Lori L. McNeil
Long Island University, CW Post Campus,
USA

Applying Institutional Ethnography to Childcare

Abstract

This research applies institutional ethnography to childcare by employing participant observation, interviews and text examination at two childcare research sites. The initial focus of this work describes the daily happenings in childcare utilizing a grounded theory approach and makes connections between what happens in childcare and the structures and institutions that dictate those experiences. The construction of work was found to be a major contributor to childcare experiences. I conclude with an examination of U.S. childcare policy and suggestions for improving these policies and offerings.

Childcare as Experience

Both as a female and single parent, I became enmeshed in the issue of childcare because it readily impacted my daily experiences. It was the continual struggles of physically locating appropriate childcare options as well as performing the emotional work (Hochschild 1979) of bringing myself to the place where I could manage my feelings of guilt, by leaving my son with another person, while I worked. More than that, however, it was coming to terms with the resentment that overwhelmed my daily childcare experiences, connected to simultaneously juggling all these issues, which completely enveloped me. The invisibility of these daily struggles left me wanting to understand, "why do I feel completely unsupported and alone," as I engaged in combining work and parenting. I was left with the conclusion that the romantic ideal of motherhood packaged so pristinely and elegantly did not fully live up to its promise. Based on this personal experience, I wish to understand why there is seemingly no room for promise, and it is this desire that motivates my research in childcare.

Theoretically and methodology, this omission of experience is likely connected to the inadequacy of methodological and analytical frameworks that do not completely examine and validate all societal knowledge (Sprague 2005). Smith (2005) adds to this discourse suggesting that it is the concept of institutional capture, serving as an unyielding hegemonic, that constructs barriers between researchers and experience. Researchers engage in institutional capture (Smith ibidem) when they allow professionals, experts and other high status groups to dictate that which

constitutes worthy research, research subjects, valid perspectives and solutions to any issue under study.

It should be noted that Smith's (2005) conception of institutional capture is theoretically grounded in and informed by Hartsock (1987) and Harding's (1987) work on standpoint theory. Variations of standpoint perspectives suggest that all knowledge is partial. Traditionally, those in the most powerful social positions have had the privilege of having their perspectives or standpoints become the dominant knowledge sources. While these perspectives have validity, they are incomplete. Thus, in order to understand society in a more complete fashion, standpoints of those who are not typically included in dominant narratives, about how the world works, must be explored in order to get closer to the truth. In this fashion, knowledge emanates from the oppressed.

Institutional capture limits inquiry and data gathering techniques because more powerful groups can only articulate their own experiences, and their experiences are not reflective of other groups. When researchers frame a single group's perspectives and/or experiences as the only knowledge base that exists, they engage in the act of privileging. Much like my own childcare experiences presented above, other experiences are not represented and documented, but nonetheless still serve as potential knowledge sources surrounding childcare. The outcome is that issues are consequently framed and thus defined in a partial and distorted manner. Because of this partiality and distortion, complete understanding of any issue or experience cannot be achieved.

A possible solution, according to Smith (2006), lies in institutional ethnography. It is the work of institutional ethnography that seeks institutional transformation. Institutional transformation centers on people's everyday experiences as an avenue to making visible macro level structures or institutions that create these daily experiences. When connections between daily experiences and institutions can be located, researchers are more able to address an issue thereby transforming that very institution. In sum, the application of institutional ethnography avoids institutional capture, as researchers honor the knowledge of the insider as an avenue to discovering the power of institutions.

According to Smith (2005), institutional ethnography initially examines how things work. By beginning with everyday experiences, subordinate positions in society are made central and valid knowledge bases. Institutional ethnography seeks an interface between experiences and institutional practices that create those experiences. While experience is central, experience in and of itself is NOT truth. The key is documenting everyday practices and linking those experiences to larger macro structures. This translocal process begins in local/everyday experiences as an avenue to discovering what Smith (1987) calls, relations of the ruling.

Ruling relations seek to uncover the ways that institutional power is part of and located in people's everyday activities and experiences (Smith ibidem). The examination of ruling relations ideally begins with experience moving to processes such as government regulations that take form in everyday, doing practices. Smith (2006) explains that the practice of institutional ethnography occurs in two components; one, documenting how things work, and two, identifying the macro level or structural practices which create those daily doing experiences.

Institutional ethnography is neither a distinct method nor theoretical perspective, but instead is conceptualized as a combination of the two. The work of institutional ethnography can be exiguous because examples of its application are not widely developed. This research provides such an example by applying institutional

ethnography to childcare. I do caution the reader that this research should not be considered a complete ethnographic account of childcare but rather as a template of how institutional ethnography can be implemented.

I began the work of exploring childcare and how things work by spending several weeks engaged in participant observation at two childcare settings. One setting, I refer to as, Sunnyside, was a family-style childcare. Family-style childcare is characterized by care giving within the home of the childcare provider, meaning that work and home occupy the same physical space. The second research setting was a daycare center meaning that care is provided in a separate facility that is not a private home. In the pages that follow, I refer to this site as, the Center. Within each research setting, there were ample opportunities for me to collect and analyze various childcare texts such as newsletters, mission statements of each facility, parent handbooks, menus, postings, notes to parents and caregivers, artwork from children and incoming phone calls. The final component of this research involved interviews of three caregivers, three parents, an administrator and group interviews of the children observed in each setting.

Childcare Literature and Structure: Examining the Text

Contemporary literature dealing with parenting and childcare has focused on women, particularly the problems of combining the status of mother with that of provider (Noor 2002; Erdwins et al. 2001; Maume and Houston 2001; Rothbard 2001; Perry-Jenkins, Repetti and Crouter 2000; Galinsky 1999; Kossek, Noe and DeMarr 1999; Rose 1999; White 1999; Brown 1998; Hochschild 1997). A traditional work ethic stipulates complete allegiance to one's job duties whereas mothering responsibilities also makes this same claim (Acker 1990). The outcome is that mothers experience a great deal of stress, conflict and guilt as they attempt to navigate family and work spheres. When these spheres cannot be fused, the effect, defined as structural interference, makes the meeting of either demand nearly impossible (Galinsky 1999). Structural interference, for example, manifests itself in the "three o'clock slump" (Hochschild 1997). The slump refers to the prevalence of phone calls to children originating from the workplace — three o'clock is the time when children typically arrive home from a school day. During the three o'clock slump, work interferes with parenting and parenting with work. The result, defined as, "spillover," can be construed as a role struggle for parents in the form of competing dual statuses (Erdwins et al. 2001; Maume and Houston 2001; Galinsky 1999; Kossek et al. 1999).

