Problematising the present: The historical contribution of consultancy to early childhood education in Australia: 1960-1985

Kim Michelle Browne
BECS (University of Melbourne)
PG Cert in Educational Studies (University of Melbourne)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Education

Melbourne Graduate School of Education
University of Melbourne
July 2017
**Declaration**

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without any acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text.

![Signature]

…………………………………………………………………….

Kim Michelle Browne

I believe that this thesis is properly presented, conforms to the specifications for the thesis and is of sufficient standard to be, *prima facie*, worthy of examination.

…………………………………………………………………….

Julianne Moss
Acknowledgements

For my brother Ryan

I wish to thank my extended and immediate families, especially my parents – Ethna and Allan – who always have advocated and aspired for my brother and I to be educated. I am very grateful to you both, for the example and opportunities you have offered to me. Ryan - you will always be with me and this historic thesis has resurfaced many joyous moments that I now hold in the present and dedicate to your memory.

Thank you to my husband Brendan and our wonderful children Micah, Julian and Aisling. My partners in life. I am so very grateful for the ongoing support and care from you all - your love, patience and generosity. I look forward to our shared family time together.

Having Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a daily challenge in my life. Whilst the personal challenges will not change, I view this thesis a ‘starting point for an opposing strategy’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 101), acknowledging that I have abilities and opportunities. I am grateful to good friends and extended family near and far who share in my life and inspire me, bring me joy, laughter and have encouraged me in this journey. Thank you to Jenny, Faye, Helen, Eva, Marija, Shari and Maria. I also wish to thank Sheila, Ingrid and the Browne, McGurn and Floyd families. The ongoing support of my close friends and wider family in all facets of my life has been very important to me. Finally, I thank a few colleagues who occasionally growled, but in a caring and sincere manner, strongly encouraged me to write this thesis – I will always be grateful.

My sincere thanks to The Hon. Tom Roper (MLA) who gave me permission to use images from his book: The Myth of Equality (1971). I am grateful to you for your assistance with this study. I also thank Jo Miller from the DHS Library for her suggestions and support towards my thesis. Finally, I wish to thank my supervisors Professor Julianne Moss and Professor Susan Wright, and staff from The University of Melbourne, who despite my personal challenges, have supported me through this thesis journey. I am very grateful for the ongoing support you have provided.
Abstract

Consultative approaches in Victorian state funded kindergartens operate presently as the Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) program. Described as a service delivery model (DET, 2015a), the PSFO program is designed to ‘ensure that early childhood teachers and educators continually improve their capacity to provide young children who have additional needs with the experiences and opportunities that promote their learning and development, and enable then to participate meaningfully in the program’ (DET, 2015a, p. 8).

Contemporary documents detailing the PSFO program have been recently revised within the context of shifts and reforms to early childhood education in Australia. The provision of early childhood education has arguably changed since the Council of Australian Governments (COAG, 2009) endorsed ‘Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia’ (EYLF), the first national framework in Australia. Providing guidance to all practitioners working in early childhood education, including PSFOs, principles, practices and outcomes are framed within a model of collaboration with children, families and educators. Significantly, the EYLF advocates for practitioners to view children as competent learners (DEEWR, 2009).

Currently, Victorian early childhood programs operate under both the national EYLF and the Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework (VEYLDF), the Victorian State Government document introduced in 2009. This document guides early childhood professionals to work with children from birth to eight years through a focus on outcomes, practice principles and transitions. Positioned within these curriculum documents, early childhood educators’ practices thread between early years’ programs and also the school-based Victorian Curriculum and transition to school frameworks.

Underpinned by Foucault's genealogical approach (1977) and ethnography, this study critically examines written and visual documents, by examining and rendering visible complex processes and discursive shifts from the 1960 – 1985 timeframe. Texts selected for examination included contemporary and past Victorian State Government documents and visual images authorised by the National Union of Australian University Students (Roper,
By interpreting the complex processes and changes over this timeframe, an opportunity presents to understand by attempting to make meaning of what might be now known about contemporary consultative services operating in Victorian kindergartens.

The findings in this study indicate that in contemporary times discourses of governmentality dominate consultative practices, compelling PSFOs to enact ‘techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour’ (Foucault, 1997, p. 81), in a myriad of complex and contradictory manners. Juxtaposed with practices in the past, I argue that (inter)relating multiple discourses have historically dominated early childhood education. Discourses include: health with supervision, additional needs education with developmentalism, and community organisations with welfare and arguably remain deeply embedded in contemporary consultative practices, forming part of current governing agendas.

What may be missing is that children and families are often swept up in the governmentality of consultancy, both historically and currently. Under the guise of collaborative partnerships and capacity building, where children and families are viewed as capable and listened to, it may be argued that consultative practices appear inclusive of the voice of children and families. However, while it appears that this is a shift away from a deficit-based approach, it emerged through the analysis of the data that a lack of transparency and authenticity pervades in these relations.

In contemporary times the PSFO program as a consultative body, has come to be an authoritative entity in preschools. Revealing discourses is one means to problematise what may be (un)known about claims which prevail as truth and the authority accorded to circulating privileged agendas and productive moments, but also points to times which are rendered silent. Examining power-knowledge relations producing dominant discourses can rupture certain truth claims and open possibilities to reconstruct new ways to conceive consultative practices in kindergartens and also for a reconceptualisation of ‘understanding of how to do things differently’ (Ailwood, 2004, p. 30).
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation underpinning the research</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foucault’s genealogical framework</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passages of the thesis</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage One: A woven methodology</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative research</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary techniques, power-knowledge relations, poststructuralist thinking and Foucault</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Inter)connections (in) methodology</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regimes of truth, (inter)connectedness and subjectivities</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving through discourse with the significance of this research</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research questions and informative studies</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods used in the research</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents under examination</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data generation</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to sites in the generation of data</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis approach</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical considerations</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Inter)connected musing: ‘rendering the familiar strange’</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary times: Kindergarten education in Victoria</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage Two: beginning again</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage Three: A (partial) history of Victorian preschool education</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowers as (un)known</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rendering early childhood consultancy as ‘strange’</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The early childhood educational ‘expert’: Social and economic conditions, 1960-1985</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourses of health and welfare: ‘Promoting the health and welfare of the vulnerable child’ and the early childhood consultant</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The present</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Inter)connected musing: an (im)partial in-between space ~ the current ‘doing’ of Victorian Preschool Field Officers</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage Four: Discourses of child development – the ‘expert’ early childhood consultant</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘educating the (un)developing child’</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge-power relations</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The present</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematising consultancy</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Inter)connected musing: subjugated self as consultant</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musings with images</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Inter)connected musing: a (poor) child’s playground</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage Five: Negotiating, mappings and musings with data</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging results – unveiling themes</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage Six: Negotiating-mappings-musings with discussion</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current political context</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (partial) contemporary contextual landscape</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk-in-text – Preschool Field Officer Program Fact Sheet</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures

Figure 1: Disrupting linearity.................................................................22
Figure 2. Emerging and overlapping themes with the data .........................42
Figure 3: (Inter)connected musing: A (poor) child’s playground....................95
Figure 4: (Inter)connected musing: Assisting language development...............105
Figure 5: (Inter)connected musing: Reading water play...........................122

List of Tables

Table 1: Influential research..................................................................31
Table 2: Documents for analysis..........................................................39
Table 3: Summary of key articles selected for review..............................68
### List of Abbreviations/glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAPSCD</td>
<td>Australian Association for Preschool Child Development (later known as the Australian Preschool Association [APA])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>Australian Preschool Association (previously named the Australian Association for Preschool Child Development [AAPSCD])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APC</td>
<td>Australian Preschools Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNEA</td>
<td>Commonwealth National Education Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COAG</td>
<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>Charles Sturt University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEECD</td>
<td>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (previously Victoria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>Department of Human Services (Victoria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECIS</td>
<td>Early Childhood Intervention Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EYLF</td>
<td>Early Years Learning Framework (Titled: Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fkaCS</td>
<td>Free Kindergarten Association Children’s Services (fkaCS began as the Free Kindergarten Union [FKU])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKU</td>
<td>Free Kindergarten Union (later known as fkaCS: Free Kindergarten Association Children’s Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISC</td>
<td>Inclusion Support Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KESO</td>
<td>Koori Engagement Support Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten/Preshool:</td>
<td>For the purposes of this thesis, kindergarten, used interchangeably with the term preschool, is defined as ‘services offered on a part-time or sessional basis (usually up to 5 hours per day, 3 days per week, during school terms only) and catering mainly for children in the year before entry to primary school’ in Victoria, Australia (Brennan, 1982, p. v).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KISS</td>
<td>Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDNS</td>
<td>Melbourne District Nursing Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Quality Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OED</td>
<td>Oxford English Dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSF</td>
<td>Preschool Field Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWC</td>
<td>Social Welfare Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCAA</td>
<td>Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEYLDF</td>
<td>Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEL</td>
<td>Women’s Electoral Lobby</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to interpret the complex processes and changes from 1960 -to 1985 that have shaped consultative practices in Victoria, and more broadly in Australia, as a way to understand what may be known (MacNaughton, 2005) about present-day consultative services operating in Victorian preschools. Central to this thesis is an exploration of how power has been deployed and sustained through consultative practices in preschool settings and in the historical events that have made this possible (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003).

The Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) program presently operates in Victorian preschools. Announced as part of Premier John Cain’s (MLA) Victorian State Government’s education agenda, this particular service emerged as a consultative model in preschool settings in 1984, as noted in Victorian State Government documents (DHS, 1985). Throughout this ethnographic study I take Michel Foucault’s genealogical approach to trace the historical contribution of consultancy to early childhood education in present-day Victorian preschools. I thus, then critically analyse a range of documents from 1960-1985 to explore how consultative practices, such as the PSFO program, have emerged and taken shape and the techniques that have circulated within consultative services during this timeframe. This is one means of bringing an historically informed understanding what we can now know about the current operations of the PSFO program. This is in the context of the last wave of educational reform in Victoria through the policy document The Education State (Victorian Labor Party, 2014), The Preschool Field Officer Program (DET, 2015a) guide and the Preschool Field Officer Fact Sheet December 2015 (DET, 2015b).

I have ‘looked for the productive effects of relations of power-knowledge’ (Campbell, 2008, p. 152), as a way to explore the prevailing constructs of consultancy evident in published early childhood literature. Consultative practices are predominantly defined as a service delivery model where consultants provide educators with support, skills and knowledge needed to help children negotiate a range of behavioural, emotional and developmental challenges (Buysse & Wesley, 2005; Hirschland, 2008; Wesley & Buysse, 2010). In concurrence with this definition of consultative practices, the current-day PSFO program provides consultative ‘support to preschool staff on the planning, implementation and review
of developmentally appropriate programs’ (DHS, 2001, p. 3) in Victorian state-funded preschool settings.

Historically, funding and employment arrangements associated with consultative services have been provided by several past Australian Commonwealth Governments, and over time, advisory services have predominantly moved to become the responsibility of each Australian State and Territory. Presently, the Victorian State Government through the DET, formally the DEECD, allocates funds to a range of auspice organisations to manage the PSFO program (DEECD, 2010). Current PSFO positions operate under the direction of local government children’s services teams, family support agencies, early intervention agencies, specialist children’s services teams and through Uniting Church early childhood services (DHS, 2001). PSFOs attend a range of preschool environments to support the access and participation of children with additional needs and may attend any preschool setting operating a Victorian state-funded preschool program within their allocated region (DEECD, 2010). Victorian State Government funded programs include preschool sessions operating in mainstream kindergartens, long-day childcare centres, occasional care centres and schools.

This thesis will primarily focus on consultative services operating in Victorian mainstream\(^1\) early childhood settings (often identified as stand-alone\(^2\) preschools or kindergartens), which provide Victorian State Government funded sessional programs to children in the year prior to the commencement of school. I focus on the PSFO program in this kind of setting for two main reasons. Firstly, an abundance of published literature exists widely emphasising how

---

\(^1\) The Oxford English Dictionary refers to *mainstream* as ‘the ideas, attitudes or activities that are shared by most people and regarded as normal or conventional’ or ‘belonging to the mainstream’, and as a ‘class for pupils without special needs’. The word mainstream, noted in Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) literature in relation to preschool (James & Chard, 2010; Kemp, 2003), is also identified in current early childhood educational literature provided to Aboriginal families to ‘support’ Aboriginal children’s access and participation in a kindergarten setting (DEECD, 2007; Mann, Knight & Thomson, 2011). Further examination of this terminology is of interest to this thesis as PSFOs primarily operate in ‘mainstream’ kindergartens or preschools.

\(^2\) ‘Stand-alone’ is referred to in the Oxford English Dictionary as being ‘able to operate independently’. The Victorian Department of Education and Training refers to some community kindergartens operating as stand-alone services (2014). It is of interest to this thesis to explore in what ways kindergartens ‘stand-alone’ and are independent from whom and what? PSFOs deliver programs in early childhood settings, including community kindergartens, and explication of the complexities of the notion of independently ‘standing-alone’ is worth further examination. What might be the effects for children, families and educators engaging with PSFOs in a stand-alone, but community based kindergarten or preschool? Terminologies such as mainstream and stand-alone are explored in the discussion passage of this thesis.
important consultative programs are in targeting and addressing developmental concerns of children identified in the preschool year, prior to the commencement of school. Secondly, whilst wide ranges of consultative services operate to attend to the needs of Victorian preschool aged children and their families, it is of interest that the PSFO program has been purposefully designed and created to focus upon the concerns raised about children’s development by early childhood teachers, predominantly, in mainstream stand-alone preschool community settings. This is evident, both in historical documents from 1960-1985, and in current-day published literature. Understanding the motivations behind how this developmental approach came to be the status quo is of significance to this thesis.

This thesis aims to respond to three key questions: (1) What are the effects of historical issues from 1960-1985 in Australia on what is presently known about the preschool field officer program operating in Victorian preschools? (2) What have been the struggles among the different ideas, discursive practices and relationships of consultancy to Victorian early childhood settings in Australia over this timeframe? and, (3) How have historical issues and events influenced present-day power-knowledge relations that are exercised between consultants and preschool educators in early childhood education?

Throughout this thesis I will use the terms consultants to describe the roles of the PSFO service in preschool settings. I also apply the word preschool heavily in my writing as these terms are utilised frequently in literature associated with the PSFO program, and abundantly I argue, in early childhood education research. I use these terms as current documentation identified as part of the DET information service has used similar descriptors to identify key roles of the PSFO program. For example:

Preschool field officers are highly qualified early childhood professionals specialising in early childhood education and development. They support kindergartens by providing consultation, resources and advice to teachers and families.

(DEECD, 2012, p. 1)

**Motivation underpinning the research**

Guided by the questions I sought to examine, I began to ponder the motivations underpinning this research. I questioned my own role as a child under consultancy and then as a qualified
educator who utilised the PSFO service to assess young children. Upon reflection, when initially considering the direction of this study, I noted that throughout time this service appeared as an authorised State Government funded program in preschool communities and as an authoritative entity. This established service appeared as an authoritative source which offered verbal advice and guidance, plus evidence-based reports and strategies in relation to school readiness for children, families and educators. Of interest to me was how this program and individual PSFO role appeared to be embedded as an important referent and authoritative point for preschool educators when concerns arose about children’s development or behaviours. I queried that it appeared to be a natural ‘next step’ for educators to request advice from consultants when questioning the apparent needs of a(n) (un)developing child in a kindergarten community.

Reflecting on my own recent work as a consultant in a similar role to a PSFO, I worked with preschool aged children, families and educators as an Inclusion Support Coordinator in recent times. It seemed interesting to me to explore how I slipped into this ‘expert’ role. I offered advice, strategies and resources in relation to delaying or moving children to a school setting, suggesting further diagnostic testing for children and advising teachers to educate in certain ways without an expectation of an additional qualification. Upon obtaining this role, it seemed that vast experience working in a range of kindergarten communities appeared to be the currency of knowledge which deemed me fit to become a consultant, share expertise with others and make decisions and recommendations for young children’s futures in early childhood communities. As part of working in kindergarten communities I found myself advising educators, often with greater experience teaching children and relating with families than myself. Of interest to me was broadly how experience, and particular types of experience, came to be authoritative and the ways in which this has been made possible in both past and current times for (some) people.

I have also reflected here on my motivation for selecting the timeframe of 1960-1985 to study the PSFO program and practices. This time period saw social changes resulting in population growth in Australia and shifts in this timeframe in educational theoretical standpoints in ECE. In my initial search I also discovered a small paragraph in a Victorian State Government ECE document (DHS, 1985) announcing the PSFO program. It appeared curious to me that a large
scale and influential program presently operating in ECE settings was initially proclaimed in a modest manner. These contextual shifts alongside my own experiences as a child in ECE in the 1970s, then qualifying as an ECE teacher and moving to become a consultant in recent times led me to consider how contextual changes – large and small – influenced my own decisions and actions in the field of ECE. Curiously, I wondered what might the social and educational changes in the 1960-1985 timeframe on a broader scale and the impacts of these temporal shifts have been upon children, families, educators and consultants in the past be on current practices in ECE? A discussion of contextual changes in Australia is further explored in the literature review of this thesis.

Furthermore, through these reflections and in an initial search for information it appeared that a paucity of past and current research existed about the PSFO consultative program. This seemed, to my knowledge, to be the case in relation to not only the PSFO role alone, but broadly, consultancy in ECE in an Australian context. I became interested in exploring the PSFO program and to inquire how it is that a model of consultancy with significant state government funding and policy documentation is widely availed to teachers in ECE across the state of Victoria in contemporary times. Yet, it seemed questionable that consultancy seemed to be an underexplored area of research in the past and in current times. This became part of my motivation to examine this program further through a genealogical and ethnographic approach.

**Foucault’s genealogical framework**

Central to this thesis is my usage of Michel Foucault’s poststructural genealogical framework (Foucault, 1979). A genealogical analysis aims to:

> explain the existence and transformation of elements of theoretical knowledge by situating them within power structures and by tracing their descent and emergence in the context of history.

(Olssen, 2006, p. 14)

Foucault’s genealogical framework ‘problematises the present’ (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003,
p. 2), that is, it investigates the way in which things have become a problem in the present by marking out the effects of the power-knowledge relations which produce and regulate dominant discourses or, regimes of truth (McLeod & Thomson, 2009).

Discourse is a central concept of Foucault’s genealogical framework. Discourse may be defined as ‘what can be said and thought, but [it also involves] who can speak, when, and with what authority’ (Ball, 1990, p. 2). Foucault (1979) argues that power is exercised and conveyed through dominant discourses and that the practices and actions of individuals and institutions (such as, the site of early childhood education) are ‘products of the discourses within which we think about them’ (MacNaughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001, p. 48).

This ethnographic study presents collected documents with the purpose of exploring the values, beliefs and viewpoints (Woods, 1988) of consultants, organisations and educational settings from 1960-1985. This study will examine the processes of contemporary power through the ‘analytic grid of power-knowledge’ relations (Marshall, 1990, p. 23). I approach the analysis of power-knowledge relations, exercised through dominant discourses by drawing from James Marshall’s (1990) understanding of Foucault’s genealogical framework. Following Marshall, areas for analysis will include: social and economic traditions, and objectives and decisions made by those who are in positions of power to act for others; the ways in which power is brought into play including force, compliance or surveillance; and forms of institutionalisation and the ways in which the processes of power are rationalised and legitimatised. An in-depth discussion of Foucault’s post-structural genealogical framework is further explored in the methodology section of this thesis.

Foucault (1980) suggests that an examination of knowledge-power relations could offer institutions opportunities to find space to exercise freedom and resist the domination of discourse. In relation to the field of early childhood education, MacNaughton (2005) notes, a genealogical framework ‘can offer powerful insights into how we organise institutions and relationships in them [and] help us to think differently about those institutions and relationships in the present’ (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 151). Thus, this research project explores the historical perspectives on current-day early childhood
consultative practices with the aim of creating possibilities for the field of early childhood to reconceptualise new ways to organise and implement consultative practices in present-day early childhood educational settings (Petriwskyj, 2010).

**Passages of the thesis**

This thesis moves between seven passages with interconnections – written and visual – used throughout as a way to present what may intersect, but may not have been situated previously, among Foucault’s (1977) discursive power-knowledge relations as part of Marshall’s (1990) analytic grid. Both written and visual representations of early childhood education from 1960-1985 are woven in between the analysis and discussion of the thesis as interconnected musings.

Inclusion of a text with images within this thesis is a way of depicting the occurrence of social change (Moss, 1999) and I use this method to illuminate the social changes that have occurred in the field of early childhood from a 1960-1985 timeframe. Further, Marcus Banks (2007) describes that the incorporation of images as part of data collection may ‘be able to reveal some sociological insight that is not accessible by any other means’ (p. 4). By depicting the visual social changes as part of data collection and analysis within this thesis, an opportunity emerges – as Banks (2007) notes that a ‘set of visual methods may [lead] to particular finding[s]’ (p. 117). Further discussion of visual methodologies interrelated with Foucault’s (1977) notion of panoptic surveillance are explored in the methodology of this thesis.

