining children.
2. To explore and describe the discipline methods that parents use with their children.
3. To explore and describe the perceptions parents have about the influences on the methods of discipline they use with their children.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study falls within the field of qualitative research. Bailey, Hennik and Hutter (2011) described qualitative research as an approach that allows one to examine individuals’ experiences in detail. It allows the researcher to identify issues from the perspective of the study’s participants and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to behaviour, events or objects. Researchers therefore attempt to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them.
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. Neuman (2003) states that the exploratory approach is appropriate to use in research studies where the topic is new or little information is known about a specific area. Exploratory researchers often use qualitative techniques in order to gather data as it is believed that these techniques yield a range of evidence and discoveries about a new topic. Neuman (2003) stated that the descriptive approach is useful as it helps the researcher explain specific details about a topic. The researcher conducts research in order to describe a phenomenon. Again, qualitative data gathering techniques can be used, such as interviews.

As there is little information available in South Africa about discipline within the preschool age group, the researcher made use of a qualitative research design in order to better understand the perceptions held by parents regarding discipline with their children in the 2 to 5 year age group. By including an exploratory and descriptive approach, the researcher hoped to gain a better understanding of the research topic as a whole, including an understanding of the finer details of the topic.

Validity and Reliability of the Research

The trustworthiness of qualitative research is often questioned, as the concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same manner as quantitative research. However, Guba (1981, as cited in Shenton, 2004) proposed the following four criteria that he believed should be considered in qualitative research in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Additional measures should also be taken into consideration, in order to ensure trustworthiness, these include triangulation, iterative questioning, thick descriptions of the phenomenon being studied, and examination of previous research findings. Explanations of these criteria are given as follows:
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

**Credibility.** Shenton (2004) cited in Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that credibility in qualitative research is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. The credibility of a qualitative research study refers to how congruent the findings are to reality. The following provisions were used in order to ensure trustworthiness in the current study.

**Triangulation.** Creswell (2003) stated that themes should be established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from the participants. The researcher examined the data obtained from the various participants, including additional theoretical perspectives and peer reviewed research in order to justify themes obtained from the data.

**Iterative questioning.** Shenton (2004) urged researchers to clarify information during an interview. He suggested using probing questions in order to help clarify the meaning of a statement and also recommended using iterative questioning, where the researcher returns to matters previously discussed by a participant. This helps to extract related data through rephrased questions. These methods assist with identifying contradictions in statements and falsehoods in data collected. It is encouraged that researchers explore the discrepant data in their findings and offer possible explanations for the discrepancies found. Within this study, the research used open ended questions and made use of probes suggested on the interview schedule in order to clarify meaning in the interview.

**Thick description of the phenomenon being studied.** Creswell (2003) encouraged researchers to provide detailed descriptions of the setting of the study and provide many perspectives about themes in order to provide a deeper understanding of the information obtained. Consequently the researcher described the information obtained from interviews in depth, and from various perspectives, in order to create a realistic and richer description of themes found.
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Examination of previous research findings. Shenton (2004) suggested that a study’s results be compared to previous research done in the field. The researcher must relate their findings to existing knowledge of previous studies conducted in order to address comparable issues, which will be valuable. In order to address this point, the researcher related data obtained from the participants with previous research done in this area.

Transferability. Shenton (2004) cited Stake (1994) and Denscombe (1998) said that although each participant is unique, they are also an example within a broader group and as a result, the prospect of transferability should not be immediately rejected. It was important that sufficient descriptions of the perceptions that parents have about discipline were provided in order to allow readers to have a proper understanding of their views. In order to maximise transferability, the researcher described the process and context of the interview in detail.

Dependability. Shenton (2004) stressed the close ties between credibility and dependability, stating that the former ensures the latter. In order to address dependability, Shenton recommended that the processes within a study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the study and gain the same results. The text should include the research design and its implementation, and a description of what was planned and executed on a strategic level; the operational detail of data gathering, including specific detail about what was done in the field, and then reflective appraisal of the project, evaluating the effectiveness of the process of inquiry undertaken. This information will be described in detail, in the following chapter.

Confirmability. Shenton (2004) explained that confirmability refers to the qualitative researcher’s concern with objectivity. The authenticity of the participants’ ideas and
experiences, rather than the preferences of the researcher. This is intimately associated with validity and reliability.

**Participants and Sampling**

Non-probability sampling was implemented in the current study. Delport, Fouche and Strydom (2005) stated that the use of non-probability sampling means that the probability of an element or unit being selected for inclusion is unknown to the researcher. The researcher made use of non-probability sampling methods such as purposive and snowball sampling methods. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants that have shared traits of interest to the researcher (Delport et al., 2005). This sampling method was appropriate for the study as the participants selected shared characteristics that had been specified in the inclusion and exclusion criteria set out below. Snowball sampling is a method used to obtain information from extended associations. A snowball sample is achieved by asking a participant to suggest someone else who would fit the criteria of the study (Delport et al., 2005). The participants were recruited through participants who knew other families in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole area who specifically have children between the ages of 2 and 5 years and who met the criteria for the study. This method was also appropriate for the study as inclusion and exclusion criteria were very specific, and snowball sampling was an ideal way to access participants. The number of participants involved in the study included 5 couples. No further participants were included as saturation of data was achieved.

The inclusion criteria for the proposed study included the following: participants needed to be married couples who have at least one child between the ages of 2 and 5 years. The age range of the child was significant as the proposed research aimed to understand the influences on discipline with preschool aged children. The child must have reached their developmental milestones age appropriately. The participants must both have completed a Grade 12 level of
education in South Africa, needed to be proficient in English, and at least one parent needed to be employed. The participants could come from any cultural group in South Africa, as the research focused on parents’ personal experience of parenting and perceptions of discipline. Both parents needed to be present at the interview, in order to understand how they disciplined their children as a couple. An exclusion criterion included that their child does not currently have a diagnosis according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, 4th or 5th edition, (DSM-IV-TR; DSM-5).

As previously stated, the participants were initially recruited through purposive sampling, and thereafter snowball sampling was utilised, where participants suggested other parents who met the criteria for the study, in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole. Once participants had been suggested, the researcher contacted them telephonically in order to assess if they were willing to participate in the study. Participants who indicated interest in participation in the study were asked questions in order to confirm that they met the criteria set out, and an outline of the study was provided. The participants were also given an opportunity to ask questions that they may have had and to clarify their role in the study.

Data Collection

Interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research. Semi-structured interviews aid in gaining a detailed picture of the participants’ perceptions. This type of interviewing allows the researcher more flexibility to follow up particular interesting avenues that emerge in the interview, and participants are able to give a detailed picture of the account. This method is also suitable when the researcher is interested in a process that is personal to the participant (Delport et al. 2005).

Within the current research the researcher made use of an interview schedule in order to conduct the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). During this process, the
participants were given the flexibility to further explain their perceptions of discipline, which contributed to the researcher better understanding the beliefs of the participants. This method is suggested to be used with participants who have a personal account to tell. Therefore, this data collection method was highly suited to the study as it allowed the participants the freedom to express their perceptions of discipline with their children and provided an opportunity for the researcher to clarify and explore themes found in the interview process.