Parenthood is oftentimes portrayed as a struggle—or a gulf between expectations and daily-lived reality (Galinsky 1999). One mother, for example, explains this situation as "[a] conflict between having this idealized vision of what a great job is and having this idealized vision of what being a great parent is. And the higher the bar gets raised on either of those fronts, the more difficult it is to meet those expectations" (Galinsky ibidem: 201). Brown's (1998) ethnographic research of a daycare center found that women get caught between expectations of motherhood and workforce participation essentially combining need and guilt and thereby making for a potent and potentially explosive mixture.

Work and family conflict research addresses childcare as a family/work conflict and one of two distinct domains. For example, a depletion argument suggests that increased adherence to either a work role or parental role results in less absorption of the second role (Noor 2002; Rothbard 2001). Thus, the assumption is

that…"engagement in family is achieved at the expense of work…" (Rothbard ibidem: 655).   In this case, role conflict centers on the allocation of a fixed number of resources devoted to either a work role or a family role. Rothbard (2001) explains this conflict, in part, as one that tends to be gendered and motivated by differing societal expectations for mothers and fathers.

Beyond work and family literature, other research has focused on childcare cost, quality of care and the types of childcare traditionally available (Buchbinder et al. 2005; Huston 2004; Crittenden 2001). This is so because the workforce structure has experienced incredible change with the increase of women entering the workforce, thereby creating the need for viable childcare options. While examining issues of cost, conflict, availability and quality issues, research seeking to understand childcare from the perspective of all stakeholders tends to be missing. For example, research centered on caregivers' or parents' perspectives do not fully capture all aspects of childcare (Buchbinder et al. ibidem; Corsaro 2003). Exploring childcare based on caregivers, parents and children in childcare provides an insider view of childcare that is more comprehensive than provided in past research. Applying institutional ethnography to childcare addresses this research gap.

Since the purpose of institutional ethnography focuses on connecting experience to structure, it is useful to have an understanding of formal childcare structure. Childcare is a commodity that is bought and sold. At its most basic level it is bound by a capitalist economic system. In its purest form, a capitalist economy is characterized by the market-driven activity of profit making and the individual choice of service/product offering and consumption. This orientation posits childcare as a service where profits must be realized in order to be successful which means that childcare offerings in quantity and quality are impacted by a profit motive. Beyond our economic system, an acknowledgement of the structure that regulates its production and consumption is necessary. In essence, childcare is regulated in a layered fashion.

At the macro level, childcare is regulated in part by the federal government. Federal regulation occurs via funding requirements.   Funds by the federal government are released to individual states, states then make the decisions on how the funds will be used and distributed. The overwhelming majority of direct federal funding is appropriated to low-income families as part of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Long and Clark 1997). Indirect childcare funding, which is primarily utilized by middle and upper income families, occurs via tax credits and reimbursements.

Individual states are the primary regulation entities directing childcare.   In Michigan, the state in which the research data were drawn, childcare services receiving remuneration must be licensed. Licensing focuses on and is limited to issues such as staff training/education, age of caregivers, criminal record of caregivers, inspection of physical structure, caregiver-to-child ratios, disciplinary procedures, nutritional content of meals served and type and presence of equipment (Long and Clark 1997). For example, educational requirement for daycare center directors is equivalent to a two-year degree, but caregivers in daycare centers can be as young as 18 years old and need no formal training or education. Caregiver-to-child regulations in daycare centers and family childcare facilities include a one-to-six caregiver/child ratio stipulating that only four of the six children can be under 30 months and only two of those can be under 18 months of age.

The final layer of structure relative to childcare delivery stems from the facility itself as directed by the State. Facility regulations can include but are not limited to

pricing schedules, late fees, hours of operation, illness guidelines, care giving philosophies, disciplinary guidelines and food guidelines. In the childcare settings I observed, for example, the philosophies involved modified versions of Montessori styles of learning. In interview and observation, I found that these styles generally refer to children learning at their own pace, child-directed activities and the nurturing of both learning and independence. The modified component of this style refers to a higher level of organization that is normally part of a Montessori style of learning and care giving.

My work in the childcare setting began with the question, "what is happening here," as is the practice of emergent theory. Emergent theoretical frameworks and/or concepts are discoverable within or through an examination of the data itself (Glaser, 1992). Thus, I began without preconceived ideas or hypothesis to be tested but instead immersed myself in the data.

The work of documenting a typical day of childcare transpired via the production of field notes of observations and interviews from each of the two research settings. Based on these data, I began an initial open coding analysis to uncover the patterns within the behavior and verbalization of the stakeholders. The initial open coding led me to the practice of memoing, the goal of which Glaser (1992) identifies as directing the researcher to a higher level of abstraction of data to the extent that saturation occurs. Saturation is realized when researchers find that continued analysis of transcripts or field notes produce no new insights to the memoing process.

My next step involved a review of sociological as well as childcare literature. Through an examination of this literature, I was able to identify several major concepts that I argue both fit and explain the data uncovered in the childcare research settings. It is, after all, the goal of ethnography generally to discover new concepts within the research setting that were not evident or identified in past research (Buchbind et al. 2005). In fact, I found that institutional ethnography specifically lent itself to the application of this inductive style of grounded theory explaining childcare experiences.

Through an examination of the sequence process surrounding people's daily doings in childcare settings, I began to empirically explore how these layers are knitted together to form a social organization based on the relations of the ruling. I identified the major processes occurring throughout the day as, arrivals of the children, meals/snacks, different playtime/activity styles, naptime and departures at day's end. While I do not present all research data discovered, I instead use vignettes of this work to illustrate points of intersection between people's actual activities and those institutions impacting those experiences.

Inside Childcare—How Things Work: Examining Childcare Routines

In examining the actual relations of childcare, immediately evident is the incredible amount of care giving for children that is steeped in routine. Other researchers have also documented the routinous nature of childcare (Brown 1996; Beardsley 1990). The children, caregivers and parents who together produce the organized activity of childcare all have intimate knowledge of the routines of a typical childcare day. In fact, those very routines of childcare, and the stakeholders' knowledge of those routines, are a significant dimension of childcare informing this research.