Passage One, following this introduction, is the methodology section. I opt to show how I wish to shape the direction of this thesis by bringing the methodology of this study to the fore. In doing so, I seek to highlight how the methodology permeates through the entirety of the thesis. I explain my decision to use a Foucauldian genealogical framework to find new

---

3 Etymologically, according to the Oxford English Dictionary (nd.), the word ‘passage’ is from Old French based on Latin passus ‘pace’ – the rate or speed at which something happens or moves. I use the word passage – referring to the action or process of moving through on the way from ‘one place to another’ to denote explored spaces and pathways negotiated throughout this thesis. In this way rather than a sense of linearly processing or moving ‘forward’, the notion of one place to another can also be seen as changeable and moving through multiple directions, cycling at complex speeds and may be read in any order (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).
ways to explore what has not been said (Foucault, 1977), and what may remain as uncontested (Wong, 2013), about the operations of consultative services in Victorian preschools from 1960-1985. In this, I explain the conduct of this study by combining an ethnographic and genealogical approach as a means to understand the dominating – or hegemonic – discourses operating within early childhood consultative practices. I also identify the methodological struggles and complexities that arise in taking a genealogical approach to analyse documents within an ethnographic study. Furthermore, I move to explain my decisions for choosing certain documents and the implications this may have on outcomes emerging from this thesis.

Intersecting heavily within this thesis, are interconnections, or in-between musings, as a way to illuminate and explore what has already been said about the ‘decisive influences on a specific practice’ (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007, p. 31), and to situate the ways in which this notion of the in-between interrelates amongst the literature. This interwoven journey throughout these passages provides the reader with the opportunity to become familiar with what is known and talked about (Kamler & Thomson, 2006; Wong, 2013) – the diverse roles, complex practices and knowledge traditions – both within and surrounding Victorian early childhood consultative services and settings. Through interconnecting passages, I will endeavour to show my movement towards the questions underpinning this thesis, particularly in the following interconnection. In Passage Two, I reflect on my childhood experience of being subject to a type of early childhood consultancy, alongside my adult experience of being a consultant, alongside a scholarly deconstruction of discursive threads of both these. By extension, this forms part of the rationale that underpins this research project.

Passages Three and Four, which form the literature review, are interwoven with interconnections following the methodology section. Here, I provide a unique account of the already said (Campbell, 2008) in published research of consultative practices in early childhood education. In these passages, I interconnect – grid-like (Marshall, 1990) – a (partial) situated account, a historic-political account and in-between I offer an account of the contemporary context and definition of early childhood consultative practices, specifically the PSFO program.
In Passages Five and Six of the thesis, I introduce the Victorian State Government policies, community organisation accounts and a visual text that I have chosen for analysis. This passage explores my interpretations of the various 1960-1985 documents analysed as part of findings and discussion. I attempt to show how consultative practices have taken shape and the techniques that have circulated within these practices during this timeframe. It is within this data that I discuss the minute changes and struggles between the differing ideas, discursive practices and the complex power-knowledge relations of consultative practices in preschools from 1960-1985 in accordance with James Marshall’s approach to genealogy (Marshall, 1990).

Summarising with concluding thoughts (Passage Seven), specific conclusions are not made as, following Sellers (2013), the intention is ‘to signal an always already incompleteness within which there are in-between spaces constantly being (re)negotiated, in ways appropriate to the reader, context, contact zones and relations in–between’ (p. xiv). In this, I seek to consider how various in-between spaces have been (re)negotiated yet remain incomplete between the PSFO program and early childhood education in Australia.

The next passage considers the methodology of this thesis. This passage draws on Foucault’s poststructural genealogical framework (1977) and theoretical understandings of power – knowledge relations, truths circulating through discourses, notions of surveillance and normalisation techniques in operation. Theoretical underpinnings are then woven into the methodological approach within this thesis during this passage with ethnography and document analysis, and (inter)connect further with the key questions to be addressed in this thesis.
Passage One: A woven methodology

In this passage I seek to outline the research methodology, bringing to light the questions to be interrogated within this qualitative study, and my movement towards approaching the analysis of the data. Through this methodology passage I seek to explain how the two epistemologies – critical ethnography and post-structuralist thinking, including Foucault’s reading of discourse (1979) – are used to approach and design how the collected data is to be interpreted in this thesis. Document analysis, the method engaged to interpret the complex processes and discursive changes from 1960-1985 shaping consultative practices, is further explored in this passage. The design and complexities of collecting data within qualitative research is described here in relation to an exploration of historical perspectives on current-day early childhood consultative practices. The aim is to create possibilities for the field of early childhood to reconceptualise new avenues to organise and implement consultative practices in present-day early childhood educational settings.

Underpinned by these epistemologies (critical ethnography and poststructuralist thinking), an analysis of the data seeks to reveal the discursive themes at play. This is a means to explore what may be known through the power-knowledge relations producing dominant discourses about consultative services operating in the present-day in Victorian early childhood settings. Following is a discussion of relative aspects of the complexities of qualitative research, showing how this study is designed, how data were collected and analysed and what required particular vigilance throughout the research processes (Edwards, 2001).

Qualitative research

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) note that qualitative research crosscuts ‘disciplines, fields and subject matters [where] a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions surround the term’ (p. 3): genealogy and ethnography which is in this study. Various modes of qualitative research seek an understanding of social phenomena to ‘discover and to describe in narrative reporting what particular people do in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them’ (Erickson, 2013, p. 89). Using such methods can offer a way to answer questions ‘that stress how social experience is created and given meaning’ (Denzin &
Lincoln, 2013, p. 17, original italics). In this sense, qualitative methods offer insights into approaching how practices are socially enacted, questioning assumptions about disciplinary practices and the meaning given to thinking, talking and acting in certain ways. The intention here, through the research design, is to interweave ethnography and Foucault’s (1979) genealogical framework as tools approaching document analysis to unearth partial truths, complexities and multiple subjectivities (Lather, 2007), to potentially enrich this study. As genealogy and ethnography emerge from separate theoretical traditions (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003), they are described in greater depth here.

Ethnography has been broadly historically categorised in modernist scientific paradigms as searching for origins through a unitary cause to interpret individual stories of social worlds (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). The ethnographer is positioned as an authoritative and dominating interpreter in research. However, in contemporary ethnographies, a critical stance enables attention towards how culture emerges, the conditions that are produced, the effects, meaning and missed agendas that exist within these conditions and the way power exists through discourses in local practices (Brown, 2003). In this thesis I use a critical ethnographic approach to enable previously unheard silences and veiled moments to become apparent throughout the poststructural research processes which are emerging.

Genealogy, however, focuses on the deployment of power (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). A genealogical approach seeks to analyse the forces and relations of how power is deployed through complex discursive practices and the ways in which they are constituted through cultural and historic sites, thus shaping the subject (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). Genealogy allows the researcher to consider historical aspects differently and find meaning in the ways institutions function and value social practices and the processes in which particular practices are privileged, established and maintained (Saar, 2008). Tracing historicity, in this way, provides the researcher with a means to unveil the emergence of shifting temporal moments, which have transformed the structure of objects and events through forces and power at a given point (Saar, 2008).

Within the potential for working alongside ethnography, genealogy ‘oscillates between modernism and postmodernism, occupying ambivalent positions, [however] despite their
differences…genealogy and ethnography share several orientations and points of reference’ (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003, p. 3). In an attempt to classify these junctures and show how research could be conducted across these disciplines, Tamboukou and Ball (2003) claim that, together, genealogy and ethnography can question and disrupt the validity and authority of scientific knowledge in complex ways by looking at the ‘micro-operations of power [and] being sensitive to local struggles’ (p. 4). Genealogical and ethnographical approaches together can also unveil silences and reveal what may have been unnoticed in historical narratives, giving voice to what may have been unheard (Brown, 2003).

In a genealogical and ethnographic study, Peters and Fendler (2003) examine concepts of disability, and how difference is constructed through the ‘problematic of normalisation in competing, multidimensional discourses’ (p. 111). They point to silences and tensions in the construction of difference, to gain understandings of how normalisation is influenced, creating opportunities for new meanings of disability to emerge (Peters & Fendler, 2003). Similarly, using a joint genealogical-ethnographical approach I seek to render the present-day PSFO program, both strange and problematic. In this way, I not only aim to interrogate the multiple discourses operating in the PSFO program, but seek to reach some understanding of how this program has now become normalised as an authorised site of expertise which, I argue, productively exercises power through subjects in early childhood education. Both an ethnographic and genealogical stance can create opportunities to identify the silences, the missed agendas and tensions in the construction of the PSFO program and provide space towards an understanding of the particular values privileged in this program, which has remained, largely an unexamined space.

**Disciplinary techniques, power-knowledge relations, poststructuralist thinking and Foucault**

Poststructuralist thinking regards the individual as constantly in flux, rejecting the view that each person can create continuous and coherent meanings of the world (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Hughes, 2001). As well, power, identity and meaning constantly change within institutions as language, cultural and social factors move and (re)stabilise through discourses (Kenway, Willis, Blackmore & Rennie, 1997); and discourses constitute subjects as individuals who are social products of language (Hughes, 2001). A poststructural approach
Thus offers opportunities to disrupt the ‘possibility of objectivity of authoritative knowledge on which individual subjects construct their ‘truths’ about their world’ (Robinson & Jones Diáz, 2010, p. 184). In this study I seek through a poststructural approach to examine how changes occurring in the PSFO program over time have discursively constituted the actions of PSFOs and the ways in which the PSFO program has constructed ‘truths’ (Robinson & Jones Diáz, 2010, p. 184) arguably about its world.

Whilst Foucault was reluctant to categorise himself definitively with any major traditions of social thought (Ball, 1990), his work, particularly his interpretation of discourse theory, has been influential across several disciplines as part of poststructural approaches and analysis (Besley & Peters, 2007). Discourse as conceptualised by Foucault, refers to ‘ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations between them…they constitute the ‘nature’ of the body; unconscious and and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern’ (Weedon, 1987, p. 108). Foucault suggests that to understand how power-knowledge relations operate in our society we should examine the most specific instances of their exercise at the micro-level and consider how these relations function at the macro-level (McNicol Jardine, 2005). Through his influential publications *Discipline and Punish* (1979); *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* (1976), Foucault introduced concepts of bio-power, panoptic surveillance and docile bodies in accordance to power-knowledge relations operating in discourse. These concepts are interwoven and related to the research throughout this methodology passage.

**(Inter)connections (in) methodology**

From the introductory passage and into the review of the literature I offer subjective accounts of the passages I moved through as a child in kindergarten, an educator and an early childhood consultant. In accordance with Foucault’s ideas, I am providing a description of how I saw, (re)exercised and questioned ‘discourses and the knowledge and power they bring with them’ (1971, p. 46) within early childhood settings. According to Clare O’Farrell (2005), Foucault argued that ‘knowledge is always shaped by political, social and historical factors – by ‘power’ – in human societies’ (p. 54). This has led me to explore a (partial) history of ECE and the shaping of consultative services from 1960-1985 through the
literature review passages. Here in this passage, I utilise a woven methodology that threads and weaves\(^4\) with/in/throughout this thesis.

Through presenting (inter)connecting subjective accounts I explore and expatiate on the discourses I passaged through as a child, educator and consultant. Elements within these subjective spaces appeared as linear, (see Figure 1), with a beginning and end point and often with a sense of progression through a line of thought, language and practice. Figure 1, however, is not quite a straight, unidirectional line. I seek to show that the constraining linear spaces I operated within held uncertainties in particular temporal moments and dominated how and what could be said or silenced (Foucault, 1971).

**Figure 1: Disrupting linearity**

These junctures may also be read as moments where my practices moved and (re)formed into (un)familiar discursive spaces, and as reflexive moments too, of ‘listening to things that are unsaid and/or not we expect’ (Thomson, 2008, p. 4). The slight curve in the line may be read as my beginning (again) movements to interrogate discourses as a way of seeing Foucault’s (1982) ‘point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy’ (p. 101).

A slightly curved line may also be seen as a representation of complex (in)between spaces – like a single filament of fibrous thread. A piece of thread may be used to fasten together, to repair materials or to make a garment or fabric by a person or a machine. However, a single strand of thread is unable to become something new without action. Strands of thread require the decision and purpose of a sewer or machine to stitch each fibre together in order to design and create a piece. In this sense, this line may represent emerging ideas – or threads – which when considered and conjoined can create something new. Thus, by seeing a line in this

\(^4\) To weave – *noun* make (a complex story or pattern) from a number of (inter)connected elements - from Old English *wefan*, of Germanic origin. To weave - *verb* twist and turn from side to side while moving somewhere - from late 16\(^{th}\) Century from Old Norse *veifa* ‘to wave, brandish’ (Oxford English Dictionary). Using these two descriptors, I seek to thread and weave the methodological elements underpinning this thesis across the narrative through playful passages.
manner it is possible to conceptualise emerging discursive spaces operating in the PSFO program as a series of singular strands of threads, where each ‘element forms part of a complex whole’ (OED, nd., para 3) when woven and pieced together.

Similarly, this line may represent a hyphen. As suggested by Hoskin (1990), this could be seen as a meaningful operation (inter)connecting such spaces which (de)scribe how power-knowledge relations function productively within disciplinary practices. Hoskin (1990) suggests that examination, discipline and culture could be three terms operating metaphorically as a hyphen. Situated (in)between power-knowledge, an exploration of these spaces enables an entrance to ‘understand what lies concealed there’ (p. 52). Here, Foucault’s poststructural approach may be brought into play through the methodology and the analysis of the data passages. Approaching an examination in this way may reveal these spaces and how they operate between the power and knowledge relations of PSFO practices.

**Regimes of truth, (inter)connectedness and subjectivities**

In considering my own past, I read the poststructural reflections of other early childhood educators, including Miriam Giugni, who stated:

Critical reflection is taking risks to look back with a critical and political eye. The critical reflector risks fragmenting her knowings of what she does and who she ‘is’. She risks the perils of uncertainty. But, she has the capacity to establish her positions in things and consider what that means in the context and lives of those she works and lives with. Here, poststructural discourses can help to start the process of questioning the operations of power.

(Giugni, cited in MacNaughton, 2005, p. 53, original emphasis)

The (inter)connecting passages are examples of how I, as a child in the first (inter)connection, an early childhood educator in the second (inter)connecting passage, and as a consultant in the third (inter)connection was subjected within multiple and shifting, but dominating discourses or ‘regimes of truth’ of child development, of authority, of diversity and of expertise, and of the effect(s) these fragmented and often contradictory discourses had on the children and families I encountered (Davies, 1994). Through their power these discursive knowings shaped my particular ways of talking and ways of teaching (Hultqvist & Dahlberg, 2001; Rhedding-Jones, 2002), and also exposed me to discourses that did not
benefit all children and families in ECE (Gallagher, 2003). However, as previously noted by Foucault: ‘every discourse is a stumbling block…a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy’ (Foucault in Gallagher, 2003, p. 10), and this offers opportunities to examine ‘regimes of truth’ within ECE. Hence, as Foucault has argued, a time for the ‘demystification of critical discourses which destabilise ‘regimes of truth’, in order to produce a consciousness of the contingency, complexity and fragility of historical events and forms’ (Lather, 1991, p. 6). has emerged.

These technologies of both domination and of the self ‘define the individual and control their conduct as they make the individual a significant element for the state through the exercise of a form of power, which Foucault coined as ‘governmentality’ in becoming useful, docile, practical citizens’ (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 30). This offers a space to not only examine the seemingly practical and useful natural conditions in which regimes of truth operate (Rose, 1999) through which these systems of power (re)produce, and sustain power (Novinger & Compton-Lilly, 2005; Marshall, 1990); an exploration of the ways truth regimes, and ‘the very question of truth, the right it appropriates to refute error and oppose itself to appearance [and] the manner in which it developed’ (Rabinow, 1984, pp. 79-80) is (re)shaped through the subject also warrants attention.

The exploration of my own understanding of the complexities and my actions situated within past and present regimes of truth within early childhood education, has led me to explore how these dominating regimes of truth have governed, are normalised and constitute educators’ practices (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999). A genealogical approach thus offers an opportunity to examine and unravel events in the way they formed (Rabinow, 1984).

**Weaving through discourse with the significance of this research**

Discourse is a central concept of Foucault’s genealogical framework and may be defined as ‘what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority’ (Ball, 1990, p. 2). Foucault (1979) argues that power is exercised and conveyed through dominant discourses and that the practices of individuals and institutions, such as the field of Australian early childhood education, are ‘products of the discourse(s) within which we think
about them’ (MacNaughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001, p. 48). Foucault’s interpretation of discourse is summarised by Gunilla Dahlberg and Peter Moss (2005):

> Discourses turn subjective perspectives into apparently objective truths; they make assumptions and values invisible; they determine some things to be self-evident, natural and realistic. By the same token, discourses also exclude alternative ways of understanding and interpreting the world, rendering them incomprehensible and apparently impractical. So discourses are both productive and governing: they enable us to think and talk about a particular object or practice, and at the same time constrain how we do so. And those discourses that come to exercise a decisive influence in a particular field are ‘dominant discourses’.

(Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 21)

There are many aspects noted through my written (inter)connections which encapsulate the ideas put forward by Dahlberg and Moss (2005). By examining the ways in which discourses are constructed assumptions can be challenged (Wong, 2006) about knowledges that, deemed to be the truth, may dominate consultative practices. Burman (2010) suggests ‘we can identify and evaluate the dominating themes or discourses that structure practices and can look beyond current frameworks [and] take up the broader questions of where these themes fit into social practices’ (p. 1). Using the literature that is available, and seeking to show the importance of this research, I aim to look behind the current descriptions of contemporary consultative services to examine the truth claims of certain knowledges; towards demonstrating how these knowledges are a decisive influence (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005) and are currently privileged in consultative practices in the field of ECE.

I intend, however, to explore beyond the surface of written language in the texts in my unearthing of complex systems of knowledge (Foucault, 1990) in contemporary early childhood consultancy. My intention is to also examine the ways in which consultants are docile bodies – where the discipline ‘produces subjected and practised bodies’ (Rabinow, 1984, p. 182). In this sense, the docile body is ready to signify meaning to, function within, and reinforce powerful and effective discursive practices (Allan & Slee, 2008), defining how a subject may have a hold over other individuals, not only to perform, but to operate and lead.
as determined by another (Rabinow, 1984). A consultant in early childhood education, as a
deemed expert, holding this authority, may be seen to enact power over others through
discipline (MacFarlane & Lewis, 2004).

Utilising a genealogical approach, how power is deployed is the focus of this inquiry method.
Disciplinary power, as suggested by Foucault (1979), is shaped through mechanisms and
techniques and is comprised of a ‘whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of
application [and] targets’ (Rabinow, 1984, p. 206). When applied, disciplinary principles
classify and objectify individuals. In early childhood settings, which are infiltrated sites of
panoptic surveillance where ‘techniques and strategies of power [are] developed and refined’
(Marshall, 1990) a Foucauldian analysis enables us to ask ‘what has this kind of knowledge,
this type of power made of us?’ (Foucault, 1990, p. 71). Consultative practices employ
specialised techniques and mechanisms. Thus, a genealogical approach can offer an
opportunity to meticulously examine the knowledges which dominate the actions of
consultants and the ways in which knowledges are shared and shape the actions of others.

I aim to discuss through document analysis, an examination of statements – for ‘not so much
for what they say, but for what they do’ (Graham, 2011), and how certain knowledges are
central to the normalisation of institutional practices. Thus, space is provided and
opportunities created to consider how educators, children and families who inhabit early
childhood settings are constituted, constrained and subjected (Ailwood, 2004; Dahlberg,
Moss & Pence, 2007; Tremain, 2010) within the parameters of early childhood consultative
practices. An opportunity then arises to consider the power-knowledge effects of objectifying
normalising strategies on those who occupy early childhood communities.

Document analysis

Document analysis, through an exploration of written and visual texts, was selected as a
means to locate power-knowledge relations operating within discourses for the purposes of
this research. I aim to explore each piece using both a poststructuralist Foucauldian
genealogical and ethnographic approach to underpin an analysis of each document as a
research method in this thesis. Bowen (2009) identifies document analysis as a ‘systematic
procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer
based and internet-transmitted) material’ (p. 27). Documents may include written and image based texts for analysis. In this way a qualitative method such as document analysis suggests that data can be examined to gain insights and elicit empirical meaning through interpretation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Bowen, 2009) towards understanding ‘what are the assumptions in the text?’ (Rapley, 2007, p. 117).