Research Procedure

As previously mentioned, the initial participants were purposively selected, and thereafter, participants suggested parents who met the criteria for the study. The researcher contacted the suggested participants telephonically in order to ascertain their willingness to participate in the study. The participants were screened in order to assess eligibility for the study, were given an outline of the study, and were given an opportunity to ask questions. Once the participants gave consent to being interviewed, they were given an opportunity to meet at UCLIN, the University Psychology Clinic at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, in order to conduct the interviews or were asked which location would be convenient for them. All five sets of participants requested that the researcher interview them at their homes, for reasons such as convenience for their schedules and child care arrangements. Once this had been agreed upon, the researcher requested a time and date that would suit the participants, schedules for the interviews to be conducted.

Once a date and time was set, the interviews commenced. The researcher went through the following procedures with the participants: Informed written consent was obtained from participants for their participation and for the audio-recording of the interviews. The interviews were recorded by use of a Dictaphone. Thereafter the researcher continued with
the interview process, guided by the interview schedule. The interview process began with
the researcher asking the participants the following open-ended questions:

1. Tell me your personal perception of disciplining children aged between 2 to 5 years?
2. Tell me what discipline methods you use with your own child aged between 2 to 5 years of age?
3. Tell me, based on your personal experience, what has influenced the discipline methods you use with your child of this age?

The duration of the interviews were about 1-1.5 hours in length in order for the interview process to focus on relevant information related to the research questions. The interview questions were supported by probing suggestions from the interview schedule if required. After the interview, the researcher debriefed the participants from the interview process, where the couple was given an opportunity to express and reflect upon their personal experience of the interview process. The researcher also provided the contact details of UCLIN, in case a participant would want to talk about issues that came up for them, further.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The process of data analysis involves making sense of data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses and creating a deeper understanding of the data as a whole. In the present study the data was text data, which was open ended data, based on general questions and the development of the analysis from the information supplied by participants (Creswell, 2003). This type of data analysis can be described as content analysis.

Qualitative content analysis is one of numerous research methods used to analyse text data. Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text. Qualitative content analysis classifies large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

represent similar meanings. The goal of content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

In order to code the data obtained, the researcher used Tesch’s (1990, p.142-145 as cited in Creswell, 2003) steps for analysing data. The suggested steps are described as follows:

1. Get a sense of the whole. Read all the transcripts carefully and make notes of ideas that come to mind.
2. Pick one interview and take note of themes found within the transcript.
3. After this task has been completed for several interviews, make a list of all the topics into columns that might be indicated as major topics, unique topics and less significant ones.
4. Take the list and go over all the data. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text.
5. Find descriptive words to categorise information and group similar information together.
6. Make abbreviations for each category and alphabetise these codes.
7. Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.
8. If necessary, recode existing data.

Ethical Considerations

Neuman (2003) emphasised the importance of upholding the use of ethics in research and stated that a researcher has a moral and professional obligation to be ethical. Ethical issues are the concerns, dilemmas, and conflicts that arise over the proper way of conducting research.

The following ethical issues were taken note of by the researcher, in order to make sure that the participants were not negatively affected by the research.
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

**Informed consent.** Written consent was obtained from the participants (Neuman, 2003). As previously discussed, the researcher went through all the sections of the consent form in order for the participants to understand their role in the research process and to ensure that they were comfortable with all the terms of agreement.

**Informed consent with the researcher.** The researcher was aware that participants may not want to disclose personal information and respected the participant’s level of disclosure and their right to withhold sensitive information (Neuman, 2003).

**Anonymity and confidentiality.** The researcher ensured that the participants understood that their identity would be protected, that they would remain anonymous throughout the study, and that their information would be kept confidential (Neuman, 2003). The identities of the participants were kept confidential by making use of codes for each participant. In order to keep the data obtained from the interview session confidential, only the researcher had access to the raw data and will keep it in a secure place for a period of 5 years, after which the data will be destroyed.

**Debriefing of participants.** The researcher was aware that the information disclosed by the participants was sensitive in nature and debriefed the participants after each interview (Neuman, 2003). As previously discussed, the researcher processed the interview session with the couple. The researcher provided the contact details for UCLIN, for participants to use if they felt the need for further assistance. The participants indicated that no further debriefing was needed.

**Conclusion**

The research design and methodology used was to achieve the aims of the study was explained in this chapter. This included a description of the aims and objectives, the research methodology, including research design, validity and reliability, participants and sampling,
data collection, research procedure, data analysis and interpretation and ethical considerations of the study. The findings of the data analysis will be explained in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

Overview of Chapter

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The findings were informed by the aim of the research, which was to explore and describe the perceptions of parents regarding discipline with their children in the 2 to 5 year age group. In order to contextualise the findings, a description of the sample and interview procedure will be provided and the themes and subthemes will be presented and discussed in detail.

Sample and Interview Procedure

The sample consisted of five couples, who were screened and met the requirements for the study. Participants were married couples who had at least one child between the ages of 2 and 5 years, where the child reached their developmental milestones age appropriately. In addition, all the participants completed a Grade 12 level of education in South Africa, were proficient in English and at least one parent was employed. The participants came from various cultural groups in South Africa. Both parents were present for the interviews, in order to understand how they disciplined their children as a couple. An exclusion criterion was that their child did not currently have a diagnosis according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th or 5th edition, (DSM-IV-TR; DSM-5).

All the participants were given an outline of the study and were provided with an opportunity to ask questions (please refer to Appendix A). The researcher explained her role in the study, clarified that it was a voluntary process, and stressed that the information obtained would remain confidential. All the participants gave written consent in order to continue with the interview process, including consent for a Dictaphone to be used in order for the interviews to be recorded (please refer to Appendices B and C).

The duration of the interviews were approximately 1-1.5 hours in length. The interviews were conducted in English and the data was later transcribed for analysis by the researcher.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interview questions were supported by probing suggestions from the interview schedule (please refer to Appendix D), when required. After each interview, the researcher debriefed the participants, by providing them with an opportunity to reflect and discuss their experience of the interview process. The qualitative findings from the interviews will be discussed in detail below.

Overview of Themes and Subthemes

Data obtained from the interviews was carefully reviewed. Data themes and subthemes were selected during the process of data analysis, to identify trends that emerged from the responses. The themes and subthemes represent the data that emerged most often during interviews, and are thus reflective of the perceptions of parents regarding discipline with their children in the 2 to 5 year age group. An overview of the themes and subthemes that emerged is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Themes and Subthemes Obtained from the Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions of Discipline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The establishment of boundaries at an early age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discipline Methods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Categories of Discipline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive methods of discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking in a stern voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive methods of discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverting the child’s attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing privileges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences of Discipline</th>
<th>Microsystemic factors that influence discipline</th>
<th>Mesosystemic factors that influence discipline</th>
<th>Exosystemic factors that influence discipline</th>
<th>Macrosystemic factors that influence discipline</th>
<th>Chronosystem factors that influence discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of the child</td>
<td>Spousal support</td>
<td>Pressures on parenting</td>
<td>Culture and religion</td>
<td>Differences in parenting over time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s behaviour</td>
<td>Extended family and parents’ own experience of discipline</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Legislature about corporal punishment in South Africa</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting styles</td>
<td>School and peer group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each theme and subtheme will be explored, as they relate to the main question asked (please refer to Appendix A). The researcher will make use of direct quotes from the participants in order to clarify information obtained.