A usual childcare day tends to include routines characterized by arrivals, breakfast, play and learning time, lunch, napping, snacks, playtime and, finally,

departures. Throughout the childcare day, home and daycare are significantly integrated; childcare workers, parents and children all engage in connecting processes. The childcare routines themselves begin even before the first child arrives in daycare. Caregivers come in early and stay late in order to organize materials, food, activities, and plans for the days and weeks ahead. Thus, as the first parents and children arrive at the childcare setting, often before daylight, they walk into rooms where activities are already going on: favorite morning videos, toys set up, and games set up. These caregiver activities are crucial aspects for understanding how home and work are interdependent and how all work connected to care giving is done.

One of the arguments I make is that commonsense knowledge of the daily routines in childcare is a vital part of how working parents and their children manage to integrate their home, work and daycare roles. For example, parents use knowledge of routines to anticipate, plan and strategize their morning leaving process; they draw on this knowledge as they transition from parent to worker for themselves and as they assist their child's transition from home to daycare. As Schutz (1967) noted, we transition from direct to indirect social experience of another person; that such a change is a gradual progression, a temporal process involving a continuous series of experiences. Rather than seeing the morning drop-off as abrupt, for example, it instead can be perceived as a process of moving from the realm of immediate experience of a person to experiencing that person only in imagination and memory (Schutz ibidem). Of course, this knowledge can only be useful if stability in childcare exists. With attention focused on this issue of stability and routine, I begin by presenting description of the childcare arrival process; a critical albeit understudied component of childcare (Corsaro 2003).

The day begins very early indeed. The late winter morning is brisk with the sun still making its way out to greet the day. It is 6:25 a.m. on a Friday morning. Caregivers, Rich and Leslie Sylar explain to me that when the children begin arriving, it occurs quickly and this statement proves to be quite accurate.

The first child, Molly, arrives at 6:55 a.m. Molly is 18 months old. Her mother informs the Sylers that they had gone to bed late last night and both are a bit grumpy. Molly's mother removes Molly's pink snowsuit and places it in the cubbyhole located in the entranceway. Molly's mother also removes Molly's shoes and they are placed neatly against the wall in the entranceway opposite the cubbyholes. Molly and her mother say a goodbye lasting only about 30 seconds. Molly quickly strolls into the living room and begins to interact with Rich.

While Molly's mother is still there, Timmy and Courtney arrive with their mother. Of the group, Timmy is the youngest at twelve months of age and Courtney is the second oldest. Timmy's mother is explaining that he had received five immunizations yesterday but despite the shots he seems to be feeling fine with no elevated temperature today. Timmy's mother and Leslie discuss the type of food Timmy should eat today. As Timmy and Courtney's mother leaves, another parent enters before the door is shut.

Next, Jessica and her father arrive. Her father helps Jess off with her coat and shoes following the same routine as the other parents and children. At the sight of me, Jess moves closer to her father and grabs his arm. Jess, a three-year-old, holds a book up, showing me what she brought. Jess's father saying, "give me a hug," leaves the house. It is 7:01 a.m. Six minutes have passed and four children have arrived at Sunnyside.

The importance of routines in childcare is central to this research. For example, the seemingly innocuous activity of stowing a child's shoes provides support for this assertion. Both Molly and Jess's parents engaged in this familiar routine of carefully placing their child's shoes against the hallway wall. Garfinkel (1967) explains that in addition to commonsense knowledge of social structures playing an important role in people's production and control of everyday activities, he notes that it also enables people's production and control of social affect. Indeed, Garfinkel argued that we draw on our commonsense knowledge of routine interactions "so as to solicit enthusiasm and friendliness or avoid anxiety, guilt, shame, or boredom" (Garfinkel ibidem: 49). In this case, the affect parents were perhaps seeking was for both their child as well as themselves to feel positive, happy or content about their day ahead—that of either daycare or work. Thus, engagement in this routine was a cuing mechanism for all parties to perform this transition work regardless of Jess's hesitancy of a stranger or Molly's weariness.

Molly, looking up at me, does seem tired, as her mother had explained. I noticed how very early some of the children must arrive at childcare because their parent's work schedule requires them to do so. The children's schedules, which in part determine their daily doings, are not just connected to the rules of the childcare facility but the hours of operation are connected to the demands or rules of the economy. It should be noted that in most cases when referring to the economy, I make the connection of work as being an outcome of and bound to our economic institution. Thus, this example demonstrated the centrality of the economy relative to determining a toddler's schedule. In this way, I begin connecting the actual relations (Smith 1987), or the daily doing of things in people's lives to the ruling relations, those institutions that impact, direct and even predetermine those experiences or actual relations. This initial endeavor started the work of translocal mapping (Turner 2006: 140-1) the purpose of which connects experiences to institutions—that is the very foundation of institutional ethnography.

Returning attention back to the actual relations (Smith 1987), at the Center it is now 7:15 a.m. Tanner, an older three-year-old arrives with his father. His father brings in an extra sweatshirt and puts it in the child's cubbyhole located in the middle of the room. Tanner's father waves goodbye to him but Tanner does not notice because he is busy at play. Darla, an office worker, arrives for work and walks through the main room. Darla is followed by the arrival of Sarah who is accompanied by her mother. "Bye Sarah banana," says her mother. Sarah, an older three-year-old, replies with a, "no, no, no." Sarah whines a little and shuffles her feet but begins to engage in play as her mother leaves.

Linda arrives with her mother and is carrying a ball. Linda shows me the ball saying that the character on the ball is evil. Linda is finished showing her new toy and now wants her mother to read her a story before she leaves. Her mother says that she can't because she must now go to work. Linda, on the other hand, with only a little whining, is able to convince her mother to read a short story. They sit on the small couch under the loft and Tanner soon joins them to hear the story. This mother begins her work before she enters her "actual" work setting. Her work involves the awareness that her daughter needs a slow transition into daycare this morning.

Since the concept of work is a primary focus to institutional ethnography, I offer a definition of work as anything requiring both effort and competence (Smith 1987), involving concerted and coordinated activity (Turner 2006). It is important to note that the concept of work includes not only the activity performed by the caregivers but also the work performed by children and parents connected to the actual relations of

childcare. In these observations, caregivers were performing work as they provided emotional and physical support to children. Children and parents were also employing effort and competence as stakeholders in their own childcare experiences. It is this notion of work and its connection to social affect or emotion that I continue to explore.

Emotion Work As Routine

One example of how work and emotion is characterized by routine is exemplified by the arrival of Timothy, a five-year-old, who is being carried by his father. Timothy does not want to be put down and his father tries to distract him by talking about what Timothy will do today and the fun he will have. Timothy is not comforted by his father's words and is attempting to engage him in conversation hoping to extend his father's stay. His father leaves and Timothy watches him exit from a window overlooking the entranceway. Timothy now quietly goes to the coloring table and begins drawing a picture.