An exploration of the data to gain insights and elicit meaning can ‘illuminate the detail and significance of social practices, rituals and interactions as these happen’ (Eisenhart, 2001 in McLeod & Thomson, 2009, p. 80) which can offer an interpretation of how people may understand their worlds. Hodder (2003) notes that ‘as Derrida (1978) has shown, meaning does not reside in a text, but in the writing and reading of it. As the text is reread in different contexts it is given new meanings, often contradictory and always socially embedded’ (p. 156). In this sense, an analysis of documents can offer an opportunity to explore and seek insights into social practices, but may be contingent on the context and in the way it is interpreted.

Document analysis can be useful as an interpretive tool in qualitative research. Access to texts may be easily achieved and inexpensive. Information in texts may not be available verbally and may differ from interview material. Additionally, documents can endure through time, enabling an opportunity for historical insight (Hodder, 2003). Furthermore, texts can offer information and insights to help researchers explore the historical content within issues and raise opportunities for questions to be asked (Bowen, 2009). This study seeks to gain an insight into consultative practices through an exploration of historical content in a variety of documents.

I am also mindful of the potential challenges and limitations emerging in the use of this interpretive tool. Documents are not always retrievable and access may be blocked, limiting documents to be analysed as selective and aligned with particular viewpoints in particular instances (Bowen, 2009). Atkinson and Coffey (1997) note that document analysis cannot tell researchers how organisations operate day-to-day, nor that texts are exact evidence of what they purport to be in that context. Furthermore, as documents can ‘say’ many different things in many different contexts’ (Hodder, 2003, p. 157), texts need to be considered
carefully as to whether they are firsthand or secondary sources, solicited or unsolicited and the purpose and intent in the structure of the text (Hodder, 2003) as part of a critical analysis which is applicable to this study.

Document analysis involves locating, selecting, appraising and synthesising and applying data (Bowen, 2009). It is often used with other methods to guard against ‘the accusation that a study’s findings are simply an artefact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator’s bias’ (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). As document analysis is the method to be used to elicit an interpretation of the data in this study, I aim to examine a variety of written texts and images, specifically photographs from 1971. Photographs can highlight characteristic attributes of events, people and objects and identify relationships that may be overlooked or only appear subtly (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998). An analysis of photographs can also be used as a means to discovering identity. An understanding of people being photographed (Lemon, 2007; Moss, 2008) can not only (re)construct stories (Bach, 2008) but also open access to systems of meaning and culture attributable to the photographer (Richardson, 1990; Leiblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998).

Despite these attributes, pictures alone do not purport meaning (Wood, 2000). Images require support through written text and dialogue, requiring the ‘process of listening to the stories told about photographs’ (Bach, 2001). Images may be interpreted in multiple ways in a variety of contexts where meaning may be (re)constructed and (re)positioned by various storytellers (Bach, 2001). Prosser (1998) and Moss (2008) therefore suggest, that while image-based research can offer rich insights through analysis, a focus on methodology with regard to the way theory and careful design informs the research process and the ways in which a story may be told is important. This process is taken into consideration in terms of the theoretical approaches and as part of the design in this qualitative study.

**Research Design**

**Research questions and informative studies**

This passage now returns to the questions, which inform this research. I then consider some key studies which helped shape and design the research questions in this thesis.
- What are the effects of historical issues from 1960-1985 in Australia on what is presently known about the preschool field officer program operating in Victorian preschools?
- What have been the struggles among the different ideas, discursive practices and relationships of consultancy to Victorian early childhood settings in Australia over this timeframe?
- How have historical issues and events influenced present-day-power-knowledge relations that are exercised between consultants and preschool educators in early childhood education?

In consideration of the design of the research to be conducted I sought to find other peer-reviewed poststructural studies, which study consultative practices in early childhood education. Using descriptors that appear in current PSFO literature, such as collaboration and partnership with families in early childhood education a small amount of research in Australia was located. In the initial phases of this thesis, studies related to consultative practices were difficult to locate and poorly researched. It is arguable, however, that with the recent broad changes to early childhood education in Australia since the introduction of the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009), along with a focus on government policies aimed at supporting children’s wellbeing (Lemon, 2007), Commonwealth, State and Local Government bodies in Australia have become interested in improving the standards of educational practices and have funded studies to evaluate service delivery by practitioners and partner organisations (Wong, Press, Sumison & Hard, 2012).

In a recent study, featuring collaborative practice – rather than consultative or advisory practice – a project was funded as a means to understand this role more closely. In an engagement between the Victorian State Government Department of Education, Early Childhood and Development (DEECD) and Charles Sturt University (CSU) researchers, the Collaborative Practice in Victorian Early Years Services (2012), project was initiated to ‘investigate practice in integrated, collaborative service delivery, and to investigate the service delivery models that best support this work’ (Wong, Press, Sumison & Hard, 2012, p. 6).
The Collaborative Practice in Victorian Early Years Services (2012), project conducted within ten early childhood sites, reported on ‘observations of services working toward collaborative practice, identifying the skills and attributes that contribute to effective collaborative practice across a range of programs for children and families, with a specific focus on early childhood professionals’ (p. 6). Collaborative practice was understood through multiple meanings including disciplinary expertise between inter-agency and inter-professional working relationships jointly to children and families (p. 8).

One outcome identified in the report was that collaboration between expert services, early childhood professionals, children and families in early childhood communities should be responsive to community needs and driven by an aim to bring people together through clear goals and values (Wong et al., 2012). Some enabling aspects of collaborative partnerships included leadership and good quality respectful mutual relationships. (Wong et al., 2012). However, one challenge to collaborative practices was a ‘blurring of professional boundaries resulting in diminished perceptions of specialist expertise and professional identity and difficulties for staff in recognising the limits of their own disciplinary expertise’ (p. 4).

This report does not include the words ‘consult’ or ‘consultation’. However, it could be claimed that some of the enabling and challenging aspects identified in this report could be seen to relate to early childhood practices. As part of a collaborative response to families’ specialised expertise is positioned as professional. Implicitly, early childhood staff in contrast, could be considered undisciplined (and unprofessional) in their roles in communities when working with children and families. Guised as a collaborative partnership, in this sense, the role of expert is privileged and the position of staff is diminished as part of a collective response to children and families.

The report raises some questions about how consultative delivery models may be interwoven to now be seen as collaborative practice in early childhood services in current literature. As raised in one of the questions in this thesis, I seek to explore the impacts of historical events and their influences on current day power-knowledge relations between consultants and preschool educators. Hence, insights from the 1960-1985 timeframe of the shifts in language
and the blurring of boundaries may also offer understandings about discourses surrounding collaborative partnerships and expertise within current day literature and research.

As part of my endeavour to locate research to inform this study, I considered studies that used a similar methodology. This included poststructural, critical ethnographic approaches and the use of document analysis. The purpose was to critically examine the power-knowledge relations operating in discourses within educational settings and the woven narratives shared and enacted through discourse. I aimed to locate studies which utilised Foucault’s genealogical framework (1977) within early childhood research. Of interest to me, on examination of historic literature in early childhood education in Australia, were discourses circulating within early childhood education, including gender discourses (in particular maternalistic discourses), and discourses of inclusion, disability and developmental psychology. Table 1 outlines three pieces of research I identified as influential to the design and approach of my study. Further discussion of these identified studies and how the research (inter)connects and relates to my approach is explored further after the described table.

Table 1: Influential research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Focus of research</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Approach to analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allan, J. (2011)</td>
<td>Advocates to academics new approaches to philosophy in research on disability using a poststructural lens in future studies to open up new hopeful ways to think and talk about disabilities.</td>
<td>Literature review, Previous research examples using poststructural approaches.</td>
<td>Poststructural Deconstructive, Rhizomic and Transgressive approaches in provided examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wong, S. (2013)</td>
<td>Social justice through a historic approach of ECE in Australia. Looks at the establishment of the Free Kindergarten movement in Sydney, NSW.</td>
<td>Literature review, document analysis.</td>
<td>Foucauldian poststructuralist genealogical approach and critical discourse analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31
In the article ‘Mothers, teachers, maternalism and early childhood education and care: some historical connections’ (2008), Jo Ailwood discusses how ECE in Australia is embedded in maternalist discourses. Ailwood (2008) develops historical links between discourse, politics and policy in Australian ECE settings. Further, in this article the relationship between the notion of motherhood and teacherhood, together through a historical and cultural account of Froebel’s role in the establishment of kindergarten, philanthropy and maternalism – seen as a basis for being a ‘good’ teacher - is drawn. Shifts to the rise of psychology became evident in the 1920s to 1930s in Australia and this was discussed as a significant alignment with women being able to work in ECE and seen as professionals. Ailwood (2008) also notes that women were able to take positions of leadership to an extent in education prior to and during this timeframe as ‘advisors’ visiting kindergartens. The article highlights that a poststructural Foucauldian approach in a study of a particular period of history can enable power relations to become apparent and examined to show the influence of discourses through past moments in time and into the present.

Through the article ‘Complicating, not explicating: taking up philosophy in learning disability research’, Julie Allan (2011) advocates to academics’ new forms of engagement with ‘theory in research on disability’ (p. 153). Allan (2011) notes that an introduction to theoretical ideas and practices by Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari could open up a move to a research methodology of transgression, deconstruction and rhizomic analysis within this research field. Allan (2011) advocates that poststructural researchers can offer new opportunities to think differently about and talk of people with disabilities. The article notes Foucault’s theoretical approach of transgression, or resisting limits, ‘as an important way for people with disabilities to challenge the disabling barriers they encounter’ (p.154) and notes examples of children transgressing effectively. Further, the piece identifies that teachers can impact upon children’s responses depending on whether adults view children ‘positively or in relation to their deficits’ (p.155). Allan (2011) alerts in her research to academics to shift attention within learning disabilities away from ‘fault, blame and lack, and towards something more positive’ (p.159), by seeing children as resistant and with potential to grow, change and succeed.
In the article ‘A ‘humanitarian idea’: using an historical lens to reflect on social justice in early childhood and care’, Sandie Wong (2013) considers the notion of social justice through a historical genealogical approach and critical discourse analysis in Australian ECE. Wong (2013) considers a ‘moment in time’ – the establishment of the free kindergarten movement in Sydney, NSW to show how social justice has been central to the work in ECE in Australia. Social justice discourses can be used to ‘interrogate and challenge unjust and intolerant practices associated with social class, race and gender by challenging stereotypes and oppressive practices’ (p. 313). Questions are raised for me as to who ‘social justice is for’? Are all people’s experiences considered to be socially just? Ideas of social justice can seem contemporary, but Wong (2013) identifies that this concept has been at ECE’s core since its inception in Australia. Further, Wong (2013) challenges us to see that ‘pioneers contributed to social justice in a conservative and largely gender based society’ (p. 315) with the aim of not to socially stratify, but to ‘change systems to make them fairer’ (p. 316). The social justice discourses foregrounded in this study will be considered in my interpretations of the data under examination.

In the design of the research within this thesis particular aspects in each study, (see Table 2), helped shape the approaches I identified as integral to the research questions. All three authors of these pieces have undertaken qualitative research using a poststructural approach and critical analysis to explore their data. Two studies drew on historical accounts, including genealogy, as an approach to interrogate discourses and the productive elements and effects within power-knowledge relations in education.

Drawing upon a poststructural approach, Jo Ailwood’s (2008) research identifies the complexities of how women have been positioned within political spaces of early childhood education in Australia. Of interest to my research, has been the connection between maternal discourses and educational discourses and how the subject negotiated these spaces through temporal moments in Australia to be known as a ‘good’ teacher, and in some instances in an ‘advisory’ role. As the early childhood education workforce in Australia is largely dominated by female educators (Sumison, 2005), including PSFOs, consideration of how these discourses identified by Ailwood (2008) may be seen in the data I am analysing is worth attention. The potential effects of these discourses and the ways power-knowledge relations
are maintained include questions as to how educators may be considered ‘good’ and some educators, in particular, ‘good enough’ to progress to an advisory role. It could be claimed that, by being classified as maternal and professional educators maintain a position of being ‘good’. Through disciplinary power they ‘are known to others and eventually even themselves only insofar as they contribute to the efficient progress of the efficient production of their society’ (Mc Nicol Jardine, 2010, p. 58). In light of this fixed position, what might the promotion of the ‘good’ educator into advisory roles mean for educators, consultants and early childhood communities?

Julie Allan’s (2011) article raises the potential for disability to be constructed and voiced in new ways in research through poststructural approaches. Of interest to my research is a few key points. Some journal publications regarding disability have focussed on limits of disabling conditions on young children (Gal, Schreur, & Engel-Yeger, 2010) and on the barriers which exclude children with disabilities in education (Odom, Zercher, Li, Marquart, Sandall & Brown, 2006). Julie Allan’s (2011) perspective raises new possibilities to reconceptualise practices in early childhood education when working with children who identify as having a disability. This article raises the opportunity to consider the research literature in the documents under analysis to explore studies to identify which is included and may prevail as key influences within PSFO programs and enacting roles.

In addition, Julie Allan (2011) raises questions about the ways research influences how children with disabilities are viewed and taught by educators. This generates possibilities to explore how educators, including PSFOs, view children with disabilities and use disciplinary techniques to include (and exclude) children in early childhood spaces. The article counters dominant deficit narratives about children with disabilities and offers examples of children showing transgressive moments with educators. An opportunity is offered to look for signs of transgression and agency in early childhood educational spaces in this study and to see potential for positive change by viewing children, families and educators as resistant to limits of conditions, which may be deemed as disabling.

Sandie Wong’s (2013) article uses a historical lens to gain an understanding of social justice discourses in ECE. Of interest to my study is the notion of Wong’s (2013) methodology of
studying discourse and how social justice discourses are interpreted as a means to challenge practices which oppress others and seek systematic change. Given that power can be productive, insightful and mobilise people (Dussel, 2010), Wong’s (2013) evidence of an emergence of the preschool movement and the predominant role of women as volunteers and mothers in this mobilisation, affords an opportunity in my study to explore how and which families and voluntary organisations may have influenced change or were silenced with Governmental bodies, consultants and early childhood educators’ practices. Using a similar methodology and area of study, I will explore how power induces behaviours and the techniques in operation between subjects.

**Methods used in the research**

In this ethnographic and genealogical research project, I have explored documents and aim to critically examine the content of material from 1960 - 1985 including: Victorian State Government department documents, visual data including old photographs and artefacts, brochures/fliers from educational settings (including universities), minutes of preschool and FKU meetings, curriculum policy documents and printed material sent to families about preschools (MacNaughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). I also sought to examine documents from Victorian State Government departments from 2015 – 2016 which offer current information about the PSFO program and education in Victoria in the present day. Each contemporary document was sourced to look for key search terms including preschool field officer program, preschool, kindergarten, teacher, advisor, mother, families, volunteers, supervisor, field, officer, multicultural, development, early childhood consultancy/consultation, inclusion, support, special needs (education/culture/knowledge), government, funding, preschool consultancy, and kindergarten consultancy, when searching published literature.

A systemic review of published literature was conducted as part of my search to locate documents focusing on consultative practices, specifically the preschool field officer program, in early childhood education. As the PSFO position is a funded Victorian State Government program, I conducted my initial search through government websites. I conducted an electronic database search through the Department of Treasury Victorian State
Government site, *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)*

Victorian State Government site (2007-2012), *Department of Education and Training (DET)*

Victorian State Government site (beyond 2012), *Early Childhood Australia* website and the *Early Learning Association Australia* website.

My search term focused on current documentation in the PSFO program. The PSFO program is considered as a service delivery model to children and families, so by looking at websites that might disperse information to early childhood educators and families it was anticipated that additional information might be available. Similarly, as an assistance to ‘educators in funded kindergarten programs’ (DET, 2015a, p. 3), searching research databases such as *JSTOR, Informit* and *Scopus* and libraries, including the *National Library of Australia* and the *Victorian State Library*, were important locations to include in the location of texts detailing the PSFO program. As the PSFO position comes under Commonwealth Government workplace laws and regulations, federal government sites such as DEEWR were also sourced for information.

With the implementation of the Australian National Quality Framework (NQF) for ECE in 2009 (COAG, 2009) across Australia and the wide ranging reforms to the delivery of preschool education in Victoria, it was anticipated that additional information about consultation might be located in key government policy documents. The policy documents the *EYLF* (2009), *VEYLDF* (2009; 2016) and *The Education State* (Victorian Labor Party, 2014) texts were meticulously searched as documents that might reveal information and set ‘out a vision and a program of ideas about what governments want to do’ (Weston & Tayler, 2016, p. 27), in relation to directing and designing consultative practices, including the PSFO program in Victoria, in contemporary times.

I discovered that there is a scarcity of current information available about the PSFO program overall. This is despite it being a Victorian State Government funded and widely available service to educators, families and children in funded kindergarten programs across Victoria. Two current documents were located on the DET website: *The Preschool Field Officer Program* (2015a) and the *Preschool Field Officer Fact Sheet* (DET, 2015b), described as further information regarding the program (DET, 2015b). The descriptor states that the
Preschool Field Officer Program (2015a) guide ‘provides information and high level guidance for organisations funded to deliver the PSFO program and for the PSFOs they employ’ (DET, 2015a, p. 3). Prior to the release of the Preschool Field Officer Program, (DET, 2015a) the most recent guide for educators was produced by the Victorian Department of Human Services, titled Review of the preschool Field Officer Program Within the Context of Preschool Inclusion Supports (DHS, 2001).

Interestingly, the Review of the preschool Field Officer Program Within the Context of Preschool Inclusion Supports (DHS, 2001) guide is no longer publicly available on Government websites and was obtained through my own search at the DHS Library in Melbourne. Viewers can borrow this archived document online through the National Library of Australia in Canberra.

Of the historic documents, most data chosen has included annual government department reports regarding early childhood education from libraries. One document located was an unpublished draft written for a book about preschool education and this was also scrutinised for search terms and links to emerging themes. In line with the contemporary texts, each historic document has been scoured to look for key search terms including preschool field officer program, preschool, kindergarten, teacher, advisor, mother, families, volunteers, supervisor, field, officer, multicultural, development, early childhood consultancy/consultation, inclusion, support, special needs (education/culture/knowledge), government, funding, preschool consultancy, and kindergarten consultancy. Considering gaps in search terms has been important in the search as a means to potentially locate silenced voices and missed agendas. Identified key search terms have been highlighted and cross-checked with other documents to ensure validity across the data.

For the purposes of this study two current documents have been selected, plus a key document from the 1980s, two documents from the 1970s including one text with visual images and a document from the 1960s period. Selected documents were chosen as key search terms were identified, able to be cross checked and clearly link to emerging discursive themes. Each document is discussed in detail in the findings and discussion passage of this thesis.
I have immersed myself in understanding the values, beliefs and viewpoints (Sherman & Webb, 1988) of the consultants, organisations and educational settings from this timeframe. Thus, I maintained a field diary as a means to record my understandings, ideas and hunches. I noted silenced voices, missing pieces and interpretations as a way to note the emerging and changing themes throughout an analysis of documents (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2010).

I have written extensively about the process of document analysis through the methodology passage in this study – including visual and written text - and have recognised in the journey of this thesis the need to be mindful of both potential benefits and challenges in using this method when considering the documents under examination.