**Question 1: Please describe your personal perception of disciplining children aged between 2 to 5 years to me?**

The focus of this question was to explore the parents’ personal perceptions regarding discipline with young children. This question was important in order to help explore and
describe their views of the relevance of discipline in children’s lives. The themes that emerged for this question included the importance of discipline and the establishment of boundaries at a young age.

**The importance of discipline.** The importance of discipline was highlighted by participants, and is supported in research as necessary to raise secure, mature, and happy individuals (Campbell, 1992). When addressing the importance of discipline in children’s lives, participants indicated that it was a vital part of a child’s upbringing. The role of discipline in creating structure in a child’s life and helping them cope in the world was highlighted, and seen in:

“Discipline lays the foundation for behaviour for the rest of the child’s life”

“If you can’t discipline your child at home, the world will discipline them for you”

“We live in a world where you’re basically always under someone’s authority, whether it be the authority of the government or your work or whatever. If you can’t teach your child how to operate in that system, he’s going to have a problem”

Discipline as a way to teach children values in life also emerged as important here:

“I think that it (discipline) is very important, also when they (children) get older that they know there have to be consequences for what they are doing”

“You have these young children doing crime and all this, it only reinforces my belief of the importance of discipline”

Some parents explained that they found discipline important because they wanted to raise children who would be able to adjust with social norms in society, saying, “You’re not raising kids only for yourself but for society and other family members. We would like him to behave with whoever he is with.”

**The establishment of boundaries at an early age.** The children in the study are in Erikson’s Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt stage (2-3 years old) and Intitiative vs Guilt stage (3-5 years old) stages of development (Erikson, 1963, cited in Cockcroft et al., 2002). Explorative behaviour is common during these stages and behavioural outbursts such as
tantrums are often seen. Erikson (1963, cited in Cockcroft et al., 2002) stressed that discipline is vital during these developmental stages, as children have not yet learnt the necessary skills to help regulate their own behaviour. Thus, the establishment of boundaries was a theme that emerged clearly among participants. Some of the comments made regarding establishing boundaries include:

“You need to discipline from an early age to incorporate those boundaries because the older they get, they’re going to expect whatever they’ve learned in those tender years”

“They shouldn’t be allowed to do whatever they want because they don’t have the street smarts or developed brains to actually handle that freedom. They’re not equipped to deal with it”

A contributing factor to help with establishing boundaries includes having a routine. A participant indicated that, “If you’ve got a good routine, there’s less need to actively discipline,” and further explained, “It’s much easier disciplining her (her daughter) at 4 because she’s got a routine, she knows this is what I do...you know.” When the researcher clarified this statement, the participant indicated that routine was linked to consistency in discipline, which she felt is necessary to help provide stability in their child’s life. This is congruent with research that indicates that consistency in discipline is key for effective results (Creed & Salvesen, 2010).

Question 2: Please describe what discipline methods you use with your own child aged between 2 to 5 years of age?

The focus of this question was to explore the discipline methods that parents use with their young children. This question was important in order to help explore and describe specific behaviour that parents felt was effective in their discipline process. The themes for this category included coercive and inductive methods of discipline. Below these themes, the subthemes will also be discussed.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Coercive methods of discipline. Coercive methods of discipline can be seen as methods that are power assertive, and compel the child to behave. These methods include spanking a child, yelling, name calling and insulting a child (Halpenny et al., 2010). The majority of the participants in this study indicated that they used coercive methods of discipline, specifically spanking, when their children engaged in dangerous behaviour, hurt others, presented ongoing negative behaviour or were disrespectful. Situations where these methods were most often used include:

“I do believe that if it (negative behaviour) does come to the point where he’s doing something where he’s going to hurt himself, I do hit him and he knows that he shouldn’t be doing it again”

“...something severe where he could get injured, he needs an instant hiding”

“...like biting a sibling...”

“Smacking is a last resort”

“Spanking is a quick fix. It mustn’t be an unconscious thing that you just do it. It must be thought through”

Most of the participants believed that particular negative behaviours resulted in coercive discipline methods being used, specifically spanking. The most common behaviours mentioned in the interviews included the child hurting other children, engaging in dangerous behaviour where they could get hurt, not listening to their parents and being disrespectful or rude. Other coercive discipline methods mentioned by participants included speaking in a stern voice, shouting and threatening the child with a spanking or removal of privileges.

Two participants did not support the use of coercive discipline, particularly spanking. They indicated that they were brought up with spanking but strongly believed that it “did not work” and did “more harm than good”. They therefore chose not to spank their children and reported that their experience of discipline was good. Methods of discipline mentioned in their interviews mainly included inductive methods, which will be discussed below.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Inductive methods of discipline.** Inductive methods include non-aggressive discipline methods. These include reasoning or discussing an issue with a child, using effective time out methods or grounding a child (Halpenny et al., 2010). The participants mentioned a variety of inductive discipline methods that they use including communication, diverting the child’s attention, time out, reward system and removing privileges.

**Communication.** Creed and Salvesen (2010) urged parents to define boundaries to their child. They stressed that it is important that children understand and are able to conceptualise boundaries set out in a family.

> “Communication does go a long way in dealing with children of that age”
> “If you keep your tone and then you say what you want to say, in a clear manner, then they listen”
> “...that is why you just have to explain to them nicely that it is wrong, that there are external influences”

Some participants mentioned that explaining their child’s behaviour to them was very important. They stated that this method worked well with children above 4 years of age, but that younger children struggled to understand the consequences of their actions so explaining behaviour was less effective.

**Diverting the child’s attention.** Tiedmarsh (2000) explained that diverting a child’s attention from negative behaviour is best used with toddlers. Participants’ explanations were in agreement with the age group of this technique, as this technique emerged as used with younger children. One parent explained “...you take him away from the situation and divert his attention”. Participants indicated that they often distracted their children from negative behavior when they were younger, as their children struggled to understand the cause and effect of their behaviour at this age.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Time out.** Nieman and Shea (2004) stated that time out is an effective technique to use with young children. This was confirmed in the study, as time out was reported as a common inductive discipline method used with descriptions including:

“...time out is very effective...”
“We have a naughty chair”
“I’ll put him in time out in his cot and has to lay there and once he’s over it, he’ll get out of his cot or I’ll go there and time out be over”

Although time out was used by many participants, the effectiveness of the technique varied. The techniques used to implement this method varied to a large extent amongst participants, and many participants did not feel positively about it, where one participant described, “We don’t find it works because she just plays in her room”. Participants reported using this method with children between the ages of 3 and 5. It was noted that participants implemented this method differently, often inaccurately, including differences in length of time out, and differences in when to explain the punishment to the child.

**Reward system.** Some parents indicated that they prefer using a reward system with their children. Direct quotes from the interviews include the following:

“We use the reward system. If you’ve done something right, then you are rewarded”
“She’ll receive a reward and that’s what comes out of being good”
“If he listens well for the week, he knows we can go to Spur”

Participants described this method as being useful to reinforce behaviours such as listening, cleaning their rooms, being kind to their siblings and sleeping in their own beds.

Some rewards participants felt were useful included verbal praise, buying a gift, going to their child’s favourite place to play and spending time with their parents. This method was most often used with children between the ages of 4 and 5.