For Timothy and others, emotion work (Hochschild 1979) is performed throughout the day. Emotion work involves managing the feelings of others to produce the right emotion based on a social setting. For example, parents informing children how much fun they will have during the day, children waving through the window as their parent leaves and caregivers dispensing physical affection and "I love you[s]" to children is all work activity. While this work is not usually acknowledged as such, emotion work is a major component of childcare that tends to go unnoticed.

Oftentimes, emotion work is performed as goodbyes or glances cast through what has become known as a "waving window" (Brown 1998). A waving window provides a transitional space for many of the children and has become part of many childcare settings. The window usually overlooks either a walkway or parking lot. The child can stand at the window and wave a final "goodbye" to a parent. Not all children and parents make use of the window, but many do. Timothy was performing emotion work as his father was leaving the daycare. A series of easing Timothy into the childcare day such as his father reading him a story and verbal reassurances from caregivers did not soothe Timothy emotionally. After approximately 45 minutes, Timothy's father was finally able to extract himself from the room. Timothy immediately positioned himself at the waving window and watched his father depart. The window and the wave eased Timothy, and perhaps his father as well, into his daycare/work role and world. The waving window also served the same purpose at the end of the day. Parents, children, and caregivers were observed engaging in a variety of emotion work.

Other such emotion work was performed in childcare settings in various ways. For example, Timmy, an infant, had just received five immunizations the prior day. Although Timmy did not have an elevated temperature, his mother was apprehensive about his welfare that day. Because of this, she spent a longer time than usual in the entranceway watching him and chatting to his caregivers. Timmy's mother spent time talking about the number of bottles Timmy should have today reasoning that perhaps he would need an extra to soothe him. The caregiver listened attentively to Timmy's mother as she begins to stroke the soft hair atop the infant's head. Timmy's mother, still hesitant, paused but made her departure as Timmy crawled away from her, planting himself onto a caregiver's lap. Timmy's mother interpreted the cue

provided by her infant and ducked out the door to begin her workday. These information exchanges tell daycare workers about events before the daycare experience that may effect the daycare day, and perhaps will necessitate extra attention, care and understanding. It serves as a kind of indirect parenting by parents—parents are, in effect, extending their personal caretaking role beyond the moment when they exit for work. This extension also serves as an engagement in emotion work but in this case, work performed by the parent occurs outside of the typical or traditional work setting but is still defined as work based on the definition presented earlier. Insights from a phenomenological framework (Garfinkel 1967) add clarity to the notion of social affect as it is administered through routine activity.

Drawing on Schutz's (1967) phenomenology, Garfinkel (1967) noted that in order to manage their daily affairs, people routinely draw on their commonsense knowledge of the social structures organizing their environment. Knowledge of social structures enables people in everyday life to anticipate other's actions, plan their own actions, and thereby offers a participant some degree of control over his/her situation. Controlling a situation through anticipation presupposes a set of more or less vivid expectancies about typical situations, typical courses of action, typical types of people, and so on. The more intimate the knowledge of a situation, the more vivid the imagined expectations. All the knowledge is based on past experiences in the same or similar situations with the same or similar people. In short, knowing from past experiences what to expect in a current situation, we can plan ahead and anticipate responses, as Timmy's mother does, so as to negotiate and control how a situation will turn out.

Schutz (1967) also argued that when away from others we have a more or less anonymous image of what they are doing, how they are doing, and whom they are with. The more familiar a person is with the actual activities and people in a situation, the more vivid their picture when imagining their actions. Intimate knowledge of the people and routines of daycare, I argue, enables a parent, while at work, to imagine their child in vivid detail. In this case, the imagined pictures of Timmy produce calm and ease, relieving guilt about a child who may not feel well.

Next, Sandy, another full-time caregiver, arrives for her workday. Gloria, who arrived 15 minutes earlier with her parents, begins putting a puzzle together at one of the tables but Gloria seems less interested in the puzzle than are her parents. Sandy makes her way to the table and comments on their work and begins chatting with the parents. Gloria's parents stay for perhaps 15-20 minutes and complete the entire puzzle before departing. Gloria's mother says, "I'll see you at naptime, I have to go, goodbye."

Another five-year-old boy arrives and he is excited to see his buddy, Mark, and quickly goes to him. A father arrives with his son, Garrand. Garrand seems cautious about his surroundings and stays close to his father. Sarah approaches Garrand's father and tells him about what she is doing. Garrand's father nods to her as Garrand tries to persuade his father to stay and put a puzzle together with him. Still another father arrives with his five-year-old son, Adam. Adam holds onto his father's pants pockets as though he is preventing him from leaving. Adam and his father now sit on a bench by themselves and Adam's father is reading a story to him. As Adam's father tries to leave, Adam begins to whine and his father sits down again.

Garrand's father is finally permitted to leave. Angela, a caregiver, walks to Garrand, takes his hand and leads him to the small back room where they will all congregate and talk about their day. Neal and his father arrive through the mudroom and enter the main room. With a quick exit Neal's father says to him, "you are so

strong, I love you." Karri, the lead caregiver, and Sandy make their way to the small room where most of the children are now congregated. A mother enters with her son and Garrand's father returns and enters the small room where his son is. He leaves again saying to Angela, "he just didn't want to let go today, no not today." Angela nods in commiseration with him.

Karri sings, "its time to put the books away so we can talk about our day." Karri and Sandy begin talking about the conference they had attended and all the time providing the children with great detail about things such as the weather. Karri describes how Sandy's hair was blowing in the wind and the children begin to giggle over the description of their caregiver's hair. The children are all sitting on the floor on carpet squares. Karri asks the children to think about something they did yesterday they can share with the group. Karri gently broaches the subject that Sandy is leaving at the end of the week. Sandy has taken another job at a bank and is going to return to college. "She won't be a teacher anymore," Karri explains. "Even though they, [referring to other teachers who have left the Center] are not our teachers anymore, they can still be our friends."

In this short amount of time, parents, children and caregivers where all involved in the work surrounding child caring but they were not just involved in this work, they were effected by the larger structures that literally shape their daily experiences. Perhaps most evident of this impact is the example of Sandy's leaving the daycare center where caring for money becomes more important work than caring for children. These local experiences become translocal when one evaluates the construction of work and how work is valued and remunerated in contemporary society.