**Documents under examination**

Each document chosen from a wide range of published literature is an illustration of past and contemporary consultative services operating in ECE. Contemporary documents that were selected are specifically about the Victorian PSFO program currently in operation. Approximately sixty publications were reviewed from 1960 to 2015, most of which are not included. Documents that were eliminated from the search did not contain the referred search terms or had been located in another search tool. Table 2 refers to a summary of the key documents selected for analysis. Listed documents in the next table emerge in the present day and genealogically descend to study beginnings, as an examination through descent allows the ‘discovery under the unique aspect of a trait or a concept, of the myriad events through which… they were formed’ (Rabinow, 1984, p. 81). Subsequent to this listed table, further discussion ensues about each document chosen for analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool Field Officer Program (DET, 2015a)</td>
<td>December, 2015</td>
<td>The Communications Division for the Wellbeing Health and Engagement Division</td>
<td>Guide developed for PSFO providers and PSFOs to facilitate understanding of the program and how it is to be delivered. The guide includes employment information, performance measurement and data requirements and links to the Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework and early childhood intervention services standards.</td>
<td>Wellbeing, Health and Engagement Division at the Department of Education and Training, Victoria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool Field Officer Program Fact Sheet December 2015 (DET, 2015b)</td>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>Victorian Department of Education and Training</td>
<td>Noted as ‘further information regarding the program’, this 3 page fact sheet offers information about the program through a question and answer format.</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training, Victoria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of the Department of Community Services (DCS, 1985)</td>
<td>30 June, 1985</td>
<td>Under the newly formed Department of Community Services in March 1985, this report was produced to explain the roles and functions of the department</td>
<td>Report details the range of branches and divisions operating in the Department of Community Services and the multiple community service programs to be coordinated and delivered. Under these changes this report now refers to preschool supervisors as preschool field officers.</td>
<td>Department of Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Myth of Equality (Roper, 1971)</td>
<td>1971 Edition</td>
<td>Book written by The Hon. Tom Roper MLA Victorian State Parliament</td>
<td>The written and image-based text argues for reforms to education in Australia. The author argues that inequalities in education result in a lack of opportunity for some Australians which are not adequately addressed by the Commonwealth Government. Through a campaign, including this text, the purpose was to alert the public to this issue.</td>
<td>First published by National Union of Australian University students (1970). Second publication by Heinemann Educational Australia (1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report for Calendar Year 1962 of the Director of Maternal, Infant, and Preschool Welfare (Department of Health, 1962)</td>
<td>Unspecified date or month, Year: 1962</td>
<td>Victorian State Council and Director of Maternal, Infant, and Preschool Welfare to the Department of Health, Victoria</td>
<td>Victorian State Council reported on information sourced through medical health officers and psychologist, day nurseries, preschool advisors, voluntary organisations and committees and made subsequent recommendations from these reports to the Department of Health, Victoria.</td>
<td>Department of Health, Victoria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To identify and examine the construction of consultative practices, documents chosen for analysis were selected as it made reference to early childhood consultancy, including *preschool field officers, preschool advisors or preschool supervisors*. This was to aim to answer the third question in this thesis – *how have historical issues and events influenced present-day power-knowledge relations that are exercised between consultants and preschool educators in early childhood education* – by endeavouring to explore the written and visual text to search for common themes and patterns. This was to elucidate the dominating discourses operating in the current day between consultative and early childhood educational practices influenced by historical issues and events.

By explicating the data in this manner, I made space to examine the first and second questions – *what are the effects of historical issues from 1965-1985 in Australia on what is presently known about the preschool field officer program operating in Victorian preschools and what have been the struggles among the different ideas, discursive practices and relationships of consultancy to Victorian early childhood settings over this timeframe.*

Documents were initially colour coded to look for generated themes in the data, particularly surrounding consultancy in early childhood education. By looking for common themes appearing in each document, frequent terms that emerged and coded were meticulously searched for and cross-checked for similar patterns with other documents chosen for scrutiny to locate discursive themes.

Data, as represented in Figure 2 (Emerging and overlapping themes with the data), identifies the three categories and the prominence of frequent terms distilled from the texts. Figure 2 is arranged to highlight the (inter)connections between themes to display how the data was categorised. Common themes in the data were arranged into three categories – *Negotiating (with) data*, to indicate dominant themes appearing most frequently as prominent discourses and truths emerging within the data through the 1960-1985 timeframe; *Mapping the data*, to illuminate the sites, people, objects under surveillance across locations; and *Musings with data*, to highlight musings with inquiry, spaces with (un)certain questions, ideas generating through the data and spaces which may (or not) appear open to transgression. Curiously, some themes could be seen to interweave and frequently cross into sections to indicate the
term may operate in multiple ways temporally and across spaces, warranting further
discussion. Due to the frequency and prominence of emerging themes within the data, these
three categories were noted as areas for closer scrutiny to be explored in the discussion
passage of this thesis.

Contemporary documents were selected for examination as they are the most recent and only
publicly available documents detailing the PSFO program from Victorian State Government
departments. Moreover, the context of early childhood education in Australia has seen major
reforms and changes (COAG, 2009), to educators deliberate pedagogical approaches which
shapes and guides curriculum in all early childhood contexts (Sumison, Barnes, Cheeseman,
Harrison, Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2009; Grieshaber, 2010; Kilderry, 2015), to the
commitment of providing universal access to preschool for all children in the year prior to
school (Rudd & Smith, 2007) and through a national approach to ECE to productively lift
quality standards in settings (Cheeseman & Torr, 2009; Fenech, 2011). These contextual
changes may offer insights into shifting discursive practices, in which, some may have
remained more visible than others as part of powerful policy agendas in early childhood
education (Cheeseman, 2007) and ‘which make public the thick descriptions and analyses of
what policies and practices look like on the ground’ (Apple, 2012, p. 230).
Contemporary pieces regarding the PSFO program are discussed in detail where emerging themes are explored in the next passage. Documents chosen for analysis - *Preschool Field Officer Program* (DET, 2015a) and the *Preschool Field Officer Program Fact Sheet* (DET, 2015b) are explored in detail. This is to examine the nexus between the semiotics and linguistics of documents and an unveiling of the ‘talk-in-text’ (Rorty, 1989) as a way to explore ‘how language is used in certain contexts’ (Rapley, 2007, p. 4), as part of the discursive themes which are raised, or relegated to silence (Fairclough, 2003).
Within these documents discourses are critically examined to explore how subjectivities are shaped through power-knowledge relations and ways of speaking and the meaning made through shared language and practices (Robinson & Jones Díaz, 2006). At a macro level, an analysis of discourses offers opportunities to explore how certain phenomena is considered to be real, factual and dominant, and the ways in which this might be maintained, produced and negotiated through social language (Rose, 1998; Fairclough, 2003; Rapley, 2007). Of note, possible silences in discourses with missing practices, voices and obvious gaps in the data may also be evident (Kilderry, 2015). Considering discursive themes at a micro level involves analysing localised language in texts to gain an understanding of the semiotics and linguistics in operation (Fairclough, 2013). This analysis is not just to interpret language at a situated level, but to examine how these actions and events contribute to the replication of macro systems (Fairclough, 2013), and the nexus (in)between both structures.

Within this thesis, a critical analysis of the power-knowledge relations operating in early childhood consultative practices to examine discourses at a macro-micro level is appropriated and interwoven in this passage through Marshall’s (1990) reading of Foucault’s (2010) analytic grid. As previously noted within this thesis, Marshall (1990) states that this analysis, which examines the processes of power includes:

- the social and economic conditions which allow for power to be brought into play;
- decisions and types of objectives made by those in a position of power to act for others;
- the means in which power is brought into play including force, compliance or surveillance;
- forms and hierarchical structures within institutions; and
- the ways in which the processes of power are rationalised and legitimatised.

In this sense, a genealogical analysis of the discursive practices constituting subjectivities and their effects within consultative practices in early childhood education, including possible tensions and contradictions between discourses, brought to prominence in these current day documents, can offer insights into ‘things, which continue to exist and have value for us’ (Foucault, 1984, p. 81). Moreover, as Marshall (1990) pointedly states, through the use of
this analytical tool ‘the present and its discourse/practice is not as rational, humane, or developed as we might think [and] can throw genuine insight into what we are doing with children in the name of education’ (p. 25).

As demonstrated by Sue Middleton’s (1998) insightful project, it is hoped that my account of current day consultative practices in early childhood education can unveil and disrupt discourses producing regimes of truth across time and themes, to view the past differently. Locating documents through this detailed process in the next passage opens pathways to explore documents in the past to question how it came to be that current day subjectivities are constituted in certain ways and how power-knowledge relations through dominant discourses and conditions have come to operate within early childhood consultative practices.

**Data generation**

This project seeks to purposefully sample historical documents from 1960-1985 and present day PSFO program documents that provide rich information that enable me to address the research questions (MacNaughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001), and sample as many documents as possible in order to consider ‘what cases [I can] learn the most from’ (Patton, 2002, p. 233). Thus, drawing from the work of Patton (2002), I focused upon a few purposeful sampling strategies that were relevant to my research project:

- **Emergent sampling:** I selected a range of websites based upon their potential to offer me the information-rich data as each site emerged.
- **Snowball sampling:** I asked government departmental bodies, early childhood organisations and universities about further opportunities to access new cases to sample in order to have the opportunity to examine a wide field of data.

During the reporting of my research I aimed to accurately describe the data I sample, the size of the data and any difficulties and limitations I face in accessing important and relevant data for my project (MacNaughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001).
**Access to sites in the generation of data**

In this study to source historical documentation from 1960-1985 that highlighted the work of early childhood consultants and preschool education in Victoria it was necessary to explore the relevant State Government departments, regulatory bodies and educational institutions that hold information relevant to the project. Currently the Victorian State Library and University of Melbourne education library store some curriculum policies from 1960 -1985 related to early childhood education and consultancy, which are accessible to the public and where I was able to read available material. Interestingly, images on the covers of documents related to the field of ECE appeared to predominantly depict Anglo-Saxon females, who were seemingly middle-class and well dressed holding fully clothed smiling babies.

In turn, at a bookshop outside Melbourne University, a black and white book titled *The Myth of Equality* (1971), by The Hon. Tom Roper (MLA, Victorian State Government), was sitting in a stand and caught my eye. The book had an aerial photograph of a brick school on the cover with children lined up in groups. In this picture, inner city Melbourne can be seen with Victorian State Government Department of Housing multi-storey flats located in the background. The photograph enthralled me as it reminded me of Foucault’s description of panopticism (2007) and of my beloved grandmother, who lived in one of the multi-story block of flats in the photograph and where I fondly spent some of my childhood. Upon looking at this book in detail I noted that numerous images appeared in contrast to other photographs I had seen in government documents related to education from the 1970s period in Victoria. All images appeared in black and white and depicted impoverished Anglo-Saxon and/or multiethnic children. Some children were smiling and some appeared dour and were located in inner city and remote country locations, including schools, kindergartens, in laneways, often without shoes and often playing with other children or within a scheduled time with adults, such as a doctors’ appointment.

Qualitative studies aiming for rich descriptions requires the researcher to responsibly examine data closely to ensure diversity and quality is encountered (Freebody, 2003). This idea became important because as I was noting in my field diary diverse viewpoints across the timeframe in my study was required in the data, and was lacking. In addition, questions
were being raised for me about maternal discourses from the images on government documents and I was seeking further data of the role of women and children in this timeframe to begin to explore emerging themes in more detail. In an attempt to explore the data beyond government documents and offer richer descriptions of education during my chosen timeframe, I sought to include this book and images as part of the data to be interpreted.

As the author of *The Myth of Equality* (Roper, 1971) was a former member of parliament in the State Government of Victoria, I was able to find an email address to locate him. I sought written permission to use and reprint multiple images (see figures 3, 4 and 5) from the author of the book to produce in this thesis. The photographs were taken by a journalist and were published in *The Age* newspaper and then the book *The Myth of Equality* (Roper, 1971). Permission was granted in writing to use images for the purpose of producing and interpreting photographs as part of this study by the author, Tom Roper.

**Data analysis approach**

My approach to analysing the generated data was to adopt a series of steps that enabled me to analyse data as it built over the duration of the project. Through ethnographic analysis I scanned the generated data in order to organise and synthesise notes for patterns and regularities as they emerged and used theorising techniques to perceive, contrast, order, establish relationships, speculate and create linkages in order to organise the data and build related constructs (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). My aim was to identify themes within the data by examining the recurring patterns that emerge and to use these themes to link various parts of the categorised data, which challenged me to reflect upon and question the existing and emergent data in new ways (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Ongoing reflective analysis of this data also allowed me to establish connections between the data and the theoretical framework of genealogy and ethnography that I employed in this project.

Foucault (1979) argues that the purpose of applying a genealogical approach to research is to examine the processes of modern power through the ‘analytic grid of power-knowledge’ relations (Marshall, 1990, p. 23). Marshall (1990), as noted in the introduction of this thesis,
states that Foucault’s genealogical framework requires the analysis of power-knowledge relations, as noted earlier in this passage.

By analysing the content of documentation in this way, opportunities for deeper understandings and perspectives of the possibilities, ruptures, accidents, struggles, the complex actions (Marshall, 1990) and the decisions taken by people and organisations that were manifested within the historical context of the 1960-1985 timeframe were made possible (Bryman, 1984). Opportunities to build meanings of the power-knowledge relations and discourse practices between consultancy and early childhood education and the creation of space(s) to understand how these power-knowledge relations are produced and sustained in current consultative practices in Victorian preschools were also made possible (Cannella, 1997; Peters & Fendler, 2003).

The trustworthiness of the study

My approach to creating a trustworthy research project incorporates the suggestions made by Lather (1986) and LeCompte and Preissle (1993). Lather (1986) argues that ‘techniques of validity are tied to paradigmatic assumptions’ (p. 66), where formulated quantifiable procedures in positivistic studies, seen as objective and neutral, are assumed as a natural method ‘appropriate to the study of human beings’ (p. 66). Suggesting however that these positivist assumptions are inadequate ‘in the face of the complexities of human experience’ (p. 63), a critical ethnographical approach is one research method which offers a stance against scientific norms through ‘transformative agendas’ (p. 64). Lather (1986) referred to catalytic validity as the ‘degree to which the research process re-orients, focuses and energises participants in what Freire (1973) terms ‘conscientization’, knowing reality in order to better transform it [practices or agendas]’ (p. 67). This research piece has sought to reconceptualise how the PSFO program understands its practices and, as part of participating in the research through self-reflection, an understanding of the practices and actions enacted.

Central to Foucault’s genealogical framework was my reflection upon my own subjectivity and how I acknowledge that my background, emotions and position impact upon the collection and interpretation of data (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2010). In order to make my
study trustworthy and ethical, it was important that I be transparent about the ways I exercised and operated in power as (a), a child in a kindergarten, (b), teacher and (c), as a consultant to children and families, through educational discourses. Through this process I sought to subject my positioning to the same scrutiny as the data I generated (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2010).

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) also noted that qualitative research should also consider how validity functions across the research project. My aim was to address these key concepts in the design of the research including:

- considering how I established goals during my research and my ability to consider how these goals affected early childhood consultants and educators in Victorian preschools (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993);
- considering how my theoretical framework fit the research situation and my ability to continually question the theoretical frame I employed, by relating my study to previous research in the field, to consider previously made arguments and to offer new positions (Lancy, 1993);
- considering the reliability and validity of the data I sourced during the course of this project. I aimed to generate a wide range of data from multiple sites and to check and cross-check data during the course of the research (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993);
- Allowing open scrutiny, assessment and discussion of my research project by educators, consultants and scholars in the field of early childhood (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

**Ethical considerations**

This research project did not require ethics clearance from the University of Melbourne, as this study did not directly involve human research participants or the need to seek the consent of any identifiable persons in any documents from 1960-1985. However, I have ensured that I took measures to explain the purpose of this research project in written form to any relevant State Government departments, regulatory bodies, authors and university faculties before visiting sites and generating data. Through written form I ensured that any relevant parties
were offered access to any publicised results of this study (Dowling & Brown, 2010). I also ensured that all documentation generated was stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be kept for a five-year period after the completion of this project to maintain confidentiality.

In the next passage is an (inter)connection – Rendering the familiar strange. Interrelating my readings of the collected data, with a view to thinking about creating possibilities for the field of early childhood as a way to reconceptualise how consultative practices in early childhood may also be understood, suggests another way forward, as raised through the following (inter)connecting passage.
(Inter)connected musing: ‘rendering the familiar strange’

In this (inter)connecting passage – inter referring to ‘between’ or ‘among’ (OED) – I draw on the work of Professor Keith Hoskin and Professor Deborah Youdell, both scholars from the University of Birmingham. I highlight their deep reflections, or musings, to demonstrate the (inter)relatedness of the methodology and the move to the literature review. In this, I trace ‘relations and forces of power connected to discursive practices’ (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003, p. 8), with the aim of exploring both the social terrain and the subjectivities, which are under interrogation as sites of struggle (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003, p. 4), and rendered problematic in this thesis at the micro-level. Together, Hoskin (1990) and Youdell (2010) offer tools for analysis useful to the literature review passage.

Keith Hoskin, contributing to Foucault and Education (Ball, 1990), contends that Foucault not only rendered the familiar strange, but intensely pursued ‘understanding the strangeness’ (Hoskin, 1990) to unmask that which is made familiar. Notably, etymologically, the term rendering is concerned with the action of giving, making or surrendering something. Hoskin’s detailed musings in relation to Foucault’s theoretical work offer a tool for explicating educational practices as a possibility of understanding their making or ‘rendering’. He argued that Foucault’s seminal text Discipline and Punish (1977) refers to discipline in education as exercising power-knowledge in a process of ‘presenting a certain knowledge to the learner, and the discipline of keeping the learner present before the knowledge’ (Hoskin, 1990, p. 30).

Further, Hoskin argues that behind the notion of how discipline is exercised, is ‘the examination’ (p. 31). The significance of the examination, states Foucault, is that:

---

5 From Old French rendre – from an alteration of Latin rederre ‘give back’, ‘recite’, ‘make’ ‘deliver’ (Oxford English Dictionary). I seek to (sur)render what has been produced – recited, constituted, constrained and made familiar in early childhood education - in relation to consultancy. By examining the social construction of early childhood educational consultancy practices, space is rendered to rupture familiarities, and by extent, to make it strange (Delamont & Atkinson, 1995).
examination spreads across the human sciences…functioning as a ‘constant exchanger of knowledge’ from the powerful (teacher, doctor, employer) to the powerless (pupil, patient, worker), but also in the other direction, as the subjects must make themselves known in answering the questions put in the examination.

Foucault, 1977, p. 32

Turning to view educational practices through a(n) (partial) historical examination of the terrain and through shifts over time affords the possibility to explore consultant subjectivities in early childhood educational discourses. I aim to understand the ways the subject – consultants – discursively ‘both speaks and is spoken of’ (Marshall, 1990, p. 14); also, to examine the effects of productivity as to how consultant subjectivities ‘form and function in educational discourses’ (Hayes, 2003, p. 91).

Alongside this, I turn now to an understanding of the subject through a Foucauldian influenced feminist poststructural lens. In seeking to illuminate this notion, I am drawn to Deborah Youdell’s musings regarding the conceptual ideas of Judith Butler in relation to educational practice. Youdell (2010) states that Butler’s understanding of the subject is concerned with:

the limits of who this subject might be; the constraints and disavowals that are intrinsic to particular subject positions; the reasons why we might be attached to forms of subjectivity that appear to injure us; and the potential for subject positions to be resisted or mean something else.

(Youdell as cited in Apple, Ball & Armando Gandin, 2010, p. 134)

Youdell (2010) notes that Judith Butler is concerned with the notion of fixed identities which can be seen to ‘constrain group members, at the same time as offering them recognition, and also to exclude others who do not fit the group identity (p. 134). She argues that an understanding of the subject, according to Judith Butler, considers the notion of performativity, where ‘performatives are things that are said which make something happen’ (p. 135). Foucault was also interested in the way performance of practices are deployed and the means in which performativity is exercised – the body according to a Foucauldian analysis, ‘remains the locus of the application of power’ (Marshall, 1990, p. 22). Making
sense of the way the subject is positioned and performs through gender discourses through a feminist poststructural lens as a way to understand how consultants are constituted and regulated in everyday practices underpins the upcoming literature review.

Following on from this interconnection, the contemporary landscape of ECE in Australia is detailed. The purpose here is not only to (inter)relate the terrain in a (dis)continuous journey, but to bring to light the multiple influences which might be in play in consultative practices. Thus, as a means to understand the current terrain I bring to view the current context of ECE in Australia: The National Quality Framework (NQF) (COAG, 2009). In utilising and (inter)relating these epistemologies, my aim is to describe the current context with the purpose of enabling the reader an opportunity to understand this terrain, and to move towards the review of the literature which details these temporal contextual shifts in ECE juxtaposed to the research evidence base.
Contemporary times: Kindergarten education in Victoria

Educational practices in early childhood education in Australia are guided by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009). Implemented in 2009, the EYLF was formulated by a consortium of researchers from Charles Sturt University co-led by Professor Jennifer Sumison and Professor Linda Harrison. The aim of the creation of the EYLF was to guide educators to develop high quality early childhood programs (Weston & Tayler, 2016). This was established as part of the Rudd Government strategy for a national partnership for a reform agenda of ECE (Rudd & Smith, 2007), known as the National Quality Framework (NQF) for all early childhood settings and was agreed to through the Council for Australian Governments (COAG) in 2009. The purpose of the NQF was to broadly regulate the early childhood curriculum and services within Australia for all early childhood services through policy levers such as the EYLF, plus reforms to educational qualifications, staff ratios, service assessment, legislation and funding provisions (Weston & Tayler, 2016). In addition, under this reform agenda, all children were to be provided with universal access to an ‘ECE (preschool) program in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling’ (COAG, 2009, para 3).

The NQF was introduced across Australia through all levels of government in response to a need to streamline early childhood education and care services, where ECE services in the past had operated concurrently and divergently across states and territories. This reform response was based on ‘educational, social and behavioural sciences [which] affirm[ed] the importance of early life experiences’ (Weston & Tayler, 2016, p.28). In addition, the desire for policy reform was influenced by economic factors, where early childhood education was seen as more cost effective than investing in people as they age (Heckman, 2003). This included international research such as the Effective Preschool and Primary Education Project (EPPE) in the UK which found that early childhood education had a lasting impact on children’s learning and helped diminish social disadvantage, including poverty and exclusion (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2010). The decision to reshape early childhood education throughout Australia was also influenced by women’s participation in the paid workforce and the need to expand early years’ services to
accommodate children (Penn, 2011). All of these factors influenced the decision making to reframe early childhood education through a national partnership between all states and territories through COAG after the election of the Rudd Government in 2007.