**Removing privileges.** Participants said that the removal of privileges worked well for children from the age of 5, as they had developed the ability to reason and understand consequences of their behaviour. One participant explained, “When he was little he didn’t
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

understand what he was doing wrong but now he knows if he doesn’t behave, he doesn’t get to go to the gym with me”. In most instances this technique was used for not listening or when parents made repeated requests to listen. Some participants made the following comments to explain their use of the technique:

“You can tell them that if they’ve done something wrong, then there’s no pocket money for Friday”

“Once you’ve taken away a privilege, the behaviour normally comes to an end”

“For every action there’s a consequence, whether it be good or bad, you do something good, there’s a good consequence. You do something that’s really bad, bad consequences happen”

**Question 3: Please tell me, based on your personal experience, what has influenced the discipline methods you use with your child of this age?**

The focus of this question was to explore and describe the various influences that parents felt affected their discipline process. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development was used in order to contextualise the data collected. The ecological environment within which transactions take place consists of a series of successive layers. The innermost layer is the microsystem, then the mesosystem, the exosystem, macrosystem and finally the chronosystem. Each of these spheres will be discussed in detail, particularly paying attention to the influences on discipline with young children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, as cited in Cockcroft, Hook & Watts, 2002).

**Microsystemic factors that influence discipline.** This category will focus on the influences mentioned by the participants that take affect within the microsystem. As previously mentioned, the microsystem is assembled from three basic elements: the activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the individual. These influences directly affect the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Factors that the participants mentioned in this category included the age of the child, child’s behaviour, gender, parenting styles and family values.
**Age of the child.** According to Miller (1995, as cited in Halpenny, 2010), the age of a child influences the discipline methods used, as is found that younger children often experience higher frequencies of coercive discipline. In the present study, the age of a child emerged as an influencing factor of discipline, particularly the relationship between age and the use of coercive discipline methods such as spanking:

“I would say 2 years of age, you don’t really smack but 4 or 5 is okay”

“When they were like 2, all you needed was a sterner voice”

“The more they understand, the more you know that they understand, you can do things accordingly. You know it’s no use punishing somebody for doing something if they don’t know they’ve done wrong”

These statements are in agreement with research conducted in South Africa, where the average age at which children experience spanking is 3 years and older (Dawes et al., 2004). Some participants explained that the insight a child has into their behaviour, influenced the degree of discipline used. Many participants felt that young children did not have insight into their behaviour and using a coercive method such as speaking in a “sterner voice” was effective in correcting behaviour. Many felt that children who were 4 or 5 years of age were old enough to understand the difference between right and wrong and therefore could be held responsible for their behaviour.

**Children’s behaviour.** The most common factor that participants indicated as influencing their discipline methods was their child’s behaviour. Research indicates that children who have high activity levels, exploratory behaviour and independence, low impulse control and engage in dangerous behaviour, experience higher frequencies of coercive discipline (Miller 1995, as cited in Halpenny, 2010). Participants described the following situations where corporal punishment was most often used:

“Jumping on the bed”

“If he hurts his brother”
“If I have to repeat myself over and over”

“If he’s doing something where he’s going to hurt himself”

“If she swears”

Different cultures place different levels of importance upon behaviours expected from their children (Chang et al., 2010). If, for example, a value system within a culture holds consideration in high regard, if children behave in a way that opposes that belief system, the family may discipline them. Most of the participants strongly expressed that if their children engaged in dangerous behaviour, where someone could get hurt, they would spank them. Many participants stated that they did evaluate the behaviour before disciplining their children and said that the behaviour was “graded”. Participants also indicated that it was important to “pick battles” when disciplining.

Additional negative behaviours mentioned by the participants, to which they responded, included their children accidentally breaking things, not listening for a period of time, not sharing with their siblings, and taking treats that they’re not supposed to take. Other coercive discipline methods mentioned by participants included speaking in a stern voice, shouting and threatening a child with a spanking or removal of privileges.

**Gender.** Research indicates that gender influences discipline methods used with children. (Darling, 2007). It is explained that boys often experience higher frequencies of coercive methods of discipline, than girls. Bronfenbrenner (1979) offered an explanation for this finding, saying at a younger age, girls are more likely to conform to social cues, where boys engage in more independent behaviour.

Participants in this study did indicate that high activity levels and overtly expressive behaviour was often frowned upon. Coercive discipline methods were most often used in response to these behaviours. Although participants did not mention specific differences between disciplining boys and girls directly, the results indicated that participants who had
boys reported a higher frequency of perceived negative behaviour such as engaging in dangerous behaviour and overtly expressive behaviour. These parents engaged in a higher frequency of coercive discipline. Participants who had daughters of a similar age generally expressed lower incidents of negative behaviour such as hurting others and engaging in dangerous behaviour and said:

“She’s not a violent child, she doesn’t pinch or hit or anything like that. She mostly speaks to us”

“She wants to be a big girl now so mostly she tries to listen”

“As she’s gotten older, she listens more”

**Parenting styles.** Parenting styles and beliefs have shown to influence parents’ discipline methods (Bates et al., 2010). Campbell (1992) states that mothers play a large role in discipline and are most often seen as the main disciplinarian in the family. This finding is believed to occur, as they are seen as spending more time with the children. Many of the participants in the current study stated otherwise. Many participants indicated that the fathers were the main disciplinarian, particularly when using coercive methods such as spanking. The general understanding was that the father was seen as more of an authority figure, seen through the following comments:

“I’m more lenient than my husband”

“He (the child) understands me as Mommy, the loving and caring one”

“My husband can say something once, where I need to say it 2 or 3 times before they listen”

“He (the child) tends to listen to him (the husband) easily, I think obviously because he’s more authoritarian than I am”

Some mothers indicated that they used a higher frequency of inductive methods such as reasoning, negotiating, and explaining desired behaviour when disciplining their children. This type of parenting was found in Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) research, where women were more likely to engage in inductive methods of discipline.
Family values. Results from the current study indicated that family values is a strong influencing factor on the discipline process. Chang et al. (2010) stated that parents play a primary role in children’s lives in developing character and imparting the values that they wish their children to uphold. Participants made the following statements regarding their unique family value systems and discipline:

“We don’t want brats, we detest brats”

“We want to raise her properly in a Christian home. She must know that God comes first and be a good person”

“What you want today is a respectable child. You want to raise a child that’s going to respect everyone”

“We want other people to like our kids”

Many participants stressed that they wanted to raise children who had strong characters and for them to know the difference between right and wrong. Many participants also indicated that they wanted their children to be able to have the required skills needed to have a successful future and to be responsible people. This belief included acquiring skills such as having good manners, being respectful towards others and being well liked by others. Another strong value system that was stressed, was that of Christianity. This point will be discussed in detail at a later stage.

Mesosystemic factors that influence discipline. This category will focus on the influences of discipline mentioned by the participants that occur in the mesosystem. The mesosystem comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Factors that participants mentioned in this category included spousal support, extended family and parents’ own experience of discipline, school and peer group and finally the neighbourhood that they live in. The description of the factors will be discussed below:
Spousal support. Spousal support was regarded as an extremely important factor in the success of discipline. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stressed that consistency and agreement among parents is incredibly important in the development of a child. Participants made the following statements regarding their support of each other when disciplining their children:

“I think that we come to an agreement even though we have different parenting styles”
“We back each other up. If I say no, then she says no...we don’t let them (the children) get in between us. We agree to disagree”
“She knows if I said no, she won’t even try going to Dad because she can’t play us up against each other”

Although many of the wives indicated that their husbands were the main disciplinarian in their family, most participants explained that they supported each other’s decisions regarding discipline and stated this created a positive discipline environment. From a parental perspective, the participants indicated that apart from feeling supported by their partner, supporting each other also created a stable and consistent home environment for their children. This was regarded as an important goal for many participants.