Interestingly, one caregiver explained in interview that his work is consistently devalued. For example, others may see him sitting outside on a sunny spring day and interpret his activity as simply watching children. In this way, his work is not defined as real work because he is simply watching children play. These idealized activities of childcare, however, are few and far between he added. In fact, the better childcare work is performed, the more invisible it becomes (Smith 1987). Constant cleaning, children's tantrums and the organization associated to being a childcare provider is seldom acknowledged, making his work of care giving invisible and consequently not valued. Since the care giving of children has not traditionally been regarded as work, value is not usually connected to his work. In this same way, Sandy's work yields wages that reflect the devalued nature of caring for children. These observations provide additional mapping opportunities demonstrating the power matrix embedded within the relations of the ruling—that is, how the economic/work institution profoundly affects individual experience.

Roughly 25 minutes has passed and another wave of children begin arriving at Sunnyside. Tony arrives with his daughter, Christine. Christine is a young three-year-old. Tony begins interacting with Rich as they discuss the weather and then the conversation turns to sports. Tony explains that Christine woke up in a bad mood today. Tony is in the entranceway about one minute and begins to leave which causes Christine to rush to his side, grabbing his arm. Tony, distracting Christine from his leaving, informs Rich and Leslie that Christine brought a doll with her today. Tony leaves as Christine watches him and then she looks around the room to survey what she might now like to do.

Another father enters the house with his son, a toddler named Caleb. Caleb's dad watches him anxiously as he settles in and he also begins a conversation with Rich. Caleb's father wants to leave but seems hesitant about departing. He

mentions to Leslie that Caleb is a bit grumpy today. He laughs, "he's all yours Leslie, the check's in the mail," and he ducks out the door.

The last of the children have now arrived. The Sylers have only nine children today, a light day, as Mona and Larry do not come on Fridays. It is now 7:55 a.m. and only one hour has passed since the first child arrived at Sunnyside. Based on state licensing regulations, the Sylars can have as many as twelve children in their family daycare facility at any one time. Thus, whether the two caregivers can successfully provide care for more or fewer children, the number is predetermined regardless of ability.

During arrivals, children, parents and providers all work through a process of role change. For parents, this change involves relinquishing their direct parenting role and shifting into their roles as workers. For children, this change involves a transition from parent care to childcare, which often involves a shift from mom and/or dad's baby to a mature child in a public setting. For childcare workers, it means taking on the responsibility for "surrogate parenting." In many respects, this shift happens as soon as children and parents open the door. But, upon closer examination, none of this work involves an instantaneous transition – one that commences with the simple but powerful opening of a door as they enter the childcare setting. Those transitions, and the emotion work that eases them, started at home, and many of them started days or weeks before the childcare day begins.

In both childcare settings, the issue of parents leaving was tenuous for children, parents and also for caregivers. A discussion of why work and family operate in a disconnected fashion continues the work of connecting actual and ruling relations. A traditional work ethic suggests that a disjuncture between work and family is mandatory. Acker (1990) explains this phenomenon as workers who are disembodied. This concept describes workers as having a strict allegiance to work such that they are totally devoted to their work settings. Goffman (1961) noted, however, that integration is typical even in situations where people are otherwise expected to keep their personal and work roles segregated. Even in the white, male, middle class world he investigated, Goffman (ibidem) observed that workers routinely engage in multi-situated matters, showing concern for relationships and persons not present. He argued that such externally grounded matters have a relevant claim on a person's time—a claim that a worker may be able to honor only by diverting some attention from work. Thus, a disembodied worker, while perhaps serving the purpose of the economy, leaves little room for families and maneuvering these venues simultaneously. One way to begin fusing these venues, which of course represents a distinct departure from a business toward a human relations model of work, is to evaluate and produce connective opportunities for children and parents.

One researcher suggests that those connections must start in childcare settings (Bookman, 2004), thereby alleviating barriers between work and family so that the needs of both spheres are equally addressed. She explains that, "the development and sustainability of strong community-based childcare programs is one of the most important building blocks of a healthy civil society" (Bookman, ibidem: 154). Establishing work release time for parents, for example, is one way to promote a healthy civil society by allowing and encouraging parental participation in childcare settings. This type of volunteer release time can be negotiated, especially through unions, as part of employee benefit packages. When parents are continually involved in childcare, as was demonstrated by Gloria and Linda's parents, they build critical connections to other children, parents, and caregivers that translate into stable childcare settings as well as strong communities generally.

Parents having the opportunity to engage in volunteer release time are more likely to develop the type of relationship with caregivers that facilitates, kid talk. Kid talk is the practice of relaying less obvious information about a child's emotional state. It was observed that sometimes the routines of relaying information on difficult mornings was transmitted in the code phrase, "not having a good day," or some variant thereof. On one morning, Tony, the father of Christine, cued the caregiver immediately upon arrival that his daughter woke up on the wrong side of the bed. This phrase suggested to the caregiver that a child would likely have difficulty settling into daycare. Still another father cued the same caregiver later in the morning that his son, Caleb, was "a bit grumpy."

It should be noted that, based on a narrow version of an appropriate work ethic, many parents do not have the luxury of scheduling extra time either before or after work in their child's daycare. The time famine (Williams 2000) so prevalent in the lives of working families can be addressed in part with work release time in order to volunteer time to one's daycare. The following example provides illustration of the time famine and the need for release time for working families. "Julie, a biologist…leaves her experiments only briefly for family business, like calling the dentist to schedule appointments for the girls. She says triumphantly, 'I got them both in on the same day!' Her thoughts keep drifting back to the field trip her daughter's second-grade class is taking tomorrow. She wishes she could get time off work to accompany them…" (Bookman 2004: 2). At the very least, valuing family life at the same level as work life should be a priority. It is establishing such a work environment—one that doesn't punish parents who are involved with their families, which creates a dual-centric (Galinsky 2003) economy. Dual-centrism represents a viable direction for the United States.

One example of how women have been punished in work settings points to the issue of times when children are ill and cannot attend childcare. This area of childcare need has received scant attention requiring parents, usually mothers, to take days off from work to fill the childcare gap when their child is ill. Crittenden (2001) refers to the practice of women's reduced participation in the paid sector as the, mommy tax. Caring for children during emergencies, illnesses and during atypical work schedules, are gaps in childcare that cause considerable stress in the lives of working families. In many cases, gaps are filled using a patchwork-style of childcare meaning multiple caregivers are employed to fill the entire range of childcare needs. In an interview with a parent, I learned that when her son, Daniel, is ill, Dawn will usually phone the daycare and actually touch base with a caregiver to receive an assessment of her son. The relations of the ruling to which Smith (1987) refers, directs and subordinates Daniel and Dawn's experience instead privileging an economy that demands disembodied workers. Non-punitive alternatives are in dire need of development. Ultimately it is the purpose of institutional ethnography to engage in the work of improving institutions when they do not fully meet the needs of a society.