Following this plan, and with agreement of the COAG, significant changes to early childhood education in Australia were made in 2009 at a national level. With immediate implementation and by endorsing a set of early childhood curriculum guidelines and regulations for children aged birth to five years (Arthur, Barnes & Ortlipp, 2011), the EYLF document, called *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (DEEWR, 2009), has been acknowledged as important as it was the first attempt on a national level to regulate an early childhood curriculum decision making in Australia (Elliot, 2009). The EYLF document, developed by a consortium of academic researchers with feedback from national consultations with fellow researchers, educators and onsite trials (Sumison, Barnes, Cheeseman et al., 2009), was created as a guide designed for educators to ‘extend and enrich children’s learning from birth to five years and through the transition to school’ (DEEWR, 2009, p. 5).

Under the EYLF, educators’ practices and principles when working with children, families and in early childhood communities, are underpinned by ‘contemporary theories and research evidence concerning children’s learning and early childhood pedagogy’ (DEEWR, 2009, p. 12). Utilising the EYLF principles, early childhood educators are guided to engage in high quality pedagogical practices in order to develop and support the learning of children, which is measured through children’s learning outcomes (DEEWR, 2009). The EYLF explains that the principles involve practitioners developing and maintaining relationships with children, forming partnerships with families, holding high expectations and a recognition of the capabilities of children, engaging in continual professional development, having a respect of diversity and an involvement in ongoing reflective practice (DEEWR, 2009). Educators guide children’s learning through play by the implementation of intentional teaching strategies and constructing play-based programs that meet evidence-based outcomes such as identity, physical and social wellbeing, cognitive based learning, communication and connection to local and global communities which are assessed and documented (DEEWR, 2009).
Since the implementation of the EYLF, an emerging critique from within a growing body of literature opens space to ‘interrogate and problematise the role of learning frameworks such as the EYLF in the provision of quality programs for children’ (Arthur, Barnes & Ortlipp, 2011, p. 3). Significant in this literature is the discussion, which raises the dilemmas and dangers associated with the implementation of the EYLF to early childhood communities (Arthur, Barnes & Ortlipp, 2011), where it has been argued that in the design of the EYLF learning is valued over play (Ortlipp, Arthur & Woodrow, 2011), as learning outcomes are seen as intentional drivers primarily for children to be school ready (Grieshaber, 2010).

Despite the endorsement and implementation of a national framework guiding ECE practices, COAG (2009), agreed to individual states and territories developing their own ECE frameworks to align with the EYLF. Currently, early childhood programs in Victoria operate under both the national EYLF and the Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework (VEYLDf), which was introduced in Victoria in 2009 by the DEECD and Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), and was recently revised in 2016 by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) and VCAA. As noted by Lauren Armstrong (2013), the VEYLDf attends to elements of the EYLF:

…by focusing on the five early years learning and development outcomes, as well as practice principles for learning and development, relating to collaborative, effective and reflective practices. However, one distinction between these two documents [EYLF and VEYLDf] is that the VEYLDf (DEECD & VCAA, 2009) serves children from birth to eight years, links to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), and therefore incorporates children participating in the early years of primary education.

(Armstrong, 2013, p. 32)

Lauren Armstrong (2013) notes the connection between ECE and and orientation towards school-based learning in Victoria through the VEYLDf in her research. In this context, the implementation of the VEYLDf can be seen as a policy reform where Victorian early childhood services work under the EYLF and the VEYLDf guidelines to create programs that
‘project positively towards the formal school phase of education’ (Tayler, Ure, Brown, Deans & Cronin, 2008, p. 6), where pedagogical practices orient towards strong linkages and transitions between ECE services and school settings (Tayler et al., 2008). In this light, it is arguable that this reform has also had an impact upon PSFO practices. Within the context of this reform PSFOs practices are performed under both the EYLF and the VEYLDF which now shape educational practices in Victorian ECE services.

In a recent review of the PSFO program in Victoria by the DET (2015a), given the wide reforms to ECE practices, the importance of adhering to a contemporary framework within the PSFO role was addressed. Whilst it was acknowledged that ECE services were operating under the reforms of the EYLF, it was stated that the role was to be ‘underpinned by the practice principles and outcomes of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), [as the] foundation for professional practice of all early childhood professionals, including PSFOs’ (DET, 2015a, p. 3). In this context, the VEYLDF document with an orientation towards a school-based agenda over the broad aims of the EYLF was privileged in relation to how PSFOs were directed to perform their role in Victorian ECE settings with educators, children and families.

Given the relative prominence of the VEYLDF to the transition into the early years of school in early childhood education and to the role of the PSFO in current policy documents, it is of importance to this thesis to consider and question current PSFO practices in light of these present frameworks – particularly in relation to an orientation towards a school-based agenda, which will be further explored as the thesis progresses. Of particular interest is the differing ideas, discursive practices and relationships of consultancy to Victorian early childhood settings through the implementation of these policies. It appears in the research presented – through the wide consultations and development of contemporary policy – that the voice of the child and and family has not been prominent. Faced with these questions, it is worth considering in what ways past practices in engaging the child’s voice and family perspectives on what constitutes as important learning and for what purpose has played a part in the development of policy. Understanding the historical practices and past documents which have led to current day positions, as explored in current literature, is one means in which I can further problematise and interrogate this situation.
I now approach the literature review in three written passages which (inter)connect and muse over consultancy in early childhood educational practices in Australia from 1960 – 1985 weaving in a (dis)continuous and playful linear-non-linear somewhat recursive, journey. This is enabled through a genealogy and ethnographic approach, which reveals ‘discontinuities, recurrences, and unexpected backlashes as well as unexpected continuities...it is a history without constants’ (Tamboukou & Ball, 1990, p. 5), and ‘is disruptive [and] is about the play of power-knowledge relations in local and specific settings’ (p. 5). The three passages are titled: beginning again; the next being a (partial) history of Victorian preschool education; and the third one is discourses of child development: The expert early childhood consultant ‘educating’ the (un)developing child.
Passage Two …beginning (again)…

As I began to explore the possibility of writing a thesis, my original starting point was: ‘Supporting early childhood educators teaching preschool aged children: Does consultancy match what preschool teachers want?’ Academic staff in the university’s faculty of education challenged me to consider how I came to identifying this particular research question as a starting point. What did I mean by ‘support’? How did I come to understand that present-day teachers needed and wanted ‘support’ from consultants in preschools? Why did I assume that children need and want what educators would think is necessary for the wellbeing of children? What practices had I learnt to value as important in early childhood education and how did this lead to the research question?

To identify how this question became the initial starting point in my research I reflected upon and considered my own experiences, both as a child in an early childhood setting and as a kindergarten teacher in the 1990s in Victoria, Australia.

As a child of an immigrant mother from Ireland, I attended kindergarten aged four during the 1970s in suburban Melbourne. My recollections of this time include a consultant watching me in the reading corner at kindergarten with the preschool teacher. Speaking with my mother after the kindergarten session, the consultant and teacher advised my mother to delay my commencement at school for the following year and instead, to repeat the preschool year. I recall looking up at the adults and hearing: ‘Kim does not socialise. She doesn’t play in the home corner like the other children.’ It appeared to the consultant, reporting to those present, that ‘she [Kim] only likes to paint, draw, write and read books.’

I remember my mother looking quizzically at the teacher and informing her that in Ireland I would be at school at age four doing activities involving writing and reading. It initially seemed ‘foreign’ to my mother for me to repeat the preschool year. Walking home from preschool, my mother wept. Later that day, I recall her telling my father: ‘Perhaps Kim should stay on at kinder next year. The teacher was worried enough to arrange for an advisor to come to the kindergarten to see the activities Kim did.’
Reflecting on this event of September 1979: Despite the angst that my mother experienced during this visit, as a 4 year-old I was acutely aware that I was being watched and held a sense that I was not performing to an expected, but unknown, standard. Later, my mother’s pain and distress was evident to me on our walk home through the notable silence. This memory is very clear and despite this pain I went on, later as a kindergarten teacher, to engage with the same sanctioned discourse and subjectivities (Wong, 2013). In the present-day, as a kindergarten teacher, I too, have informed families with the assistance of early childhood consultants, of my observed concerns of children. My approach to teaching children in preschools has been informed by psychological science, specifically developmental psychology. Like Sheralyn Campbell and Kylie Smith, through my teaching practices I constructed the child as a fixed and unitary individual, who may be knowable through a predetermined set of norms (Campbell & Smith, 2001). In the following, I explicitly explain my role as a kindergarten teacher engaging with early childhood consultants across several preschools in Victoria:

For many years I had directed children and families through fixed developmental frameworks and as a teacher, advocated developmental stages as the best way to help children learn. I had always relied on my understanding of developmental staging to observe and assess children. In preschools where I have taught I have been advised by employers, directors and committees of management: ‘if you are having trouble with a child, speak with the child’s parent and get the preschool field officer to come out and observe and assess them. Use their knowledge and support to help you teach the child in the kindergarten.

I recall with some dismay, the year I taught Jake*, aged four. I’m not dismayed that I taught him, but at my approach to teaching him. That year, it seemed as though Jake couldn’t sit still at any activity indoors or outdoors. He could talk, but would not ‘use his words’ and speak the way I was compelling him to with his peers. Yet, he talked over me during group activities. It appeared that he wouldn’t and couldn’t develop friendships with the other children. I talked to Jake’s mother about what I perceived as his difficulties at kindergarten and following the policy of the preschool, suggested we ask the PSFO to assess Jake. Jake’s mother reluctantly agreed to have the PSFO attend, and left the kindergarten angry and distressed. Although I remember feeling upset at how badly the
meeting went, I recall feeling a sense that I had ‘won’. I remember telling my assistant at the time: ‘The family will realise that this is the best outcome for Jake as he will get the additional help he needs to develop the skills he does not have’.

Jake’s difficulties seemed beyond me. It never occurred to me to think about Jake’s interests, experiences or views as a first response to this situation. I gave some consideration to the activities I provided, but without Jake or his family’s input. I failed to reflect on ways I could have attempted to understand this child and his family from a cultural perspective. It never occurred to me to ask Jake what he wanted from kindergarten. I kept and maintained my distance from Jake by observing him from across the room to later report my views of Jake to the PSFO and his family. I felt I lacked the ability to help Jake, so I turned my direction to the PSFO, who I saw as knowledgeable and skilful to enable me to overcome the problematic behaviours and abnormalities I saw in him.⁶

Reflecting on these notes from September 1999, it is easy to question how and whether these vignettes matter. Why did I not just continue to internalise and trust the constraints of child development domains and the assistance of consultants as the best way to enable support of all children, families and myself as an educator? However, I too had not met an expected standard in my kindergarten experience so should my parents have followed the advice of the consultant who briefly visited? Upon reading excerpts from Glenda MacNaughton’s text *Doing Foucault in Early Childhood Studies: Applying Poststructural Ideas* (2005) my ideas and practices were challenged in terms of how I had thought about children. I realised that my thinking and practices were dominated by and considered through essentialist notions, or truth claims, of a fixed universal child (Viruru & Cannella, 2001). I recognised too, that there were viable alternatives to dominant discourses about children which often appear as incontestable (Wong, 2013).

⁶ The name ‘Jake’ is a pseudonym in the above vignette.
Using this impetus, I started to consider Foucault’s writings – in particular genealogy, where he posits ‘if one can think differently than one thinks and perceive differently than one sees’ (Foucault, 1985, pp. 8-9) – as a way to reflect on my own experiences. I came to recognise that my understanding of support and the techniques I encountered, both in the past and in the present, were based on theories of development. I began to see that discourses of child development had shaped my particular ways of thinking, talking and teaching (Hultqvist & Dahlberg, 2001; Rhedding-Jones, 2002) had an effect on the children and families I encountered (Davies, 1994). I started to appreciate how these discourses of developmentalism did not appear to benefit all children and families I encountered in early childhood communities (Gallagher, 2003).

I have considered my own questions and reasons for pursuing this thesis in a historical context. When I critically reflect upon my own experiences and actions, I am motivated to explore the historical issues and events that informed my preschool teacher and consultant’s core beliefs and values about early childhood practices; I even wonder whether the experiences I encountered as a child have had an influence on my decisions as a teacher many years later. This all compels me to consider how, practices of the past influence and shape current-day early childhood practices.

In the next section of this thesis I follow this journey by introducing the (partial) history of Victorian early childhood education and consultative services. This account of Victorian preschool education is partial as it presents ‘one account of facts and events that capture what happened in the past, [facts and events which] can be understood differently by different people’ (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 149). Before I continue into the next section I explain the decisions I have made in relation to the content and style of part two.

…beginning points, I suggest, are not fixed, rather shifting and fluid (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006)⁷. Whilst this thesis concentrates on documentation of 1960-1985, I have also included selected historical events prior to 1960 that show how preschool education has shifted in the context of governmental policies and regulations in Victoria, Australia in the

⁷ the use of the ellipsis and lower case ‘b’ denotes less of a fixed beginning and more of a fluid opening.
following passage. Here, I intend to show that from the emergence of early childhood education in Australia, educators’ pedagogical practices have been governed through policy and regulation. This has influenced educators’ philosophical positions on theoretical knowledge (Agbenyega, 2009), which in turn have contributed to practitioners’ decisions, skills and attitudes in ECE, (Theodorou & Nind, 2010), both widely throughout Australia and locally in Victoria, prior to and beyond 1960.

I also present documented historical conditions prior to this timeframe (partially) linearly as a way of outlining the formation of preschool education in Victoria, and more broadly in Australia. Julie McLeod and Rachel Thomson (2009) note that a genealogical approach opposes ‘teleological quests for historical origins and grand narratives that produce linear accounts of history as stories of inexorable progress’ (p. 49). However, by depicting historical events in this manner I am not offering a simple progressively closed account of historical events. Rather, I aim to show that a linear account can be seen as an opportunity to highlight and mark out the discontinuities, accidents and reversals in the past (McLeod & Thomson, 2009) and as an instrument to muse about what hasn’t been said or included in accounts of Australian and Victorian early childhood educational history. In this way, we can begin to question how ECE in Australia and consultancy practices are linked to past external conditions (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). It could be said that by creating a section which demonstrates the external conditions operating in ECE in Victoria, and more broadly in Australia prior to 1960, I attempt to demonstrate how consultants’ practices in Victoria beyond the 1960s, interconnect with these historical external events and can assist in illuminating current, specific knowledge in ECE practices, which unfold during the review.
Passage Three: A (partial) history of Victorian preschool education

As signalled above, the aim in part three is to explore the (partial) historic-political context and the events which occurred in early childhood education in Australia, both prior to and beyond 1960. By drawing upon Foucault’s genealogical approach, this exploration seeks to uncover the overt policy and regulatory decisions within documented historical accounts that have occurred over time in Australian ECE settings as a means to demonstrate the shifts and changes in the formation of consultative practices and the ways in which they have operated.

Whilst in this section I detail past accounts that show consultative services in action in early childhood educational settings, I am not seeking to just simply restate events which have been widely documented, rather, to explicate past events. I wish to make apparent which particular knowledges over time have become established within circuits of power and formed regimes of truth, practice and thought (Ailwood, 2004) and the ways in which these practices have constituted and reconstituted the subject (Marshall, 1990). By exploring past events through the lens of a genealogical framework, space is made to search for the ‘accidents, contingencies, overlapping discourses, threads of power and importantly, conditions of possibility for the production of common-sense, taken-for-granted truths’ (Ailwood, 2004, p. 21); space is also made to consider who has been excluded and marginalised within these recorded historical events (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). By detailing past events in ECE in Australia an opportunity opens for questioning how current consultative practices in early childhood environments have been influenced by these past practices in settings in Australia. This then enables an unpacking of assumptions, concepts and theories that underpin current consultative practices evident in ECE environments, which is addressed in section three of this thesis.

I state here that the detailed historical events presented here are partial – partial, as I examine only some pieces, which illuminate consultative practices through time and space. I am cognisant that not all pieces – voices, transcripts, images, viewpoints – are brought to light here and represented as part of past events. It is not possible within the constraints of this thesis to detail every event in Victorian early childhood educational setting or within a
historic political context. What is documented are key changes and shifts in this account which examine the power-knowledge relations of the body politic (Foucault, 1977).

Foucault (1977) described the body politic as ‘a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge (p. 28). As Julianne Moss (2008) has indicated, by considering Foucault’s view of objects of knowledge we have an opportunity to ‘draw maps of the field…to see the past and to rupture silences in current practices’ (p. 5). By examining the available literature in Australian early childhood education detailing consultative practices, an opportunity is afforded to map this political site as a means to further understand how power-knowledge relations have been shaped through time, and in what context.

Further, it is worth considering the documents made available (or not) in this section. While a wide body of published literature details political events in early childhood education, a very small selection of published literature exists regarding the specific role of consultants in early childhood education in Victoria. Hence, in this section I draw heavily on the published work of Lyndsay Gardiner (1982) and Elizabeth Mellor (1990), both of whom wrote an extensive and detailed analysis of the historical role of the first consultants in Victorian kindergartens, known as ‘supervisors’ who were employed by the Free Kindergarten Union (FKU) and to trace this journey. It is worth querying how it is that there is limited available literature exploring consultative practices; and within this available literature, what is it that is has not readily been looked for? These queries about what is apparent and what is not, arise as significant to the power-knowledge relational analysis of this thesis.

**Knowers as (un)known**

We knowers are unknown to ourselves, and for a good reason: how can we ever hope to find what we have never looked for?

(Nietzsche, 1956, p. 149)

For most of the twentieth century in Western societies, the field of early childhood Education (ECE) has been linked to psychological science, in particular, theories of
child development (Bloch, 1992; Edwards, 2009). It is well documented that ECE in Australia has relied upon psychological developmental science as the foundation which has provided early childhood consultants and educators with a knowledge base that is used to act in the best interests of the universal and predetermined child (Burman, 2008; Bloch, Kennedy, Lightfoot & Weyenberg, 2006; MacNaughton, 2003; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005; Walsh, 2005; Yelland & Kilderry, 2005).

Early childhood education in Australia has also been influenced by the role of privileged and wealthy Christian philanthropists who focused their interests on the ‘poor and neglected child’ (Mellor, 1990, p. 67). The convergence of educational and philanthropic aims in the establishment of the preschool movement moulded an ‘expert’ body (Novinger, O’Brien & Sweigman, 2005, p. 218), which has (dis)continuously shaped past and current Australian social and economic early childhood policies (Woodrow & Press, 2007, p. 88), and has constructed consultants and educators’ views of children and the way services are delivered to children and families in early childhood education.

Early childhood consultation may be defined as a service delivery model in which a consultant provides educators and parents the support, skills and knowledge needed to help children overcome a range of behavioural, emotional and developmental challenges (Buisse & Wesley, 2005; Hirschland, 2008; Wesley & Buisse, 2010). However, Cannella (1999) argues that ‘consultants, as ‘experts’ of knowledge, are by definition given exclusive rights to speak and act’ (p. 39, original emphasis) for the universal child. Taken as objective truth, these traditional paradigms of child development and their normative models of early childhood educational standards and criteria based in psychological science are applied by supposedly expert consultants to inform and communicate their educational decisions about young children (Fendler, 1998; Novinger & Smith, 2003; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005). Furthermore, these discourses of expertise and authority are promoted in ECE as progressive and beneficial to all children and families (Cannella, 2005).

**Rendering early childhood consultancy as ‘strange’**

These ‘power-knowledge relations’ are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the
subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations.

(Foucault, 1977, pp. 27-8)

By analysing historical events from the 1960-1985 period in this paper, I aim to problematise how early childhood consultancy (subject) has come to have the power to direct the practices of educators, as consultees (object), in Victorian kindergartens. For the purposes of this thesis, ‘kindergarten’, used interchangeably with the term preschool, is defined as ‘services offered on a part-time or sessional basis (usually up to 5 hours per day, 3 days per week, during school terms only) and catering mainly for children in the year before entry to primary school’ in Victoria, Australia (Brennan, 1982, p. v). In this, I seek to outline the pedagogic status of early childhood ‘experts’ within the economic and social conditions since the establishment of the kindergarten movement in Victoria; also, to illuminate historical events, which were controversial for their time, but are now taken for granted (Fendler, 1998, p. 40); events that emerged prior to and within the 1960-1985 timeframe, concomitantly with an examination of the discourses, objectives, and practices (Cannella, 1997; Peters & Fendler, 2003) of consultants. This then opens to interrogating the means in which power is produced (Marshall, 1990) in early childhood settings.