Extended family and parents’ own experience of discipline. The intergenerational transmission of discipline methods is a strong influencing factor in parental beliefs about discipline with their own children (Halpenny at al., 2010). The intergenerational transmission of discipline method was evident in this study, seen in the following statements:

“I think also part of it obviously growing up you learn from your parents”
“Of the things I always said to myself when I left home, I said I won’t do things that my dad did. I’ll do it better”
“You take your cue from the boundaries you were set and you do, well sort of set, well I think I set according to how I was disciplined”
“We have high regard for extended family and they’re very much involved in our children’s lives. I know there’s an unspoken code in the family in terms of what behaviour is acceptable or not”
“The extended family can give you support, especially the older members of the family. They’ve been through this. They can give you guidelines to help discipline”
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results from this study reflected evidence that is shown in current research, where people often draw upon their own upbringing when disciplining their own children. Three participants indicated that they used their own upbringing in order to help discipline their children, thereby continuing an extended family belief system of discipline. Two participants explained that this method did not work for their family, as they had developed a different belief system to that of their own parents. One participant explained that she had been spanked as a child and disagreed with this form of discipline. As a result, she chose to use inductive discipline methods with her daughter. In order to explain her point of view she stated, “Hitting a child perpetuates the idea that there’s a physical resolve to conflict which we don’t want to instil in her”, another participant stated that they “do it (discipline) better than their parents did”.

When mentioning the involvement of extended family members, many stated that extended family were prohibited from using coercive methods of discipline with their children, but were valuable in helping monitor their children’s behaviour. One participant indicated that their extended family was very present in their children’s lives and that they found the experience of the older parents valuable within the family. This belief is upheld by research that indicates that extended family is seen as a protective factor, in terms of availability of help and aids in reducing stress experienced by parents (Eddy and Holborn, 2011).

Neighbourhood. Research conducted in the United States of America and Britain indicated that the neighbourhood they live in influences children’s behaviour. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that neighbourhood resources are typically characterised by structural dimensions such as socioeconomic status and culture. It is believed that these structural dimensions influence the discipline methods used by parents. The participants
made the following statements regarding the influence of their neighbourhood on their discipline methods:

“*No because it doesn’t matter what neighbourhood we’re living in, our rules are our rules*”

“*Whether our neighbours or friends do something different, it’s not really going to influence what we do because we’ve already decided on one way*”

“*We don’t really let anybody influence us*”

Studies conducted in South Africa indicate that 51% of children have personally witnessed violence in their neighbourhood and families. In addition, parents who lived in dangerous neighbourhoods often used stronger methods of coercive discipline (Eddy & Holborn, 2011). Although there is strong research to support this factor, it did not emerge as a theme in this study. Most of the participants indicated that they did not let their neighbourhood influence their methods and described low community involvement. Only one participant stated that they found “*observing or learning from an older parent*” was useful as “*they can give you some advice*”.

**School and peer group.** Eddy and Holborn (2011) explained that children’s behaviour is strongly influenced by the peer group that they have in their life. The participants explained their views regarding the influence of their children’s school and peer group has on their discipline process in the following manner:

“*She’ll come home and tell us about what various kids did at school and we give her input so we’re very vocal, very open with her. If we don’t like something, we’ll tell her*”

“*The school does communicate their mode of discipline. They use diversion of attention*”

“*We’re lucky that the school that she’s at now they actually have like a little correspondence book that comes back every day so if there’s any notes the teacher needs to give us*”

Participants indicated that their children’s schooling environment did not influence their discipline process. They did however indicate that their children learnt negative behaviour from their friends in the schooling environment. Some negative behaviour that children learnt
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

from their peers at school included spitting, biting and inappropriate language. One challenge that was discussed included their children wishing to behave like “other children”, where their children would sometimes say “but they (their friends) get to do it...”. This statement was a common theme among participants, and participants explained that this factor was challenging to deal with. Participants explained that these learnt behaviours made “keeping family values difficult”, where they would have to repeatedly “remind the children of their own family’s set of values”.

Exosystemic factors that influence discipline. This category will focus on the influences of discipline mentioned by the participants that occur in the exosystem. The mesosystem involves social settings beyond the individual’s immediate experience that nevertheless affects them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Factors that participants mentioned in this category included pressures on parenting and various forms of media. The description of the factors will be discussed below:

Pressures on parenting. Halpenny et al. (2010) found that 56% of parents reported that maintaining working and parenting roles was challenging and that the difficulty of juggling these two roles impacted their parenting skills. This theme was reflected in the current study. Participants repeatedly indicated that maintaining various roles in their lives, such as work and parenting was an extremely stressful process. One participant explained that “there’s a lot of pressure, you already have stressful jobs, you have your husband and you have your studies, so you have just too much happening and you don’t have time”. Trying to maintain these various roles often lead to feelings of exhaustion and guilt about effective participation in these various roles.

Media. All the participants had strong beliefs about the influence of media on their discipline process. They made the following comments regarding its influence:

“Some of the Barbie movies are like quite evil in a sense. We make her aware that that is
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

not right behaviour”
“‘We’re living in a world with Internet and there’s a lot of information, so there we pick up a lot of things’”
“You’ve also got the Internet which for parents is a good tool, obviously, because it can help them to research good ways of discipline”
“We also watched Nanny 911 so we picked up a lot of stuff, time out and things that worked, reward which works, you see it working and we just need it and it does work”
“Reading about discipline doesn’t change my beliefs but it helps me to improve the techniques I use”
“Workshops help to gain more knowledge and kind of like reassurance of what you’re doing right, what you’re doing wrong”

The forms of media that participants mentioned in their interviews include television, the internet and books. Research indicates that television is a strong influence in children’s development of value systems and behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The majority of participants felt that television had a negative effect on children’s behaviour, as they often imitate behaviour viewed on various programs. Often these behaviours would be in direct conflict with behaviours that their parents felt were appropriate for children their age or creates conflict with the family’s value system. Alternatively, a participant identified a television series that was a very good source of information to help them discipline their child with age appropriate techniques.

The Internet and books were seen as preferable resources to help gain information about effective parenting and discipline. Participants explained that these sources did not change their views on discipline but helped to provide effective discipline techniques, which they found helpful.

**Macrosystemic factors that influence discipline.** This category will focus on the influences of discipline mentioned by the participants that occur in the macrosystem. The macrosystem refers to consistencies, in the form of content of lower order systems that exist at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or
ideology underlying such consistencies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Factors that participants mentioned in this category included culture and religion, and legislation about corporal punishment in South Africa.