Boundary Work—Connecting Work and Family

Family and work tend to be conceptualized as completely segmented entities. While involved in this research, I discovered abundant examples integrating family and work domains. The outcome, defined as boundary work, of this integration reduces and often eliminates the separateness of these traditionally distinct spaces. Boundary work refers to the strategies and practices individuals use to engage in role movement or transitions (Nippert-Eng 1996). Boundary work modifies or

renegotiates cultural categories creating what is defined in the literature as third places. While family and work are referred to as first and second places, third places capture activity not neatly falling into either of these cultural constructions. Third places essentially exist as instances of informal public life activities made possible by the renegotiation of role boundaries as reinforced by internal or external cues (Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate 2000). Engagement of boundary work was evident on many occasions during childcare observations. I continue to describe how things happen in childcare settings to better understand the significance of boundary work to stakeholders.

At the Center, it is 8:55 a.m. and breakfast is ready. Karri releases the first group of children from the back room and the children begin washing hands and using the restroom. The children will be eating bagels with cream cheese, apple slices and milk. Eighteen children are now at the Center. Three tables are set for breakfast and a caregiver is present at each table directing discussion and manners.

At 9:00 a.m. the bell on the door rings and many of the children look up to see who is coming through the door. It is Diane, the Center director, with her two children, Aaron and Katie. Aaron does not want to enter the room and scowls. Diane picks him up and all three of them head toward the office. Although Diane is the Center's director, she often must do double and even triple duty as an administrator, parent and caregiver, performing all roles simultaneously. Diane's triple duty is part of a larger social structure that dictates women's work in an overlapping, continuous and invisible nature. Essentially, because the caring of children is not typically defined as work in a traditional sense, Diane's involvement in several work situations is not likely to be acknowledged or identified as such.

Back at Sunnyside, the plan is to play downstairs now that breakfast is finished. After the children use the bathroom, they begin their organized descent. Several of the older children approach the basement window peering outward toward a toad house located there. The toads burrow under the gravel for the winter but sometimes come up during nice days. The toads, however, do not show themselves today and the preschoolers move on to another activity. Leslie and the preschoolers begin a structured exercise of matching colors and shapes on laminated folders. This activity is organized in such a way that the children perform the matching of shapes and colors and wait—expecting that Leslie or Rich will check their work. After about an hour of play, the playroom cleanup begins signaling an end to that play activity.

Rich facilitates the next activity engaging the children in circle time with the children discussing what item they brought for show-and-tell. The children, however, seem unable to settle into this activity. Leslie responds by calling out, "okay, everyone on the floor on their backs." The group scurries to find their places in the living room giggling as they do so. The giggles and excitement indicate that the children know exactly what is up-coming and it is an activity they enjoy. Upon finding spots they claim as there own, Leslie instructs them to "peddle your bikes." The children, with legs in the air, begin peddling furiously. "Where will we go," Leslie asks. "We are going to McDonalds," yells one of the preschoolers without hesitation. As Leslie takes on different roles at varying locations to which they peddle, the children also must adopt different roles such as order taker or hamburger maker.

At the Center, Karri is cleaning up breakfast and organizing the next activity. By 11:00 a.m., the children are now busily involved with circle time activity. One child has brought cardboard tubes from home and the caregivers are using them as part of this activity. Many times, children bring different items from home to be used at the Center. The children now divide into three groups and use the cardboard tubes as

telescopes. Each child then peers through the tube and spots something they did that day and describes the activity. This activity not only reflects the Center's high scope philosophy referred to earlier but also represents a layer of the structure directing the children's play. By 11:25 a.m., the children are again transitioned to another activity signaled by dismissal from the tables.

The activity of circle time or show-and-tell offers a powerful example of how work and family do not exist as separate spheres. The cubbyholes described on many occasions are labeled with each child's name and are large enough to also stow items such as those brought for "show-and-tell," as well as a favorite security blanket, shoes, coats, or a changing of clothes. These items, especially those for show-and-tell as well as security items, provide a link from home to childcare. Oftentimes special care in storing these items was observed by parents as they began the process of relinquishing their direct care giving duties in order to don their work role. The actual items brought to childcare from home as well as the routines surrounding the stowing of items, revealed a transitional and connective purpose. Indeed, bringing private belongings into public spaces begins the process of boundary blurring (Shapira and Navon 1991). These routines served as an opportunity to fuse work and family spheres creating an arena where these domains co-exist resulting in the creation of a third place. The sharing of food, followed by naptime, continues the connective process defined as boundary work.

At 12:00 p.m., all the children are eating lunch. Lunch consists of fish sticks, bread and butter, corn, milk and orange slices for dessert. Lunch is organized in a family-style manner with children requesting seconds if they wish. The family-style structure again reflects the philosophy of the Center, stressing independence and learning to care for one's own needs. One child does not want any corn and Angela says he must at least have a "no thank you" bite before refusing it. As the children finish eating, they scrap their plates, use the restrooms if necessary and wash their hands. After this is completed, they ready themselves for still another activity.

Back at Sunnyside, Rich asks, "what time is it?" The children answer, "night time" signaling their consent to lie down for their naps. Leslie is working on sending the children to the bathroom. "All the little ones are done," Leslie informs Rich. Christine keeps repeating that she needs to go potty. Rich ignores her knowing that this is often part of Christine's naptime routine. Christine sleeps in a crib at home and has a difficult time adjusting to mat sleeping. Based on this knowledge, the Sylers have designated her sleep area near the door of the living room because many times Rich or Leslie must pull Christine and her mat into another room before she will settle into sleep. Christine will not settle down today so before long, Leslie pulls Christine to another room. Leslie returns to cover the children with blankets and distributes kisses, telling each child, "I love you." Courtney teases her suggesting that she was forgotten as Leslie goes back and gives her another kiss, saying, "night, night, sweet dreams." The children, now close to sleep, clearly enjoy the affection displayed by Leslie. The emotion work sooths the children into sleep. By 1:30 p.m., all the children are sleeping and the Sylars have a short break from the children but must now clean up and organize for the rest of the day.