Recent publications reviewed were selected from documents dating from 2000 - 2016. This timeframe was selected in order to explore some of the current literature of influence to present day practices and techniques deployed within the PSFO program. As Mills (2008) notes, the selection of literature to be reviewed is subjective as others searching for existing publications may choose completely different studies using similar descriptors. Publications selected for this genealogical analysis include: government reports, texts and peer-reviewed articles from Australian and international journals. International journals were selected as limited data regarding the PSFO program and consultation, broadly, is limited in Australia. Thus, it is possible that Governmental bodies may be influenced by research concepts and outcomes undertaken internationally to shape ECE policies and the PSFO program in Victoria.
A range of databases were sourced through electronic searches for various publications containing keywords such as *early childhood consultation, inclusion, poststructuralism, genealogy, Australian history, expertise* and *early childhood education*. Table 3 (Summary of key articles selected for review) illustrates the literature selected for review.

As noted in the methodology, my intention is to examine the PSFO program as thread-like, seeing the shifts and changes in ECE and consultative practices. I intend to examine these elements and to also look for the dominant discourses which may have woven in and out through moments in time, but remain present and influential in contemporary consultative practices. Thus over the following two passages, I weave past practices with and (inter)connect contemporary consultative practices in ECE, seeking to view the (inter)relationship between current practices in the current context of ECE policies and the way in which practices have emerged through a diverse range of literature.
Table 3. Summary of key articles selected for review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case-Smith, J. &amp; Holland, T. (2009)</td>
<td>Article presents a rationale for consultants to use fluid models of service delivery and explains how consultants make decisions about the blend of service delivery methods they employ that will best ‘serve’ a child.</td>
<td>Models used by consultants were examined to determine their usefulness in early childhood environments.</td>
<td>Models of consultative service delivery, including interactional models when working with children and models of service delivery that focused on collaboration and flexibility when working with early childhood teachers.</td>
<td>To create fluid consultative delivery models consultants need to plan collaboratively with early childhood teachers, and design flexible scheduling systems and maintain precise documentation about when and how services are provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross, A.F., Traub, E.K., Hutter-Pishgahi, L., &amp; Shelton, G. (2004)</td>
<td>The focus of this study was on the practices used by consultants and early childhood teachers that contributed to the successful inclusion of seven children with disabilities in preschools. Of particular interest were the specific elements identified by the researchers that contributed to children being included.</td>
<td>Participants were individuals who provided services, support and education to 7 children with disabilities and their families.</td>
<td>Data were gathered from three sources and included interviews with 43 participants – early childhood consultants, early childhood teachers and families, observations of practitioners with the children and written records.</td>
<td>Researchers identified four elements to children’s successful inclusion in preschools: attitudes, parent-provider relationships, therapeutic interventions and adaptations. Researchers suggested that if consultants could identify these practices then this would permit children of all abilities to have a successful inclusive experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinnebeil, L.A., McInerney, W.F &amp; Hale, L. (2006)</td>
<td>This article documents the responsibilities and professional activities of itinerant Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teachers in Ohio, USA.</td>
<td>Five itinerant ECSE teachers visiting preschool aged children.</td>
<td>ECSE teachers were observed in an observational study and their behaviours were coded. The observations occurred three times over a year for three week periods to explore changes over time relating to ECSE teachers’ practices.</td>
<td>Results showed that ECSE teachers interacted primarily with children (in a direct service model) which is in despite of recommendations from the field for ECSE teachers to provide consultative services to teachers and caregivers in early childhood education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Continuation of summary of key articles selected for review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gomez, R.E. (2012)</td>
<td>This article focuses on the way Early Childhood Professional Development Specialists (ECPDS’s) understand their own work practices with Early Childhood Educators (ECE’s) and how ECPDS’s influence practitioners’ understandings of policy and practices in the field.</td>
<td>Three ECPDS’s and U.S. policy documents.</td>
<td>ECPDS’s were interviewed. Participants commented on transcripts. The researcher also analysed a policy document – the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plan. Connections were sought between the policy and the</td>
<td>The ECPDS’s sometimes accepted and reproduced knowledge, such as child development knowledge and expected ECE’s to have an understanding of this knowledge system. At times, ECPDS’s resisted institutional knowledge systems and encouraged ECE’s to critique and reflect upon the needs of their preschool community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huang, H-H. &amp; Diamond, K.E. (2009)</td>
<td>This study examined how information about children’s disabilities on preschool teachers influences their responses towards including children with disabilities. Of interest was whether the severity of the child’s needs and information about diagnosis also influenced teachers’ responses.</td>
<td>155 early childhood teachers currently teaching children up to the age of four years.</td>
<td>Teachers completed questionnaires. In these questionnaires, teachers detailed their views on how comfortable they would be including children with different disabilities in a preschool setting.</td>
<td>This study showed that teachers’ responses were significantly and strongly related to the description of the child’s abilities and needs. The responses indicated that teachers are more likely to accept children who are identified as having mild disabilities and are more concerned about including children diagnosed with a severe disability. The respondents indicated that they would want additional support and resources from a consultant to include all children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt, P., Soto, G., Maier, J., Liborio, N., &amp; Bee, S. (2004)</td>
<td>This study focused on two studies investigating the efficacy of a general education/special education collaborative team in promoting the engagement, development and learning of preschoolers with disabilities who attended community preschools.</td>
<td>Study one focused on consultants, teachers and parents. Study two planned for four preschoolers identified from the first study.</td>
<td>Researchers took two hour observations of the preschoolers and conducted team interviews to elicit members’ perspectives of the participation of the children in the study.</td>
<td>Researchers found that including children with significant disabilities requires a collaborative effort by team members, including parents, and depends on regular scheduled opportunities for team members to share expertise, identify goals, build plans of support and determine responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Continuation of summary of key articles selected for review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelley, M.F. (2004)</td>
<td>Articles on the topic of ECSE consultancy were sourced with the intention to obtain further insights into the discussion of the role of the ECSE consultant.</td>
<td>A review of 16 studies in the field of itinerant ECSE consultation.</td>
<td>The focus of this article is to discuss the emerging roles and practices of itinerant early childhood special education (ECSE) consultants and to explore the realities of practice which appear to be inconsistent with the philosophy and promise of itinerant consultation.</td>
<td>Researchers found that there is a need for reconceptualising the itinerant consultation model. This includes: the development of clear standards for consultants, professional development coursework, field experience that prepares collaborative partnerships, and research on efficacy of consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy, S &amp; Stewart, H. (2011)</td>
<td>Data for this study were sourced through health and education databases. The study included six qualitative and three quantitative articles, seven discussion papers, and three literature reviews.</td>
<td>Nineteen studies were reviewed to further understand collaboration between therapists and teachers.</td>
<td>To present a critical review of available health and education research to better understand how collaboration is defined, the barriers to collaboration, and to consider further research and practice in Australia.</td>
<td>The researchers found that professionals express desire for collaboration, but implementation of collaborative strategies appear inconsistent and poorly researched. The review of literature found that methods which support collaboration in practice include interactional, organisational and systemic factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson-Gibbs, A. (2004)</td>
<td>Articles on the topic of ECSE consultancy were sourced. The researcher reflected on and contrasted her own experiences with those of a consultant in light of the research in the field.</td>
<td>Written reflections of the author and recent published research on itinerant ECSE consultancy.</td>
<td>This article focuses on the reflections of an itinerant early childhood special education (ECSE) consultant who has worked as a consultant in early childhood settings for over ten years. The author highlights that few people understand the role of the ECSE consultant and that definitions of the role of the ECSE consultant are unclear.</td>
<td>To provide greater clarity for people considering training as an ECSE consultant, the researcher concludes that current consultants need to document their experiences in the field and reflect upon their own practices as a way to address the many variables affecting collaborative relationships between consultants, teachers, parents and children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3. Continuation of summary of key articles selected for review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheridan, S.M., Pope Edwards, C., Marvin, C.A., &amp; Knoche, L.L. (2009)</td>
<td>Identifying gaps in research literature to offer new research directions with the processes underlying professional development in early childhood education, including consultative service delivery models.</td>
<td>A review of literature of the theoretical structure of professional development, including consultation to early childhood teachers.</td>
<td>A review of over seventy articles associated with professional development models in early childhood education.</td>
<td>This article reviews literature in the area of professional development with the aim of investigating ‘how’ professional development efforts exert their influence and produce meaningful change in practices, skills, behaviour and dispositions of early childhood teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley, P.W., &amp; Buysse, V. (2006)</td>
<td>This study focuses on the need to use an evidence-based process to make decisions about consultative services using scientific research, professional viewpoints and family expertise as sources of evidence.</td>
<td>Three different case studies about consultative practices are analysed in this study.</td>
<td>The researchers use case studies juxtaposed with published literature about ECE consultation with educators and families</td>
<td>Recommendations include engaging consultants, educators and families to identify the efficacy of consultative practices and dilemmas in consultative practices and ensure the current code of ethics is updated to resolve ongoing dilemmas during consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley, P.W., Buysse, V. &amp; Keyes, L. (2000)</td>
<td>This study examined the professional level of special education consultants providing consultation ‘about’ children with varying types, severity levels and combinations of disabilities.</td>
<td>Eighty-three female special education consultants and one male special education consultant who provided consultation to early childhood workers and children aged 0-5 years.</td>
<td>Group interviews collecting information on children’s disabilities. Consultants completed a profile on a child’s disability showed some consultants felt unable to support all children.</td>
<td>Consultants felt more comfortable managing children’s disabilities when they had ‘technical knowledge’ to underpin ‘effective practices’ to support inclusion. Consultants’ attitude impacted on the comfort level of early childhood teachers supporting children with disabilities in the kindergarten. This study highlighted a need to offer training to consultants and teachers together to meet needs of all children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The early childhood educational ‘expert’: Social and economic conditions, 1960-1985

Within the field of early childhood, the professions – the experts – have been very significant in this process of constructing knowledge, through the identification of new problems and the construction of means to solve them as well as staffing organizations to cope with them.

(Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999, p. 35)

Whilst, a wide body of published literature details political events in early childhood education within this timeframe, a very small selection of (past and current) published literature exists regarding the role of consultants in the field of early childhood. From the late 1950s, the role of the supervisor in early childhood settings operated at two levels: (1) To personally relay the aims and policies of the FKU to educators and to advise the FKU of concerns of individual preschools; and (2), to visit and assist, advise and watch over kindergarten staff and committees of management in preschools and to organise meetings with educators to consult on educational trends in ECE and ways to address and ‘cope with particular childhood problems’ (Gardiner, 1982, pp. 163-64).

During the late 1960s, the Health Department of the Bolte Government of Victoria entered the preschool field by offering the FKU affiliated kindergartens per capita grants, on the provision that kindergartens maintained buildings, equipment and staffing arrangements (Brennan & O’Donnell, 1986). In the early 1960s, the Victorian branch of FKU with 88 affiliated kindergartens, acted upon this proposal by producing educational standards, which included measures to maintain ‘the ratio of staff to children in a kindergarten and to the ratio of Union supervisors to Union kindergartens’ (Gardiner, 1982, p. 157).

In addition, the FKU’s purpose of providing free sessions of kindergarten to all preschoolers in Victoria was constrained by both the rising costs of maintaining preschools (Gardiner, 1982), employing trained kindergarten teachers (Whitehead, 2010), and the Commonwealth government’s decision to increase educators’ salaries in the 1960s (Spearritt, 1979). This
provoked the FKU’s decision to turn children away from preschools to maintain the ‘approved ratio of teacher to children and of supervisor to kindergarten’ (Gardiner, 1982, p. 157). Since many children attending Victorian kindergartens during the 1960s were from privileged middle-class backgrounds (Mellor, 1990), it is unlikely children in the middle-class suburbs of Melbourne were turned away. However, it is difficult to establish in the literature which particular children and families were turned away from preschools following this decision.

Indeed, it is arguable that these events during the 1960s helped the kindergarten movement to be considered an important educational institution to benefit the growing number of children and families in middle-class Melbourne suburbs (Gardiner, 1982). Voluntary parent-body committees of management autonomously ran local kindergartens in many middle-class suburbs and this created a surge of interest in preschools and allowed the FKU to advance the educational and social value of kindergarten (Spearritt, 1979), particularly to ‘deprived children in working-class suburbs’ (Brennan, 2005, p. 74). In addition, after the war, the preschool movement in Victoria rapidly expanded into rural areas where supervisors were employed as experts to support inexperienced teachers in new kindergartens requiring trained teachers.

Foucault is interested in the ways people and organisation are subjugated (Davies, 2004) and arguably, kindergarten committees and educators were subjected by the governance of preschool bodies and by the assistance provided by kindergarten supervisors in relation to the decisions made by committees of management to benefit children and families (Spearritt, 1979). However, the ways in which poorer outer-suburban preschools and kindergartens in rural areas were governed by preschool bodies and supervisors is difficult to ascertain in current literature.

The role of FKU supervisors was affected by political change at the federal level in Australia during the 1970s, where many social and economic decisions changed the direction of early childhood educational services. The early 1970s saw groups, such as the Women’s Electoral Lobby (WEL), put forward their case to federal politicians to provide funding for child care centres to enable women to study and work, while groups such as the Australian Preschool
Association (APA) lobbied for greater investment for kindergartens (Mellor, 1990, p. 138). Both sought to dominate the field of ECE by advocating issues and events of importance to women and children, and as fragmentation within the field of female-dominated early childhood settings widened, debates ensued between early childhood personnel as to whether funding should be increased in childcare or kindergartens (Mellor, 1990). The Liberal-Country Party government, led by William McMahon, introduced the Child Care Act (1972) in order to fund the construction and maintenance of child care centres in Australia, but Brennan (1994) contends that the decision to introduce this legislation was controversial as mothers seen to access childcare were abandoning their duty to care for their child. However, some families were deemed entitled by the federal government to access childcare services during this timeframe as they had ‘children in need’ who were considered to be ‘disadvantaged’, including low-income single parents and migrant families (Brennan, 1983, p. 20).

The early 1970s saw a range of social changes internationally, including anti-Vietnam war protests, an acknowledgement of civil rights and the rights of homosexual people (Ailwood, 2004, p. 21). Amidst these social changes, in December 1972, the Whitlam Labor Government was elected. In relation to early childhood education, Whitlam had previously stated:

> If the university is the roof, then preschools are the foundations of education in a modern community… We will therefore establish a Preschools Commission to ensure that with Commonwealth help every child in Australia has the opportunity of preschool education.

(Whitlam cited in Ailwood, 2004, p. 21)

Gough Whitlam argued that no rigid distinction should exist between the care and education of young children and that education was the foundation of an egalitarian society, which would ‘liberate the talents and uplift the horizons of the Australian people’ (Marginson, 1997, p. 16). The Whitlam Government established the Australian Preschools Commission (APC) in 1973 (MacFarlane & Lewis, 2004). While the APC’s 1974 report, *Care and Education of Young Children*, included recommendations for increases in the universal provision of health and welfare services for all preschool children, the subsequent Social Welfare Commission...
report (SWC) contradicted the position of the APC, by recommending funding for children with the ‘greatest needs’ through community local organisations who would support the developing child (Mellor, 1990). It is arguable that the establishment of both these organisations were key elements in the role of consultative advisory services becoming prominent in ECE services across Australia.

Following the dismissal of the Whitlam government and subsequent election of the Fraser government in 1975, the Office of Child Care within the Department of Social Security was established. This shift created significant changes to early childhood services, where as noted by Chan and Mellor (2002), funding arrangements moved from the Commonwealth Government into Australian states and territories governing bodies:

Commonwealth emphasis changed from universal provision of preschooling to the provision of services for vulnerable children, and particularly, various types of childcare and family support services. Rather than directly providing these services, the Office of Child Care provided funding from its Children’s Services Program either directly or indirectly to respective state departments and nongovernment sector organisations.

(Chan & Mellor, 2002, p. 9)

It is arguable that political reforms, which have at different social and economic times in Australia affected funding arrangements within Victorian preschool services, have shaped access to and the prominence of consultants and consultative practices in early childhood settings, including in Victorian kindergarten communities. Through this shift, consultative programs under the new direction of state governing bodies identified ECE services as sites to deliver advisory services to educators and to families and young children labelled as vulnerable (Press & Hayes, 2000).

**Discourses of health and welfare: ‘Promoting the health and welfare of the vulnerable child’ and the early childhood consultant**

Based on the philosophy of Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), a German educator who believed in establishing an environment where children could play and grow with the assistance of educated middle-class female teachers (Ailwood, 2008; Blank, 2010), the first
kindergarten was founded in Melbourne in 1887 and soon became accepted among educated middle-class people in Victoria as an ideal environment for their children to flourish under the guidance of Froebelian principles (Gardiner, 1982). This movement led to the establishment of the council of the Free Kindergarten Union (FKU) of Victoria in 1908, consisting of the convergence of the aims of educationalists and Christian philanthropists, who placed importance in the rescue of the ‘poor and needy’ child (Gahan, 2007, p. 5). Relying on subscriptions from wealthy middle-class members of the FKU, the purpose of the council was to open free kindergartens for neglected children in poor inner-city neighbourhoods by ‘advocating kindergarten principles and methods both as a system of education applicable to all, and as a means of social amelioration and reform’ (Blank, 2010, p. 392).

During the 1930s representatives from the kindergarten movements of all Australian states met and established the Australian Association for Preschool Child Development (AAPSCD), later known as the Australian Preschool Association (APA) (Brennan & O’Donnell, 1986, p. 19). This formation led to the Lyon Federal Government via the Commonwealth Department of Health (1938) to establish ‘expert’ demonstration centres in six state capitals in Australia. The AAPSCD were asked by the government to supervise these centres. The purpose of these centres, known as the Lady Gowrie centres, was for the ‘care, instruction, physical growth, and nutrition of young children’ (Spearritt, 1979, p. 22), through the study of individual children. To establish these centres, the Commonwealth Government allocated £100,000, which was provided in particular respect to promote the good health of and welfare of women and children, not the education of children (Brennan & O’Donnell, 1986, p. 19). Furthermore, Brennan and O’Donnell (1986) argued that the Lady Gowrie centres were a continuation of the philanthropic model of the early kindergartens, designed to give opportunities for kindergarten teachers to demonstrate to working-class parents the ‘right ways’ of raising healthy children by monitoring the development of their child.

A substantial improvement in children’s health, which was influenced by the establishment of Lady Gowrie Centres, was reported during the post-war 1940-1950 timeframe. As an example, the Melbourne District Nursing Society (MDNS) in consultation with the FKU
reported that they did not need to regularly attend kindergartens weekly, owing ‘to the greatly improved standards of health amongst children in our community’ (Gardiner, 1983, p. 146). It is possible that children were considered in this situation, to be in a home environment and requiring less guidance from nursing staff. However, which children the MDNS service referred to and whether the consultative service extended their assessment of the stated improved health to migrant children or Indigenous children living in Victoria is not clear in the literature.

Prior to a steady increase of migrants, Australian culture was ‘predominantly Anglo/Saxon/Celtic in origin, and the language background of this group was overwhelmingly monolingual’ [i.e. English] (Foster, 1981, p. 51). The post-World War II years in Australia saw a dramatic increase in the arrival of migrants, including many people from European and Middle-Eastern countries (Fabian & Loh, 1989, p. 232). During the 1960s migrant children were expected to assimilate into Australian culture and to learn to speak English and adopt Australian customs and values, and as Howe (1999, p. 224) highlights, individual migrants who did not speak English or adopt cultural values, were labelled as the ‘other’ and were considered problematic. The 1970s saw a shift in policy and language towards the welfare of immigrants under the Whitlam Government, where the discourse of ‘multiculturalism’ was introduced, and the onus was placed on children’s services to:

    Show sensitivity and a willingness to adapt services to meet the cultural needs of ethnic groups; to accept rather than change traditions and child rearing practices different from those normally considered to be acceptable; and to develop procedures that did not offend the families whom the services sought to assist.

    (Whitlam, cited in Mellor, 1990, p. 133)

During the 1960s discourses of invisibility, paternalism and silencing perpetuated the education of Australian Aboriginal children (Martin, 2007, p. 23). During this time Australian State governments adopted the interventionist method of ‘compensatory education’ from the United States, and created a program for Aboriginal children, believing that all preschool aged Aboriginal children were neglected in their homes (Mellor, 1990,
p. 14). These programs, established as Aboriginal preschools, were designed with the purpose of assimilating Aboriginal children into wider society through the provision of English language skills (Teasdale & Whitelaw, 1981, p. 12). Martin (2007) notes that these programs ‘remained embedded in non Aboriginal values of learning and childrearing [and] made Aboriginal cultural identities invisible and rendered the voices of Aboriginal parents and families silent’ (pp. 24-5). However, the 1960s also saw many Aboriginal people protest for an increase in rights, and as a response:

A [federal government] senate committee on Aboriginal voting rights in 1961 recommended that all Aborigines immediately be given the vote in federal elections. Its report stated significantly that Aborigines must be ‘integrated’ (not ‘assimilated’), which suggested a rejection of absorption for a policy of cultural pluralism. The committee also rejected the old notion of many years of tuition before rights could be given to Aborigines: it argued that it was ‘better for a right to be granted before there is a full capacity to exercise it on the part of some individuals, than that others should suffer the frustration of being denied a right that they can clearly exercise’.