**Culture and Religion.** Culture and religion form an integral part of a family’s values system, and parents use various discipline methods that are well accepted within their own culture and religion (Chang et al., 2010). This theme was seen in participants views through statements such as:

- “You’ll probably find that we have a more atheist culture now and we’ve got more druggies, teen pregnancies and the list goes on”
- “We are Christian and the Bible does give us an indication of how to raise our kids and haven’t found anything in that that can harm our children”
- “The idea of church has all the principles that we want to instil in our child, all the values”
- “In our culture you must respect older people and just be responsible for your actions.
- “Whatever actions you do, there’ll be a consequence”

The influence of culture and religion was a very strong and consistent theme that emerged in the data, particularly the influence of Christianity. All the participants indicated that they followed a Christian belief system and they based much of their decision making about discipline largely on this belief system. Christianity was not an inclusion criteria for the study but it proved to be a consistent factor with all the participants within this study. All participants indicated that they grew up in a Christian household and then chose to continue those beliefs in their own family value system. Many of the participants felt that ‘modern’ views about discipline were in conflict with biblical teachings and did more ‘harm’ than good, when disciplining children. As a result, some participants indicated that they rejected “modern discipline methods”.

Participants who fell into Afrikaans and Xhosa cultural groups indicated that respect and responsibility were of high value in their cultures and this formed an integral part in their
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

decision making process. Understanding that actions of consequences was very important to them, as they felt this aids in the development of bringing up a responsible child.

**Legislation about corporal punishment in South Africa.** The Children’s Act No.38 of 2005 (Government Gazette, 2010, p.10) states that abuse, in relation to a child, means any form of harm or ill treatment deliberately inflicted on a child. This includes assaulting a child or inflicting any other form of deliberate injury to a child and exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child psychologically or emotionally. The following comments reflect the influence of legislation on participant’s discipline process:

“Children have rights but the parents have the overall right. I’m not going to let a government tell me how I should raise my child”

“The fact that parents are not allowed to hit their children, is not right. I think if a child deserves a hiding, he should get a hiding”

“I think legislation has taken away a lot of power from authority figures to discipline and given them (children) more power than what they should have”

“I think it has changed. By them (the government) removing corporal punishment, especially for parents that I think that opened the gateway to see other alternatives for punishment”

Comments made about legislation regarding discipline in South Africa ranged from some participants not knowing about any legislation, to severe opposition to the laws. Some participants felt that it is inappropriate of the government to dictate to parents how they should discipline their children, and that government should focus on more pressing issues, such as teenage pregnancy and substance abuse. In addition, some participants explained that the government should focus attention on teaching children responsibility about their futures, as opposed to directing the process of discipline.

Legislation was also seen as being in direct conflict with some participants’ family value system. They saw legislation as giving children “more power than what they should have” and failing to teach children the consequences of their actions, therefore leaving them ill-
equipped to deal with their futures as adults. A participant commented about similar laws being passed in other countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and stated that in their opinion, those countries have the “worst discipline in the world”. The participant concluded that there is “little hope that it will help children in South Africa”.

The majority of the participants felt that current legislation was not effective and indicated that the laws did not alter their beliefs about discipline or change the methods used in their discipline process. Alternatively, two participants indicated that the current laws are a positive influence for parents, as they open avenues for parents to use alternative discipline methods.

**Chronosystem factors that influence discipline.** This category will focus on the influences of discipline mentioned by the participants that occur in the chronosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained that the dimension of time is a fundamental influence on the way systems interact. Participants had the least to say about this category, but two influences that emerged as themes include differences that have occurred in parenting and the evolution of media over time.

**Differences in parenting over time.** Many participants explained that parenting has become more challenging over time due to the multiple roles parents participate in, as a previous quote indicated, “There’s a lot of pressure, you already have stressful jobs, you have your husband and you have your studies, so you have just too much happening and you don’t have time”. This factor was explained as increasing stress and anxiety in some participant’s roles as parents.

In addition, it was noted that value systems within society have declined over time, “...you’ll probably find that we have a more atheist culture now and we’ve got more druggies, teen pregnancies and the list goes on”. Some participants believed that children’s
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

behaviour has declined over time, where a participant stated, “...we would never have done that in our day”. Some participants explained that if children were not taught to be responsible as children, that they would not be able to be responsible adults. This was believed to be a contributing factor into the ‘breakdown’ of society.

**Media.** Different modes of media were highlighted as influencing factors with discipline over time. Participants indicated that television was the most negative influence of media with regards to their children’s behaviour, as they often mimicked behaviour seen on television, supported by comments such as, “...TV is absolutely the worst thing ever invented. These days it’s sex on TV and it’s just disgusting” and “...some of the Barbie movies are like quite evil in a sense...”

**Conclusion**

This chapter began by reviewing the sample and methodology used. Thereafter, findings were summarised in a tabular format, after which themes and subthemes were discussed in detail. Specific focus included the influences of discipline, which were contextualised within Bronfrenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development. The various influences of discipline found within each sphere were discussed in detail. These spheres included the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem. The conclusions of this study, including the strengths limitations and recommendations for future research will be addressed in the next chapter.
Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

Overview of Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the aims and methodology of the study, and thereafter provides a summary of the findings along with conclusions reached. In addition, this chapter will outline strengths and limitations in the presented research, and a set of recommendations for future research.

Review of the Aims and Methodology of the Study

The primary aim of the study was to explore and describe the perceptions of parents regarding discipline with their children in the 2 to 5 year age group. The objectives that guided the current study were:

1. To explore and describe the perceptions of parents about disciplining children.
2. To explore and describe the discipline methods that parents use with their children.
3. To explore and describe the perceptions parents have about the influences on the methods of discipline they use with their children.

The current study used non-probably sampling, where snowball sampling helped obtain the sample needed for the research. Five couples, who had children between the ages of 2 – 5 years, gave verbal and written consent to be involved in the study. The findings of the study were generated from semi-structured interviews, and were focused on reaching the above mentioned aims.

Findings and Conclusions

The findings and conclusions that were deduced from this study will be outlined below:

Parents’ Perceptions about Discipline

The first aim of the study was to explore and describe the perceptions parents held about discipline with young children. From the data obtained, two subthemes were highlighted. The first subtheme was defined as the importance of discipline. The participants felt that
discipline was necessary in order to create structure in their children’s lives and to help them cope in the world. They also indicated that discipline helped children develop skills that would help them govern their own behaviour as adults, which would help them become responsible members of society.

The second subtheme that was highlighted was the establishment of boundaries at an early age. Participants indicated that discipline should be instilled in a child’s life from an early age, in order to help them govern their own behaviour. Routine was seen as an important factor to include in discipline, as this helped bring structure, consistency and stability in a child’s life. The participants in the current study highlighted the importance of helping their children develop into responsible adults who could contribute to society in an effective manner.

**Discipline Methods Used with Young Children**

The second aim of the study was to explore and describe the discipline methods that parents use with their children. Two subthemes were highlighted here, which included coercive methods of discipline and inductive methods of discipline.

Participants acknowledged the use of coercive methods of discipline that compel children to listen. They indicated that the most common coercive methods of discipline they used included speaking in a stern voice, shouting, and threatening to spank the child. They added that corporal punishment, or spanking, was used in situations where the child hurt another person, engaged in dangerous behaviour where they could get hurt, did not listen to their parents or were disrespectful or rude. Alternatively, two participants indicated that they did not support spanking and chose to include inductive methods of discipline.