Sleeping is essentially defined as an intimate activity but for children in childcare, this activity occurs in a very public setting. Naptime usually occurs early to mid afternoon and lasts for up to two hours. Although naptime tends to be the children's least favorite time, they know it is imminent and they settle down fairly quickly. Each child has a place and a mat and they know where their place is

located. Naps, too, require transition. A series of stories, kisses, hugs, music or gentle "I love you[s]" are dispensed to ease children into this unpopular activity.

As the children are settling down for their naps, I readily acknowledge that daycare settings offer a curious and helpful illustration of how alternative venues are created that belie separateness of family and work (Corsaro 2003). The concepts of integration and segmentation become important to the discussion of third places and daycare settings (Nippert-Eng 1996). Total integration of these venues suggests that home and work are one in the same while segmentation suggests that they are entirely distinct. Segmentation essentially draws lines around what is regarded as home and that which is work in the same fashion as a disembodied worker. It should be noted that integration and segmentation occurs as though on a continuum where total integration or segmentation is extreme. Most activity falls between these extremes. This continuum provides a useful tool for exploring ways in which childcare stakeholders construct this space.

Engagement in intimate activity such as napping integrates these venues but other examples throughout the day also serve as indicators of boundary work. Caregivers provide mailboxes and bulletin boards for parents where they post vital daycare information such as changes in holiday plans for upcoming events such as birthdays and holiday celebrations, and routine information about daily activities, lunch menus, and so on. For example, parents from one site were instructed to bring plastic, fill-able eggs for an upcoming Easter egg hunt. Parents were also instructed to bring stickers to be used for noting successes in their child's potty training books. Such activities require parents to prepare at home; they also educate parents about ongoing and upcoming events at daycare thereby serving as points of considerable connectedness between home and daycare.

In this same way, toys and other items from home, as well as talk about their lives outside of daycare, offer children a sense of familiarity and connectedness between home and daycare. Similar to the talk between daycare workers and parents, it enables daycare workers to learn intimate knowledge about the children's lives. Toys and talk also serve as sound markers of the children's biographical connectedness as they move from home to childcare. These observations also reveal that mornings are not just "drop-offs;" they are transition processes in which all the stakeholders participate thereby building important new spaces beyond work and home that cannot easily be segmented.

Ending the Day: Routines, Emotions and Boundaries

In the balance of this descriptive work, I focus on the day's end in childcare settings as I continue to document and present childcare routines as integrative processes in which parents, children and caretakers draw on their knowledge of routines to produce, negotiate and manage these transitional processes.

It is 2:55 p.m. on another Monday afternoon at the Center. The day is cold and rainy and some of the children are just shaking off sleep as they awaken from their naps. Others are awake and ready to get up off their sleep mats. Twenty children, all with differing needs, are at the Center today. One caregiver is preparing the afternoon snack. They are short a caregiver today, so Diane, the director, is filling in for the caregiver. Snack time is the only time that the children eat in a less formal manner at the Center.

Today is Daniel's fifth birthday and his mother, engaging in boundary work, brought a large cake for the children to enjoy. A conversation quickly ensues between the children focusing on how old they are and when they were or will be

five. Diane is kneeling down over Linda who tells Diane that, "I dream about flowers." Meanwhile, Angela is helping Daniel serve the cake reminding him not to lick the frosting off his fingers as he serves. All three caregivers are serving, organizing and directing during this treat time.

After the snack at Sunnyside, the Sylers take the children outside in two "waves" to play. Today, it is a very pleasant 70 degrees. The children are excited about the prospect of playing outside which is a rare treat for March in Michigan. A flurry of activity precipitates the waves of children departing the dining room as they use the bathroom and then locate and don their shoes. Two preschoolers collide at the corner of the kitchen and bathroom and fall. At first they look as though they might cry but they begin to giggle instead.

Molly's father arrives commencing the pickup routines and I hear her squeal in delight as she runs into his arms. Her father kneels down and they talk about the beautiful weather. Rich stands back and to the side of the reunion seeming to offer both physical and emotional space for Molly and her father.   The work of understanding when and how to create this space appears often in childcare literature describing the boundaries caregivers create to employ a sense of "attached detachment" (Corsaro 2003: 5).

Jessica acknowledges her dad's arrival by approaching him and they talk for a moment. Courtney is dancing around the yard with the star bubble wand over her head proclaiming that she is a "Christmas tree." Curtis' mother arrives and he gives her a quick hug and resumes play. Caleb's mother also arrives at about the same time. It is 3:45 in the afternoon and most of the children will be picked up by 4:00 p.m. This pickup time is one of the Sylers' childcare rules they have prearranged with the parents, and like clockwork parents begin to appear.

Rich organizes a foot race with the toddlers and the parents stand back to watch the show. Another mother arrives and her toddler runs to greet her, delivering a big hug. Now parents are attempting to collect their children's belongings and trying to make an exit. Unlike arrival time, work demands are less pressing and family issues take priority, the hurried morning pace is replaced with more gentle reunions.

At the Center, the pickup routines have also begun. A mother enters the room to collect her daughter. Her daughter spots her and says softly, "my mommy." Her mother kneels down and gently begins rubbing her back, playing with her hair and talking softly to her daughter as she finishes her cake. The mother is thoroughly enjoying the feel of her daughter's still sleep-matted curls as rolls the hair between her fingers as though she had forgotten how it felt and smelled. This parent is engaging in the emotional work surrounding the reclaiming process of parent and child at days' end.

Normally, at this time in the schedule, the children would go outside to play but can't today because it is raining. Diane plops down on the floor and puts Tanner on her lap. Aaron, her son, is annoyed with this and tries to also get onto her lap. She sits him next to her on the floor and puts her arm around him. Diane is now involved in and demonstrating her multiple roles as mother, caregiver and center director. The children are getting restless because of the closeness of the small room. They look through the window to see if the main-room play centers are ready for them yet. "Rainy days are difficult," Diane comments. Since virtually no public money is directed to the physical facilities that children occupy while involved in childcare, oftentimes the children make do in very small areas. This is particularly challenging when the children cannot go outside to release their endless energy.

The second wave of collections begins around 5:10 p.m. and this wave moves very rapidly. Sarah's mother now enters the room and Sarah heads toward her in a full run, jumping into her mother's arms. Another mother comes in for her son followed by Colin's mother. Colin is sitting very quietly at a small table cutting pictures out of a catalog. He tells the caregiver he is cutting them out for his sister. The caregiver seems baffled. At this point, parent, child and caregiver are deeply involved in emotion and boundary work as Colin's mother approaches. Kneeling down on the floor, Colin's mother explains that his best friend has just gotten a new baby sister. Now Colin wants a new sister. Colin's mother waits several minutes until he is finished cutting and leads him out the door with his pictures firmly but carefully grasped in his small hand.