(Broome, 2001, pp. 181-2)

It is arguable that protests by Aboriginal people, a wider focus in ECE on the welfare of Aboriginal children and the 1967 Commonwealth Referendum which resulted in ‘89 per cent of all Australians of voting age agreed…that Aborigines [sic] should be included in the census count and that the federal government should be given power to legislate for Aborigines’ (Broome, 2001, p. 182), saw a significant shift during the 1970s by the Commonwealth government towards Aboriginal people (Ebbeck, 1991, p. 193; Martin, 2007, p. 24). McConnochie and Russell (1982, p. 42) state that an increase in the provision of Aboriginal preschool services as a strategy to achieve economic and social equality for Indigenous people was progressive. The provision of early childhood programs during this time saw the direct involvement, determination and control by Aboriginal people of Aboriginal early childhood programs (Howe, 1999, p. 272), and has greatly influenced how current consultative practices are provided to Aboriginal children and families in Victoria.
The present

Currently, consultative services in Victoria provide a range of services to support ‘disadvantaged’ children defined as having additional needs – including mental health issues, children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, children from rural and remote areas, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (Press & Hayes, 2000, p. 54). In Victoria, the Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) program with the assistance of State government funding, is responsible for visiting and assisting children supposedly ‘in need’ at kindergartens, the primary role of the PSFO program being to ‘support children with additional needs to access and participate in state funded, preschool services’ (DHS, 2001, p. 4). Within this, as part of State Government support services, Aboriginal children are supported by Koori Engagement Support Officers (KESO) to encourage children’s attendance and provide support to educators within kindergartens (Press & Hayes, 2000; DEECD, 2007). The Victorian Free Kindergarten Multicultural Resource Centre is also a service that consults educators and provides activities to support children from diverse cultures who attend early childhood services (FKACS, 2009).

Through discourses of health and welfare, consultants have maintained power to remediate behaviours and characteristics that are judged to be delayed or under-developed in young children. Current practices enable credentialed members of society to determine problems within individual children, and by establishing norms for appropriate behaviours aim to guide educators to eradicate problems through assimilating practices and strategies (Brantlinger, 2006; Venn, 1984). Further, these strategies derive from normative theories of child development and the principles of development apply to all children, independent of their biological variability or the diverse environments in which they live (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000, p. 341). This is evidenced in current literature, largely based in positivistic traditions, which highlights the need for consultants to observe and assess children, to support children learn undeveloped skills and to help teachers assimilate and adapt the strategies offered by the therapist to benefit children in need (Case-Smith & Holland, 2009; Dinnebeil, Pretti-Frontczak & McInerney, 2009; Klein & Harris, 2004; Odom & Wolery, 2003).
In addition, it may be claimed that consultants use language to guide (Blackman, 2002), and to direct educators, and consequently children and families, into following these actions, strategies and techniques (Stoughton, 2006; Walkerdine, 1984). It is thus arguable, that these current services allow educational experts, such as consultants, to maintain control and to sustain a position of power over educators, kindergarten committees, parents and children (Cannella, 1997).
In this section, I write about the current work and definition of the role of PSFOs in Victoria. I have separated this part from other sections of the thesis in order to, firstly, clearly define this role as described in current literature. I also seek to situate the position of PSFOs in terms of what it said and what is done (Graham, 2011), in the present, by displaying the disciplinary techniques of the body in production and deployment (Crowley, 2009). I seek in this section to map the current position of PSFOs, as described, to illuminate current practices as they appear and to use this literature to attempt to investigate the questions of this thesis in later sections and as a possible tool for reassessing our understanding of the PSFO program.

I position what PSFOs do in this current section, as an ‘in between’. The PSFO role is heavily regulated in Victoria, positioned both through policy (historical and current) which was examined earlier in the literature review and, is noted in contemporary research - described further in this passage. By contextualising the position in this way, I am able to make space to show how this role may be influenced – between these two positions – in my description of the normalised everyday practices of consultants in this section. Foucault (1978) noted that the human sciences are often a place of uninterrupted constraint to practices and processes and without interrogation. This section makes space to explore opportunities to closely examine the influential ways in which the position is defined and any possible constraints that may emerge. My intent is to use this review of information as part of exploring the questions in this thesis in later chapters.

The *Preschool Field Officer Program Guide* (DET, 2015a) released in December 2015, describes the position of the PSFO in two ways; firstly, as part of a program and, secondly, as an individual role, the guide states:

The PSFO program is a locally responsive approach to providing kindergarten services with practical advice, support and professional services to enhance service capacity to provide for the access and participation of children with additional needs [sic]. The PSFO role is to support early childhood teachers and educators to build their skills, knowledge and
confidence to plan for and include all children. Children with additional needs attending a
Victorian state government funded kindergarten program are the target group for PSFO support.

(DET, 2015a, p. 3)

In Victorian funded kindergarten programs, PSFOs provide specialised educational
consultation via kindergarten teachers to children and families (DEECD, 2001; DET, 2015a). PSFOs provide specialised information to the preschool teacher about a range of conditions
in order to ‘support the needs of children’ (Dinnebeil, Pretti-Frontczak & McInerney, 2009, p. 9) with the intent of delivering a kindergarten program that ‘provides for the access,
learning and development, and meaningful participation of children with additional needs’
(DET, 2015a, p. 3) in the year prior to school.

PSFOs advocate a range of therapies and strategies that are to be practiced and generalised by
teachers to children in the absence of the consultant (Case-Smith & Holland, 2009; Harris &
Klein, 2002; Klein & Harris, 2004). Styles of consultation provided by PSFOs, include:
*behavioural consultation* – focusing on the problematic behaviour exhibited by the child at
particular stages, for example, transitioning to school; *coaching* – providing feedback to the
teacher about the best methods to address a child’s challenging behaviours; and the
*distribution of learning activities during daily activities* – creating opportunities for teachers
to practice the strategies learned from consultants (Dinnebeil et al., 2009).

The PSFO program aims to support children with a range of developmental concerns and
additional needs who are usually not receiving supports from an Early Childhood
Intervention Service (ECIS) or through Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service (KISS)
packages. Yet, consultants may assist ECE teachers and the families of children who have a
disability to apply for KISS funding (Fante, Thompson & Llewellyn, 2002) made available
through the Victorian State Government’s DET and the Commonwealth National Education
Agreement (CNEA), in order to receive additional support from an integration aide or KISS
specialist consultancy in the preschool setting (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2008).
Currently, a myriad of consultative services in Victoria provide a range of services to support children defined as having additional needs – including mental health issues, children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, children from rural and remote areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (Press & Hayes, 2000). The emergence of a range of early childhood consultative services has also seen it heavily legislated and funded by a complex network of government and community providers (Elliot, 2004; Elliot, 2006). With the support of these resources, consultative services act as an authoritative entity whose role is to build the capacity of educators in Victorian early childhood services to work with children in the year prior to formal schooling.
Passage Four: Discourses of child development – the ‘expert’ early childhood consultant ‘educating the (un)developing child’

Knowledge-power relations

Perhaps it is not generally realised just how much help we do get from our Supervisor and Union staff. They are always available for advice on equipment, buildings, staff…etc., for committees to turn to when needed.


To advocate Froebelian kindergarten principles, a training scheme for kindergarten teachers was required and the Victorian FKU council in 1909 authorised a sub-committee of ‘experts’, known as the ‘education committee’, to establish a training school for middle-class female students (Gardiner, 1982). The committee initially endorsed the FKU’s supervisor, who supervised all directors of Victorian kindergartens, to lecture and train all students. In 1910 the Victorian State Government via the Education Department provided an annual grant of £1000 to ensure the practical training of all students in Froebelian methods, whose training would be governed by the education committee alongside the advice and expertise of the FKU’s supervisor (Gardiner, 1982). However, tensions existed between educationalists and philanthropists in the Victorian FKU regarding the training methods of students, as Spearritt (1979) highlights:

[The Victorian FKU education committee] clearly regarded the kindergarten as the starting point of a sound education of a child. The basis laid here for interest, self-activity, powers of observation and so on, was vital for the proper development of the child. Hence, they [were] to be found supporting the ‘education’ function of the kindergarten and being accused by an opposing group of ‘formalising’ the garden of play and of forgetting the ‘philanthropic’ function of the kindergartens.

(Edgar, 1967, cited in Spearritt, 1979, p. 12)

New discourses of scientific child development emerged during the 1930s and 1940s and included Gesell’s theories of maturation and Freud’s psychoanalytic work. Under the
leadership of psychologists Arnold Gesell and Stanley Hall, centres for child study were established where supervisors instructed parents and educators on effective ways to help their child develop and endorsed early childhood education as a body for study and research (Dever & Falconer, 2008).

The 1960s saw preschool educational settings being depicted as providing important opportunities for children to develop their cognitive skills. Goodley (2011) states that cognitivism provided psychology with ‘a form of scientific and empirical psychology that assumed rational processes of thought within individual subjects, who were responsive to scientific study, analysis and treatment. Jean Piaget’s theory of cognition through play was seen as a means to advance young children’s intellectual growth (Mellor, 1990), where the ‘child’s development leads to learning, and that play has a strong influence on development’ (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010, p. 501). The 1970s saw the emergence of Lev Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory of child development which focused on ‘how understandings are transmitted from one generation to the next generation, where he stressed the importance of social interactions; in particular, the cooperative dialogues between children and more knowledgeable others’ (Agbenyega, 2009).

In contrast to Piaget’s views of the developing child, Vygotsky rejects the idea of developmental stages and focuses on what the child can do, rather than what the child cannot do (Raban et al., 2007). The emergence of this framework saw teachers as capable peers who interacted with and guided children to help them understand their experiences in the environment, rather than observe from a distance (Clyde, 1995; Dever & Falconer, 2008), where teachers were also questioned about how they played with children and facilitated their learning (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010). Further, Cannella (2005) argues that while the emergence of Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory in the 1970s helped expand views of the developing child by accounting for children’s diverse cultural backgrounds, it also began to broaden the early childhood field’s beliefs and views of how we construct educational experiences for children in ECE.
The present

Currently, in Victoria, PSFOs observe and assess children in play with developmental concerns (DET, 2015a). The current PSFO program states that it relies on research into brain research, and social and emotional development, based on theories of child development and early intervention models when assessing children. In contemporary times this is considered as the knowledge base to support children and families in preschools (Press & Hayes, 2000), who are deemed to have special needs (Kaderavek, 2009).

There are wide ranging consequences for the individual child deemed as lacking or deficient and considered to be in need of assessment. Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2010), contend that if a child’s development is identified as atypical an individualised plan to support children to overcome difficulties is put into operation and monitored for progress. The mode of assessment is play-based where a child in terms of their ‘disability and abnormality are incrementally understood and synthesised’ (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, p. 503).

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999) and Bloch and Swadener (2007) argue that if the child is viewed as developing through stages then following each stage successfully renders a child as ‘normal’, and conversely, being unable to meet stages of development defines a child as ‘abnormal’. Consequently, when a child is unable to meet these discourses of child development and fails to contain or control their own bodies (Goodley, Runswick-Cole & Liddiard, 2016), educators turn to technical methods to fix things by treating children as redemptive agents (Moss, 2007). Through classified models of developmentalism and medicalization the colonised body becomes a site for redemption (Goodley, Lawthom & Runswick-Cole, 2014). In this sense, there is hope that the repetitive corrective practices of professionals will deliver a unified and coherent child who is now a whole (self)disciplined, (self)rational and (self)responsible and normal person (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo & Rowan, 2014).
Collins and Evans (2002) argue that this positivist approach to understanding children within theories of child development is severely limiting, and as Pence and Hix-Small (2009) state, developmental theory only tells the educator and consultant a small part of the story of the child under scrutiny. Todd (2006) contends that while professionals have tended to focus on the individual child as problematic, consultants have also turned to teacher-specialised professional relations to ‘facilitate teacher-led solutions to problems [and] this has distanced the child and parent from involvement in the early stages of any problem-solving’ (p. 145). Thus, it is arguable that the knowledge of the consultant may be flawed, exclusive and imperfect and may not always recognise that knowledge is distributed across the early childhood community – across, children, parents, educators and consultants (Novinger, O’Brien & Sweigman, 2005).

**Problematising consultancy**

My role – is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as *truth*, as evidence, some themes which they have up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticised.

(Foucault, cited in Ball, 1990, pp. 1-2, italics added)

In highlighting this quote by Foucault, his genealogical framework becomes apparent as a way of enabling an exploration of constructs of consultation in early childhood education. Numerous changes have occurred in Australia since the introduction of kindergartens in the 19th century and these changes have enabled some people, but silenced others. The role of consultants, which can be interpreted as a positivist construction, has arguably, disempowered educators, families and children at various times during Australia’s history. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that some changes have further enabled children and their families to participate in kindergarten programs. For example, collaboration between the federal government’s and FKU focus on improved health after World War II, ensured that consultants helped many children and their families to access early childhood educational services while in preschool.
Nonetheless, this paper seeks to problematise the construction of consultancy, which has produced past discourses of child development, expertise, health and welfare in order to maintain power and regulate educators’ decisions over children (Cannella, 1997). Analysis of these discourses has highlighted the past and current dichotomy existing between philanthropy and education in preschool services. Yet, these two streams have both been instrumental in the construction and delivery of consultative services to Victorian kindergartens as discussed through the literature review.

It is possible that we could acknowledge new ways of thinking about the role of consultancy in new times. There the spaces to ‘argue for a deep and lasting critique of the culture of expertise…toward a participatory, inclusive model, wherein power is shared and knowledge is co-constructed and continually reassessed’ (Novinger, O’Brien & Sweigman, 2005) to reimagine how consultancy could look in contemporary times. Enabling practices which include children and families in professional processes, where potential solutions may come from children in partnership with practitioners, could become part of an inclusive culture in consultative models (Todd, 2006). Amidst the enormous changes – the implementation of the NQF and wide reforms to ECE services which have shaped and shifted in Australia over time – could consultancy be co-constructed in new ways?

This next (inter)connecting passage weaves and opens up with my account of my role as a consultant. Questions became apparent to me as I performed this role in the context of the local communities I worked in and the stipulations of the position within the context of policy reforms. It was aimed in the literature review passages to bring to light the myriad of complex changes in ECE services in Australia as a way to explore past traditional influences on consultative services, which appear to remain dominant in numerous forms in current services to preschools (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998). I aim here to inter-weave these past influences in the context of the role I performed by examining the discourses I worked in/out and the power-knowledge relations (now made apparent) within these exchanges in this next passage.
(Inter)connected musing: subjugated self as consultant

I open this (inter)connection where I weave in an account of my changeable self as a consultant (and my frailties) recently operating in this position in early childhood educational settings. Through my subjective perspectives, as a way to explore identity and the ways in which identity might be understood, I approached this passage underpinned by Foucault’s (1980) notion of discourse.

For over twenty years I worked as a teacher in early childhood environments, mostly in kindergartens. Due to health reasons, with a chronic neurological and physical disability, I no longer met the ‘inherent requirements’ in registration required of me through the Victorian Institute of Teaching to be able to continue teaching young children. Through my employer I slipped into a consultancy role known as ‘inclusion support coordinator’ position as a way to remain influential in early childhood education. It was identified by my employer that I would (im)part knowledge. My position required me to coach colleagues, observe with educators regarding children deemed as having concerning behaviours, delays or needs in comparison to other children. Children subjected in this way by educators were frequently considered unable to manage in the kindergarten environment compared to ‘normal’ children.

The program relied on teachers contacting me to arrange a visit with the consent of the family of the child. Details were gathered about what was going wrong for and with the child, but also the interests and strengths of the child and the duration of the program. These details were vital in relation to meeting with families and also in relation to the network of services operating through developmental domains which requested written information using developmental descriptors. Services included Commonwealth and State government bodies, allied health specialists, medical practitioners and inclusion support aides made possible.

A significant aspect to this role involved the relationships I constructed with families. This was to enable them to develop trust with me, as a consultant, and to share their tacit knowledge about their child. I was seen as an expert who could help advise, support, offer resources and, fix (or break?) children. Observations were based on developmental knowledge and milestones expected of children and were discussed away from the family and child. Understanding what the teacher wanted from the visit, for the duration of an hour
usually, was often privileged over the views of the families with an expectation there would be a solvable outcome in relation to the problematic child. During discussions, with the aim to reach a satisfactory outcome, often persuasive and technical language and authoritative literature was used to get families to agree to the decision I made in relation to their child. Persuasive techniques usually involved the expectation for the children to be ‘ready-for-school’, ‘the same as the peer group’ and show ‘age appropriate development and behaviour’.

An outcome was paramount in terms of family expectations – families who did not want their child to be problematic in the kindergarten. From the perspective of my colleagues, employer, government regulatory bodies and other specialist services, a good day was when I enacted and produced outcomes, which appeared to satisfy the many adults involved. Children were not involved in consultative discussions.

I began to harbor resentment to this overarching constraining model, bringing my own subjective perspective and experience to my position. Having my three children diagnosed with autism involved the same level of scrutiny – observation, inquisitions, persuasive techniques, regular testing, multiple appointments and treatments – and frequently without the voice of my children, cultural understandings or personal desires. I recognised I was embodying, operating in and subjugating communities into dominating medicalised and psychologically developmentally based discourses, alongside others, that positioned my thinking, talking and actions – which I had loathed and resented in relation to the subjected experience of my children and resisted as an educator in recent times. I was viewed as an ‘appointment’ for families and children and another knowing ‘expert’ to educators. I arrived – watched, advised and left.

Yet, I also worked with families and children who wanted answers in unfamiliar complex spaces, who often seemed distressed, excluded and misunderstood; who appeared frightened of the looming school model and the transition to this new environment; who had told their stories many times to many specialised people; families and children appearing with many unanswered questions and in unknown territories, perhaps wanting more from the socially constructed practices in which they were subjected and had possibly (mis)placed their trust.

(September, 2014)
What, how and who might (we) be ‘subject to change’? (Rorty, 1989). My woven musings have made apparent some ironies within consultative practices which appear as questionable and contradictory, worth critique and bring forth an opportunity to move towards addressing the questions to be explored in this thesis.

My subjectivities as a consultant appeared to operate paradoxically through time and space. I am interested in how I was subjected to circulate discourses as an ‘instrument and an effect of power’ (Ball, 1990, p. 2), and then began to struggle with and reach ‘a point of resistance’ (Foucault, 1982, p. 101). I sought to oppose dominating discourses – based in scientific psychological development and medical models – as a consultant in present-day early childhood communities. I had been aware of these dominating discourses informing my practices in my early years as an educator and had engaged in a critical approach to be someone else I [was] not at the beginning (Campbell & Smith, 2001). How had this point of resistance influenced and governed changes in the way I operated as an educator, but had reformed at later points? How had resistance constituted my disciplinary techniques as a consultant in early childhood sites, with authority, before becoming a hindrance to me? In the present-day educators’ practices have been subject to significant early childhood educational reforms (DEEWR, 2009), where the EYLF permits and ‘privileges intentional teaching and play based learning over child development knowledge’ (Grieshaber & Graham, 2015, p. 9). These alternative discourses in which I perceived as important as an educator in recent years when working with young children.

A connection of pursuit involved an examination of the struggles between consultative practices of the past, as woven into the passages in the literature review, how these (inter)sectioned with current peer-reviewed research generating, effecting and subjecting what is worth being known and produced. In presenting my subjugated self I have been motivated to explore the historical issues and complexities and the dominating discourses as regimes of truth I privileged (or silenced) in my role.

Worthy of consideration, is whether psychological developmental knowledge may continue to dominate as a truth and constitute PSFO identities and practices in contemporary times. Furthermore, how is it that discursive truth regimes are maintained within current-day consultative practices and (inter)twine between complex power-knowledge relations? How
do discourses constrain and subjugate current day early childhood educators’ actions and expectations is a key research component of this thesis. Moreover, are there moments of resistance which can be seen where educators and PSFOs challenge discourses of the past which (re)appear?

These (inter)connections, both written and visual, are brought into play through the discussion where these questions are pondered. Interweaving into documents within the 1960-1985 timeframe are visual images from *The Myth of Equality* (Roper, 1971), which are discussed and woven into the narrative. Historic documents are discussed and analysed within discursive themes in consultancy, where mappings and musings with data are interwoven with key influential texts and methodological approaches, as identified as underpinnings of this thesis. Through this process of exploring how subjectivities have been constituted and the conditions in which this occurred, space is provided to answer the questions cast in this thesis and create a context to attempt to understand how consultative practices, such as the PSFO program, now operate in the present suggesting new ways to reconceive how consultative practices could be.