The participants mentioned the use of a variety of inductive, or non-aggressive, discipline methods including communication, diverting the child’s attention, time out, reward systems and removing privileges.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication and explanation of behaviour was seen as useful in order to help children understand the reason that they were being disciplined and understand the consequences of their behaviour. This method was most often used with children from the age of 4 years. The next method that was often spoken about was the removal of privileges. This method was used for behaviours such as not listening or when parents made repeated requests to a child.

Using a reward system was also found to be a successful method. This method was used for behaviour such as listening to their parents, cleaning their room, being kind to their siblings and sleeping in their own bed. The rewards that some participants used included verbal praise, buying a gift, going to their child’s favourite place to play and spending time with their parents.

Finally, time out was mentioned as an inductive method used by most of the participants, but was reported as not being an ineffective method. This method was most often used with children between the ages of 3 and 5.

Influences of Discipline

The third aim of this study was to explore and describe the perceptions parents have about the influences on the methods of discipline they use with their children. The researcher used Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development to specifically contextualise the various influences mentioned by the participants in a systemic way. These spheres include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem.

Microsystem. Factors that the participants mentioned in this category included the age of the child, the child’s behaviour, the gender of the child, parenting styles and family values.

When commenting on the age of the child and discipline, participants indicated that the child’s level of insight influenced the type of discipline that the participants used. Inductive methods of discipline were reported appropriate for children aged 2 years and younger, while they felt that children who were 4 or 5 years of age had an understanding of the behaviour
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

that they engaged in and may experience a higher level of coercive discipline than their younger siblings.

Participants reported that negative behaviour that their children engaged with was an influencing factor in discipline methods used. They reported that they graded the negative behaviours according to their family value system. Coercive discipline methods, such as spanking, was used with behaviour that put their child or others in danger. Other coercive methods included speaking in a stern voice, shouting and threatening a child with a spanking or removal of privileges for behaviours such as accidently breaking things, not listening for a period of time, not sharing with their siblings and taking treats that they’re not supposed to take.

Although gender did not emerge as a factor influencing discipline overtly, results from the study indicated that participants who had boys reported higher frequencies of low impulse control and engaging in dangerous behaviour, which often lead to the use of coercive methods, than participants who had girls.

Results highlighted fathers as being the main disciplinarians in the home. Most mothers reported that their husbands often received more desirable behaviour from their children. This was often attributed to the mothers using a high level of inductive discipline methods when disciplining, where coercive discipline methods were often seen as successful with the fathers.

Family values was considered a pivotal influence in discipline amongst the participants. All the participants stressed that they wished to raise well-mannered children who could grow up to be responsible adults. The participants mentioned that their faith, which was Christianity, was a very important value system in the family. They explained that teachings from their faith helped them discipline their children.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mesosystem. Factors that participants mentioned in this category included spousal support, extended family and the parents’ own experience of discipline, school and peer group and finally the neighbourhood that they live in.

Many participants reported that having their spouse to support them in the discipline process was extremely important. Although fathers were reported as being the main disciplinarians, most participants indicated that they valued mutual support in the discipline process.

The influence of the extended family was also reported as being useful to the participants, as they felt they could learn from the experience of the older family members. Most of the participants indicated that they used their own upbringing in order to help discipline their children. One participant explained that she chose to use different discipline methods with her child, than those that were used with her, when she was growing up. She explained that the reason for this was that she grew up with some coercive discipline methods, such as spanking, which she believed should not be used with children. Alternatively, she chose to use inductive methods of discipline with her children.

Neighbourhoods were reported as having little to no influence on discipline by the participants. Participants reflected having relatively low involvement with their neighbours. In addition, the sample of participants in this study did not report living in high risk or dangerous neighbourhoods.

Many participants indicated that their children often expressed negative behaviours that they learnt from their peers at school. They strongly insisted that maintaining their own family values was extrememly important, therefore would urge their children to follow their own family value system, as opposed to ‘copying others’.

Exosystem. Factors that participants mentioned in this category included pressures on parenting and various forms of media.
All the participants expressed a concern in the area of pressures on parenting, particularly the mothers. They described difficulty in trying to balance work and home life and often felt guilty when overwhelmed with multiple responsibilities.

The media was seen as a strong influence in discipline. Many participants indicated that certain television programmes reflected negative behaviour for children, but found that some programmes targeting positive discipline methods, and were helpful in teaching varied discipline techniques. Other sources of media that participants reported as being helpful to gain information about discipline included the internet and books.

**Macrosystem.** Factors that participants mentioned in this category included culture and religion, and legislation about corporal punishment in South Africa.

Although Christianity was not an inclusion criteria for this study, it was a consistent influencing factor with all the participants. Participants indicated that they followed biblical teachings regarding discipline and reported that their faith formed the cornerstone for the belief system about discipline. In addition, participants who were from Afrikaans and Xhosa cultural groups indicated that respect and responsibility were of high value in their cultures and this formed an integral part in their discipline process.

The matter of South African legislation about discipline was not strongly supported by the participants in this study. The Children’s Act No.38 of 2005 (Government Gazette, 2010, p.10) states that abuse, in relation to a child, means any form of harm or ill treatment deliberately inflicted on a child. Some participants were unaware that South Africa had clear guidelines for discipline, while most knew about the legislation, but strongly disagreed with it. Alternatively, two participants supported the legislation, as they felt it helps parents seek alternative methods of discipline. All the participants declared that they did not condone abuse towards children, but that legislation hindered parents’ influence in their children’s
lives. Most of the participants felt that discipline was important and that sometimes coercive discipline was necessary, including spanking.

**Chronosystem.** Two influences that were indicated included differences that have occurred in parenting and the evolution of media over time.

Many of the participants expressed that balancing work and home life is very challenging with parents needing to juggle an increased number of roles, with limited resources. Some participants felt that morals and values within society has declined over time. As a result of these pressures, many participants felt that being a parent today is more challenging than in previous generations.

Finally, with regards to the influence of media over time, participants felt that television was the most negatively influencing form of media. Some participants felt that watching some programmes were in direct conflict with their family value system and found it difficult to minimise the influence it had on their children.

**Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

**Strengths of the Study**

Little research has been conducted in this area in South Africa and this study adds to the body of contextual knowledge.

The researcher interviewed both parents, as a couple, in order to understand how they disciplined their children as a couple. This was a positive outcome in the study as the data obtained from the interviews comprised information about discipline the parents used individually, and as well as a couple. This method also engaged the couples within conversation amongst themselves, which they found to be a positive process.

The data obtained was contextualised by using the spheres inBronfenbrenner’s Ecosystemic Theory of Human Development. Contextualising the influences of discipline in
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A systemic way helped reach the aims of the study. In addition, it helped in the improved understanding of the holistic influences of discipline in a holistic manner.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study adds to the body of research with regards to discipline, the limited availability of research in this area in South Africa can also be seen as a limitation, as this makes it difficult to make comparisons in relation to South African contexts.

The study made use of a non-probability sampling technique in order to establish a sample for the study. This sampling method is viewed as a limitation as the results cannot be generalised to the whole population. Within the context of this study, sampling may also be seen as a weakness – snowball sampling elicited a sample strongly religious in orientation which strongly effected the views that were elicited.

The interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants, as they found it convenient from a scheduling and child care perspective. Although the arrangement worked well in many respects, there were many interruptions from the children, which sometimes resulted in interruptions in the interviews.