It is 5:30 p.m. and the Center is eerily quiet. Diane is ushering her own children out the front door and the part-time caregiver is getting ready to lock up for the evening. The Center is closed until tomorrow morning at which time another round of care giving will begin.

Summary and Conclusions

This research presents an application of institutional ethnography by providing entry into the world of childcare. I did so by employing participant observation at two childcare settings, conducting interviews of various childcare stakeholders and examining texts relating to childcare. These are traditional methods for this type of research even though institutional ethnography is not predetermined by an established method or theoretical framework. I made these choices because they produced an avenue to understanding the actual practices of people that become routine and reproducible over time, thereby making the institutions observable analytical categories. This is a goal of institutional ethnography—to move from the actual relations toward the relations of the ruling, so that the power of the institutions can be discovered (Smith 1987).

Childcare settings provide not only an insider view of childcare but also produce a microcosm of those same power and control apparatuses that are played out in society including political and economic structures (Cosaro 2003). Institutional ethnography achieves its goal by making visible the power embedded in social organizations from the standpoint of those who are being ruled (Campbell 2006). In this way, the focus is based on the query, "what social organization coordinate experience," (Campbell ibidem: 98); thereby essentially moving all stakeholders from passive research objects to social actors demonstrating human agency (Cosaro ibidem).

In childcare while several layers of structure or organization were evident, the most dominant was the economy. The connection of the economic institution to work was tantamount. Through the employment of an inductive approach to grounded theory several concepts were discovered, I argue, that explain childcare experiences. Examples linking childcare experiences to social structures include my earlier discussions regarding the importance of routines to childcare (Garfinkel 1967; Schutz, 1967; Goffman 1961), the disembodied worker (Acker 1990) emotion work (Hochschild 1979) and boundary work (Ashforth et al. 2000; Nippert-Eng 1996; Shapira and Navon 1991). While I do present a partial translocal mapping of childcare, it should be noted that this research does not identify all connections to the ruling relations surrounding childcare. For example, an institutional ethnography

connecting family structure and childcare is not examined here and should be conducted to supplement this initial mapping process.

Beyond what actually happens in childcare, my second task involved understanding the relations of the ruling (Smith 1987). In doing so, I examine childcare policy structure. Childcare policy is first regulated at the federal level. Examples include the Child Care Development Block Grant, the Social Services Block Grant, Head Start, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers and the Dependent Care Tax Credit (Friedman 2005). These are primarily programs and policies developed to deal with the securing of childcare for low-income families and tend to be directed toward individuals rather than an examination of the larger institutions that govern them. This narrow focus posits childcare as problematic only for low-income families and has tended to ignore other issues in childcare, for instance childcare provider turnover rates.

Far-reaching policy efforts are necessary to address such rates in childcare. High childcare provider turnover is inextricably tied to wage and benefit issues (U.S. Department of Labor 2004; House Ways and Means 2000). This may be because the United States has relied on business models to dispense social services. A business model stipulating that open competition provides consumers with the least expensive and highest quality product/service can be useful in a production capacity but this commoditization of childcare has been unsuccessful. An indicator of this failure is the national turnover rate of childcare providers reported to be well above 40% (House ways and Means ibidem; Brown 1998).

It was not a coincidence, but an everyday reality in the childcare field, that during this research one childcare worker was leaving the daycare center because of her poverty-level wages. A business model applied to this scenario would dictate that because childcare services continue to be in high demand, pay would be commensurate with demand—but pay remains low (House Ways and Means 2000). Childcare provider pay scales are among the lowest paid of professions with rates ranging as low as $4.69 per hour to the median rate of 7.06 per hour (House Ways and Means ibidem). In the state of Michigan from which my research data were drawn, the average childcare provider salary is approximately 25% below the poverty rate for a family of four (National Women's Law Center 2001). Funding programs and supporting policies designed to address low wages would likely significantly reduce high turnover rates for childcare workers.

Beyond attention to provider wages, the issue of universal childcare cannot be ignored. Such a program could be linked to our current educational system in two ways. First, children three years of age and above could be part of the public school system and those under three years of age could receive care in licensed private homes with the provision of care occurring under contract as with educators (Zigler and Gilman 1996). The immediate benefit is that caregivers would receive the same pay scales and benefits as public school teachers. Moreover, this practice would promote the receiving of care from one source rather than multiple care giving sources. The use of multiple caregivers is a practice employed by more than 22% of all working families made necessary by the lack of care giving arrangements (Presser 2003).

While shifting the control of care giving to families and away from work and the economy may seem inconceivable, the benefits of such a shift are noteworthy and important to explore. Regardless of the benefits noted above, of course an initial query about a universal daycare system centers on the cost of such a provision. One estimate on funding such a venture is $122.5 billion per year (Helburn and Bergmann

2002). This figure is roughly six times the amount currently spent on childcare. The cost is undoubtedly exponentially higher than our current budget, but savings may be realized through increased literacy and other academic as well as social skills that children would likely benefit from where they available (Huston 2004). Interestingly, it is economists who are now suggesting that more public resources for childcare, "can be quite productive, socially and culturally as well as cognitively…" (Crittenden 2001: 215). In fact, childcare was the only area, economists suggest, where the increasing of public funding was critical. But since childcare is work that still remains invisible and thus value-less, such an offering is not likely to be considered necessary by the ruling relations. An invaluable contribution to extant childcare literature, however, would be a thorough investigation of benefits resulting from a universal childcare system.

Further examination of childcare, especially relative to traditional interpretations of work, as well as, the centrality of childcare routines is necessary. For example, while I tended to interpret childcare routines in a positive fashion, other interpretations of these functions need exploration. Research focusing on children's perception of routine does not readily exist. Much of the routines I observed tended to be somewhat militant as children marched from one activity to another, their bodies becoming docile entities directed by a clock as opposed to choice or desire (Corsaro 2003). Goffman (1961) refers to this action as, collective regimentation. This was especially evident during naptime where institutional power is applied to many children who were required to lie on their mats, regardless whether they were interested in or needed sleep. Conversely, a thorough examination of how children, like their parents, also require a sense of predictability would be useful.

Institutional ethnography allows for inquiry based on people's everyday doings as an avenue to understanding how ruling relations effect our actual relations in everyday society. The struggles motivating this research and those presented in this paper stem from the invisibility of experience and thus this research employing institutional ethnography provides a space for these experiences to be discovered by examining those very social structures that obscure them.

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