Recommendations for Future Research

There is little available research conducted in South Africa on discipline with children, therefore the researcher proposes that more research be conducted in this area. In order to help generalise the results to the whole population, using both qualitative and quantitative sampling methods may help achieve the goal. In addition, the use of probability sampling would be important to gain diverse perspectives.

With regards to the ages of the children, who were between the ages of 2-5 years, additional research could be conducted on a variety of age cohorts. Furthermore, additional research is needed in order to help understand the discipline process in a variety of family contexts. Such examples may include single parent homes, blended families, same sex
parents and grandparents who parent grandchildren. Further understanding is needed with regards to discipline in various socio-economic backgrounds.

Finally, in order to help understand how parents discipline as individually, it will be beneficial to interview the couple separately.

**Conclusion**

The final chapter of the current study began by reviewing the conclusion of the study. This was followed by a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study, and finally recommendations for future research.
Reference List


REFERENCE LIST


REFERENCE LIST


A man’s search for meaning 1946.


Appendix A: Interview Schedule

Parents’ Perceptions of Discipline with Young Children

1. Can you please describe to me, your personal perception of disciplining children aged between 2 to 5 years?
   - Comparison to discipline with other age groups
   - Prevalence of inductive versus coercive discipline methods in South Africa

2. Can you also describe what discipline methods you use with your own child aged between 2 to 5 years of age?
   - Effectiveness of their chosen discipline methods
   - Inductive versus coercive discipline methods
   - Comparison of discipline methods with this age group, as opposed to other age groups?

3. Could you describe, based on your personal experience, what has influenced the discipline methods you use with your child of this age?
   - Expectations of appropriate behaviour in the nuclear family
   - Expectations of appropriate behaviour from extended family
   - Influence of the child’s peer group
   - Influence of school environment
   - Influence of the neighbourhood that the family lives in
   - Media influence
   - Legislation about discipline in South Africa
   - Social norms of discipline in South Africa
   - Family’s culture/religion
   - Family experiences over time (e.g: impact of divorce on methods of discipline, over time)
Appendix B: Letter to Participants

Research Information Statement for Parents

Parents’ Perceptions of Discipline with Young Children

Dear Participant

My name is Bianca van der Walt, and I am a Masters Psychology student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. I am conducting research on parental discipline of young children under the supervision of Lisa Currin and Alida Sandison.

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) has given its approval for the implementation of the proposed study and has furthermore met requirements of the Research Ethics Committee (Human).

I am seeking your participation in the study in order to understand the following three aims:

1. Parents’ perceptions about disciplining young children.
2. Discipline methods parents use with their children between the ages of 2 to 5 years.
3. Influences to the discipline of children between the ages of 2 to 5 years.

Each participant will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher. This will take approximately 1-1.5 hours to complete. All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence. The participants’ names will not be used and will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.

A summary report of the findings will be made available to the participants upon request. Participants are free to withdraw from the project at any time without penalty. If a participant identifies a need for support, resulting from their discussions initiated in the study, steps will be taken to accommodate this.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Bianca van der Walt
Researcher
NMMU

Lisa Currin
Supervisor
NMMU

Louise Stroud
Head of Department
NMMU

Alida Sandison
Co-Supervisor
NMMU
APPENDIX C: INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT

Appendix C: Information and Informed Consent

NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCHER’S DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of the research project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal investigator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Address | Psychology Clinic  
Building 07, Lower Ground, Room 18  
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University  
South Campus  
Port Elizabeth |
| Postal Code | 6031 |
| Contact telephone number (private numbers not advisable) | 076 806 7979 |

A. DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF PARTICIPANT

I, the participant and the undersigned

ID number

OR

I, in my capacity as

of the participant

ID number

Address (of participant)

A.1 HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

I, the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project

that is being undertaken by

from

of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, THE PARTICIPANT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1 Aim:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aim and Objections of the Study:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The primary aim of the research is to explore and describe the perceptions of parents regarding discipline with their children in the 2 to 5 year age group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Objectives of the Research Study:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To explore and describe the perceptions of parents about disciplining children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To explore and describe the discipline methods that parents use with their children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. To explore and describe the perceptions parents have about the influences on the methods of discipline they use with their children.

The information will be used for partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Artium in Counselling Psychology.

2.2 Procedures: I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time during the study.

2.3 Risks: There are no known risks. The researcher will process the interview experience with the participants at the end of the session. If further intervention is needed, the researcher will provide the contact details for UCLIN, the university psychology clinic, at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, for further assistance.

2.4 Possible benefits: As a result of my participation in this study I am contributing to the understanding of discipline with children between the ages of 2 to 5 years.

2.5 Confidentiality: My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators.

2.6 Access to findings: Any new information or benefit that develops during the course of the study will be shared as follows:

2.6 Voluntary participation / refusal / discontinuation:

- My participation is voluntary
- My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care / employment / lifestyle

Yes No
True False

3. THE INFORMATION ABOVE WAS EXPLAINED TO ME / THE PARTICIPANT BY:

(name of relevant person)

in Afrikaans English Xhosa Other

and I am in command of this language, or it was satisfactorily translated to me by

(name of translator)

I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.

4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation.

5. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself.

A.2 I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT:

Signed / confirmed at on 20

Signature of witness:

Full name of witness:

Signature or right thumb print of participant
### B. STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>declare that:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I have explained the information given in this document to (name of patient/participant) and / or his / her representative (name of representative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>He / she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>This conversation was conducted in <strong>English</strong> by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I have detached Section D and handed it to the participant <strong>YES</strong> <strong>NO</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed/confirmed at on 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of witness:</th>
<th>Full name of witness:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C. IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PATIENT/REPRESENTATIVE OF PARTICIPANT

Dear participant/representative of the participant

Thank you for your/the participant’s participation in this study. Should, at any time during the study:

- an emergency arise as a result of the research, or
- you require any further information with regard to the study

Kindly contact Bianca van der Walt at telephone number 076 806 7979
USE OF AUDIO RECORDINGS AND WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES – PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM.

Participant Name:_____________________________________________

Contact details:
Address:  ______________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Telephone no:______________________________

Name of researcher: Bianca van der Walt

Level of research:  Masters in Psychology (Counselling Psychology)

Brief title of research: Parents’ Perceptions of Discipline with Young Children

Aim of the research: The primary aim of the research is to explore and describe the perceptions of parents regarding discipline with their children in the 2 to 5 year age group.

Objectives of the research:
1. To explore and describe the perceptions of parents about disciplining children.
2. To explore and describe the discipline methods that parents use with their children.
3. To explore and describe the perceptions parents have about the influences on the methods of discipline they use with their children.

Supervisor: Lisa Currin

Co-Supervisor: Alida Sandison

Head of Department: Louise Stroud
**Declaration**

(Please sign in the blocks next to the statements that apply)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The nature of the research and the nature of my participation have been explained to me verbally and in writing.</td>
<td><strong>Signature:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I agree to participate in an interview and to allow audio-recordings of these to be made.</td>
<td><strong>Signature:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The audio-recordings will be transcribed only by the researcher.</td>
<td><strong>Signature:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Once the data has been transcribed and the study has been completed the recordings will be destroyed.</td>
<td><strong>Signature:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Witnessed by researcher:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>