In this next passage, *musings with images*, I unveil three images to look to identify patterns which present (and may be unseen) in the texts chosen for analysis. I use each image to bring to bear emerging discourses which are illuminated. Each (inter)connecting moment is to be seen as (inter)weaving into the next musing from the past, in a juxtaposition to contemporary documents before moving to the discussion.
Musings with images

Becker (1998) describes the validity of gaining meaning from photographs in the way people interpret, assume understandings, utilise images and accord meaning to them in social contexts. It can be argued then, that photographs may assist people to gain a particular understanding of a situation or event based on the way the photograph is perceived. Photographic images can be construed as ‘true’ through an understanding that the photograph holds in relation to where the camera was directed and that reality is socially constructed (Harper, 1998). As Adelman (1998) suggests, while meanings can be inferred from viewing photographs, seeking an understanding of how a photographer decided upon and captured a particular moment in time offers opportunities to discover why the image was deemed significant, and to whom. Additionally, Prosser and Schwartz (1998) argue that visual interpretation also requires contextualising images to issues of power, social settings and societal values, since the production and meaning made from a photograph informs a person’s understanding of the image.

I seek, through the descriptions I provide, within (inter)connecting passages, to describe the meaning I assign to each image selected and to allude to the power-knowledge relations in which the image was captured. These three chosen images are (inter)connected, situated and (inter)woven (in)between the discussion passages detailing historic accounts within this thesis. This is to offer a different textual account of the 1960-1985 timeframe and to juxtapose and (un)veil what may have been (un)seen during this period. Selected images are chosen as they offer a visual perspective on the discursive themes which have been revealed through the written data and may show ‘characteristic attributes of people, objects, and events that often elude even the most skilled wordsmiths’ (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998, p. 116).

I note, however, that there may also be limitations in the method I chose to undertake in the analysis of written and visual texts. Multiple document, including images from history could

---

8 A photograph is defined as a ‘picture made using a camera, in which an image is focused on to light-sensitive material and then made visible and permanent’ and to ‘appear in a particular way’ (OED, nd.) In this sense, a photograph can make particular appearances and moments – events, people, locations – rendered visible spatially and temporally, which is an aim identified in this thesis in relation to illuminating power-knowledge relations between consultancy and early childhood educational settings.
have been selected and I am aware that I am constructing the moments in which these images are to be viewed and perceived (Becker & Pessin, 2006). Yet, I suggest that multiple interpretations may be made of one document at a particular moment in time by many people, and I am offering one (partial) perspective of analysis to visual texts in this study.

The next moment in this study moves to the findings in the data to examine emerging discursive themes. Using document analysis, as detailed in the methodology for this study, I meticulously look to identify patterns which are present (and are silenced) in the texts chosen for analysis, by explicating what has been found. Beyond the outlay of these findings, a discussion ensues, which seeks to make meaning by (inter)connecting, (inter)weaving and juxtaposing written and visual (inter)textual positions located in the data under analysis.
(Inter)connected musing: a (poor) child’s playground

Figure 3 – A (poor) child’s playground.  
(Roper, 1971)
I titled Figure 3 – *A (poor) child’s playground*, as this was my first impression of the image the photographer captured and I interpreted. This image from *The Myth of Equality* (Roper, 1971, p. 33), a text which depicts social inequalities related to poverty and access to education, shows two young children, who appear to be playing in, what may be perceived, as a poor disadvantaged area of Inner Melbourne. It appears that the image is of two girls. One child is standing leaning against a fence with her fingers against her mouth looking out beyond a house’s short bluestone front porch – typically common in Inner Melbourne – potentially at the house where these children live. The child appears to be looking past both the child lying on the ground and the photographer.

Readings of this image could be many and varied, depending on any given person’s subjectivity and life experiences, yet all are unverifiable. The child with fingers in her mouth may appear as worried. It is also possible that this child may be laughing as the expression on her face is unclear, perhaps unaware that the other child may have hurt herself or potentially upset. Another child, a girl, is lying on the concrete foot path gazing at an item in hand, which appears to be a glass bottle with letters on it. It may be that this girl fell or was pushed and the bottle was in the way of her fall. It is also possible this girl was intentionally lying on the ground gazing at the bottle before her in an act of play.

Nearby, lies a stationary bike on the path, against the fence and a pram with a doll in it are close by. Both items, and the girl are positioned across the pathway and the entrance to the porch. It could be, that the bike, doll and pram might belong to or are being used in play by these children and they may be both in a moment of imaginative play. Rubbish, and/or materials utilised as part of play appears strewn near the child on the ground and empty bottles stand near the upstanding girl, possibly to await a milk delivery, as part of this play area. Questions are raised here. Is it that the items cannot be utilised effectively in a small area? How is it that the children are engaging with certain materials that happen to be in this space and not others? What role do the parents hold in this situation to monitor how the children might act and engage together?
This photograph when considered in light of these questions – questions around the resources of the children, play spaces and facilities for children – in this period of time suggests that it may be that this area outside a house is the play area for these children. Roper (1971) alludes to this position by stating that difficulties for children and families in some inner areas of Melbourne were compounded by the ‘unsatisfactory and overcrowded nature of the home [and] there is just no place for privacy’ (p. 34). Given this circumstance, and the public nature of play outside the home, it could be claimed that some children in this period of time were constantly in view and ostensibly surveilled publicly around the home environment.

I suggest that photographs, such as this image, initially appearing in The Age newspaper and a university publication could have been produced to raise questions and alert people about the perceived low living standards of some children and families, and to highlight relations of inequality and exploitation in societies (Apple, 2012; Apple, Au & Armando Gandin, 2009). It could be suggested that given some of the readership of this newspaper and students attending universities were considered as middle-class during this timeframe (Roper, 1971), public scrutiny and concern came from some middle-class constituents in Victoria. It may be through a public perception of children’s space and the educational value accorded to certain items in which children could engage, desirable locations and objects of use for children could be seen to improve the social and economic conditions for children and families deemed as disadvantaged and in need of welfare.

I turn to examine past documents in relation to prevailing and silenced discourses. As I move through each piece I consider the role of community organisations and welfare for two reasons. Firstly, these terms frequented the generated data that I analysed. Secondly, I argue that in the period of time this image was produced, strong welfare provisions were maintained both economically and socially towards children and families deemed to be poor and in need of community welfare (Millei & Lee, 2007).

---

9 The Age Newspaper is a daily publication sold in Victoria. It is currently sold both in hardcopy and through an online format. In the 1970s period the newspaper was printed in a broadsheet format and sold on a daily basis.
Negotiating the documents: Community Organisations with Welfare

Through state government changes in Victoria to form the Department of Community Services (DCS, 1985), the stated aim was to ‘promote the welfare\(^{10}\) of the community of Victoria by ensuring appropriate levels of social welfare services, community development and social planning activities’ (p. 35). From this change, it was determined by the DCS to move services to a program basis to manage operations. Due to departmental changes, the establishment of a Victorian State/Commonwealth Planning Committee for Children’s Services was formed to advise the Commonwealth on ‘areas of greatest need for children’s services (DCS, 1985, p. 36). In addition, the State Government also offered ‘Preschool Child Development Program’ welfare to community\(^{11}\) organisations to offer ‘specialist advice and support, subsidies and capital grants’ (p. 35).

Davies (2007), argues that neoliberal discourses, which emerged in the 1970s in Western nations such as Australia, impact upon educational settings and are disguised in government policies and programs. Neoliberalism has been described as ‘the set of economic principles that endorse a radical free market and policies that favour statism on the corporate model of business and profit in a globalised world’ (Vintimilla, 2014, p. 80). However, Christina Vintimilla (2014), contends that a critical stance of neoliberal discourse attends to thinking about neoliberal discourses beyond the reference to economic principles, and instead to the governing and normalising effects the expansion of neoliberalism has had on early childhood educators’ practices and conduct.

In neoliberal discourses, individuals are surveilled and compelled to comply with policy and program direction and, in doing so, are productive in this reciprocal relationship with government (Davies, 2007). Thus, the emergence and shifts in programs over this timeframe may have meant that community organisations, under a neoliberal model, may have been

\(^{10}\) Welfare can be defined as ‘the health, happiness, and fortunes of a person or group’ and a ‘statutory procedure or social effort designed to promote the basic physical and material well-being of people in need’ (OED, nd.)

\(^{11}\) Community can be known as ‘a group of people having a particular characteristic in common’ and ‘a resource designed to serve the people of a particular area’. In this sense, community welfare could be considered as a resource which serves and promotes the wellbeing for those identified in need. It could be argued that consultative organisations, such as the PSFO program, undertake a role of a similar description.
enacting mandated government agendas across early childhood settings. This is significant as monetary provisions could be withdrawn should organisations, competing for funds, not comply with particular government positions. It is arguable too, that with multiple changes in government department shifts and in program arrangements, the PSFO program, as part of a neoliberal discourse, emerged in this moment.

The 1973 document, Preschool Child Development in Victoria – Report of the consultative council on preschool child development made numerous recommendations on preschool child development and welfare. The purpose of the report was to examine ‘present health, education, and welfare services for children under six years old group’ (Consultative Council on Preschool Child Development, 1973, p. 5). A key recommendation made from this report was made to build community hubs, or multidisciplinary complexes, in order to integrate early childhood services.

Reported evidence for this measure to construct hubs included a view that infant welfare centres had helped parents, particularly mothers (p. 11). It is arguable that mothers, as recipients of welfare, were determined as responsible and ‘good’ by acting upon the recommendations of services (Ailwood, 2003; Millei & Lee, 2007), and this perpetuated the government’s view that services appeared as successful. Based on evidence of success, early childhood development multidisciplinary complexes - offering advisory services, preventative health measures, welfare and education - would be best placed to meet the needs of ‘depleted or disrupted’ (p. 11) families. Missing from this information, are the particular families being targeted and the sites where hubs might be established. It could be argued that particular children and families, deemed to be disadvantaged were the focus of welfare – guised as family services – and encouraged to comply to government agenda as the report alludes to the provision and access of services should not be contingent on cost for parents (p. 11).

Arguably, government funded early childhood settings, perceived as an organisation to lift welfare standards for poorer communities (Gardiner, 1982; Mellor, 1990), have enabled the surveillance of perceived disadvantaged children and families within institutional sites, such as maternal and child health centres, ECE settings and schools. It could be claimed that by
moving young children and families to broader centralised kindergarten complexes, surveillance could be contained to a bounded environment to improve the welfare of perceived low living standards for disadvantaged families and children. It could also be suggested that relocating children and families into organised environments could veil over difficulties being experienced by disadvantaged communities from public view and reducing potentially troubling questions to governing bodies (Apple, 2012).

Funded kindergartens, as identified in the *Preschool Child Development in Victoria – Report of the consultative council on preschool child development* (1973) document, were substantially supported by community organisations such as voluntary committees to finance and manage the daily operations of kindergarten sites. It was noted that community organisations may have received funding, or none, and had frequently committed time to meet the needs of kindergarten communities, often without remuneration (p. 65). The report also highlighted how power has operated through voluntary committees by collectively advocating with large preschool bodies, such as APA as a representative voice, to bring ‘the value of sound preschool education’ (p. 66) to the attention of government. In addition, preschool advisers were noted in the report as working closely with voluntary organisations to promote the social welfare of preschool settings in the community.

Turning to the *Annual Report for calendar year 1962 of the Director of Maternal, Infant, and Preschool Welfare* document to illuminate discourses of community organisations with welfare, there are some key differences to the 1970s and 1980s timeframes. A focus on social conditions in the 1970s created significant social changes, which were argued for people who had been excluded and marginalised in society (Davies, 2007). However, the role of community organisations and social welfare is less evident in the early 1960s timeframe. The emergence of welfare, as framed within ‘maternal and infant welfare and preschool welfare’ is, arguably, health guised as welfare in this document. Preschool supervisors are reported to promote health initiatives to improve the welfare of preschool communities and through meetings regarding children and families.

I turn now to contemporary times to illuminate *Passage Five: negotiating, mappings and musings with data*. I seek here to further unveil the discursive themes. I am aware that I have
moved in a linear-non-linear manner through the data. I suggest that the discursive themes have been illuminated at various points throughout this thesis and have (inter)changeably looked different in moments, thus, I have sought to illuminate points in multiple ways. Here, moving into passage five, in seeking to demonstrate the findings which emerge through the 1960 to 2015 timeframe, I aim to show the journey through the findings and analysis to the discussion.
Passage Five: Negotiating, mappings and musings with data

Emerging results ~ unveiling themes

In this passage I approach the empirical data to extrapolate emerging results and unveil the discursive themes in the selected documents chosen for examination. I address findings in chosen documents from Victorian state government bodies and representatives detailing consultative practices in early childhood education. Detailed, are past documents from 1960-1985 to analyse meanings in the historicity of consultative practices. (Inter)connected, are photographs from the 1970s period in Victoria which considers educational practices appearing from a different standpoint to the government texts made available. Texts from 2015 locate the contemporary practices of consultants, in which the PSFO program is framed, and are presented separately to elucidate meanings of current day disciplinary practices and techniques.

This passage presents the data chosen for analysis and details the process undertaken. The passage then moves to scrutinise themes explicated from each chosen piece, exploring beyond the descriptions offered, using a critical approach to carefully examine each chosen document. I aim for my research to describe and capture the complexities and richness within the texts by exploring and identifying relationships within language (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Foucault (1977) meticulously sought to understand how ‘systems of knowledge and power worked together to produce demands on daily life on individuals in modern society [where] he undertook a historical description of how power infused a certain concept over time’ (McNicol-Jardine, 2010, p. 15) in historical documents. Beyond these descriptions, I seek to analyse the texts through the multiple discourses in play, to capture the complexities within the relationships of language to examine how power-knowledge relations in early childhood consultation, specifically in operation in the present day the PSFO program, constitute subjectivities.

Seeking to move through this passage in a linear-non-linear way, a notion I identified through an (inter)connection earlier in this thesis, I draw on the work of Julie McLeod, Rachel
Thomson (2009) and the work of Sue Middleton (1998). McLeod and Thomson’s book *Researching Social Change* (2009) highlights some of the complexities which emerge through genealogy by ‘pushing discontinuities to the foreground’ (p. 50) as illuminated in Middleton’s (1998) project aimed at understanding ideas informing educational practices in New Zealand from the 1920s to 1990s. Middleton (1998) found that rather than teachers being positioned as recipients of imposed ideas, educators’ life histories were constructed as participatory, actively authoritative, productive and enacting educational notions. McLeod and Thomson (2009) note that the life history approach ‘provided a means for valuing teachers’ viewpoints, and for telling a different story from the received chronologies and understandings of ‘top-down’ educational history…to tell counter stories of political and social history’ (p. 51). Further, Middleton (1998) draws on the regimes, practices and narratives of the life histories of participants to construct patterns and themes in a cultural history as a way to think about education in the present (McLeod & Thomson, 2009). In this way, Sue Middleton’s project (1998) is not a linear account of what happened in education, but as McLeod and Thomson (2009) state ‘one that shifts across time, generation, and interview-generated themes to capture different waves and regimes of truth to disrupt the common senses of the present and re-cast the past’ (p. 52).

It has been argued that a poststructural approach that engages a genealogical framework is useful as it allows researchers in the field of early childhood education to make space to explore our pasts and their traces in our present (Fischer, 2009). This approach can offer powerful insights into how we may understand how institutions and relationships in them are organised and help us to think differently about those institutions and relationships in the present (MacNaughton, 2005). By making current-day early childhood consultative practices appear strange, an opportunity is unveiled to disrupt current understandings and create possibilities for the field of early childhood to reconceptualise and imagine otherwise (McLeod & Thomson, 2009; Petriwskyj, 2010) how consultative practices could be.

I lead now into the discursive theme of health with supervision, unveiled in the written and visual texts from the past chosen for analysis. I seek to show in the next passage how this discourse can also be seen in past documents detailing consultative practices which have an effect on relations between consultants and educators in early childhood settings, through ‘the
broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour' (Foucault, 1997, p. 81). I seek in this discussion here to draw together the documents under analysis through an (inter)connecting musing and towards concluding thoughts.
(Inter)connected musing: assisting language development

Figure 4: Assisting language development (Roper, 1971)
Figure 4 – I titled this photograph *Assisting language development* – as my impression is that this photograph is of a specialised language assessment and this gained my interest as to what might be happening in this picture. It appears that the boy depicted in the image is undergoing a speech or language assessment with a male adult, who may possibly be a therapist, but this is uncertain. Looking on are three people. A female sitting at a desk, with booklets on top and appears to watch the boy closely. It is difficult to ascertain her facial expression, as her hands cover her mouth. Perhaps it is a moment of concentration. It is possible she is a student observing the situation or the child’s mother, but this is unclear.

Two children appear in the background – it is unclear if they are standing in the background or are facing a mirrored window. If it is a mirrored window, potentially additional people are standing behind it, surveilling the situation. The male adult appears to be a professional person, dressed in a suit and jacket. The boy under assessment is sitting with his mouth open, whilst the adult male puts a finger on the side of each of the boy’s cheeks. It appears that he is asking the boy to make a sound and is correcting the boy as to the way he is positioning his mouth. The male adult appears to model the correct sound and mouth position he is aiming for the child to perform. It is unclear whether the child in the photograph is hearing impaired and may not have heard a sound, requiring another person to model the desired behaviour required.

*Negotiating the documents: health with supervision*

Besley and Peters (2007) suggest that Foucault was interested in how knowledge is practiced and produced through relations of power and how practices are exercised over and through individuals and societies. It can be suggested that discourses of health with supervision over others and the self is evident in the documents under analysis. Under the guise of health and welfare, which move forwards-backwards through the decades under analysis, there are a multitude of initiatives for families and children. It could be argued that public visibility and concern of poorer disadvantaged constituents could have compelled community organisations to entice governments to design and construct particular ECE environments. By governing an educational and social environment, ECE settings simultaneously created settings to produce
supervisory techniques which ‘conducted the conduct’ (Ailwood, 2003, p. 286) of actors, including consultants.

In 1985, the *Department of Community Services Report* noted that preschools were moved to the newly formed Department of Community Services. As part of these changes, the department formed the ‘The Preschool Child Development Program’ (DCS, 1985, p. 36), designed to ‘support families… and provide for the planning, development, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of children’s services’ (p. 36). As part of these reforms, ‘field officer’ (p. 37) positions were created. The role of the field officer was to ‘work in, or initiate programs for hearing or visually impaired children, children who are physically disabled, children in hospital, children-at-risk, or those who are in isolated country areas’ (p. 37). This role would also enable a field officer to ‘work with a child on an individual basis or give support in a group setting’. In contrast to current PSFO practices which identify PSFOs working with educators to build their capacity to work with children, in the contemporary arrangement there may be a focus on educators, under surveillance by the PSFO, who require further skills to competently work with children with additional needs.

There are contrasts between practices from the mid-1980s to contemporary times. Currently, PSFOs are not obligated to hold a qualification beyond the four year teaching degree. It is interesting that this role required special education qualifications (DCS, 1985). How it is that current PSFOs are not obligated to obtain further qualifications is a question worth consideration. This is despite that the contemporary PSFO role, contingent on disseminating specialised knowledge about children, operates to build the capacity of skills and abilities of educators through observation and advice towards children with additional needs.

A connection occurs with children who are visually and hearing impaired and the sites constructed in the 1970s and the knowledge base of consultants. Settings were established, in part, to ‘integrate’ children with ‘handicaps’ together with ‘normal’ children (Consultative Council on Preschool Child Development, 1973, p. 93), and this initiative was focused upon ‘deaf children’ (p. 93) who were viewed as having difficulties with language, leading to a possible ‘delay in [the] development of cognitive skills’ (p. 93). Hearing impaired children
were considered as ‘impaired in a particular aspect, [but] normal in every other way and may be considerably above average in their capacity of learning’ (p. 92), where, provided with speech therapy and oral programs, could experience successful treatments (p. 93). It may be possible that field officers employed in the 1980s gained experience of working with hearing impaired children. Experimenting on children and families with strategies and techniques in this capacity, consultants gained particular experience to qualify to work in this position. It could also be claimed that this shift was an experimental idea between the government and voluntary community organisations to try whether this arrangement would be considered successful before allowing some children to attend kindergarten together, where the aim would be to achieve a situation where ‘hyperactive, disruptive children needing special attention [could] eventually attend [a] centre regularly and participate in a normal [sic] program with the usual number of children’ (p. 93). Some children, however, were not included in this initiative. Children with ‘special problems [seen with] physically and mentally handicapped conditions require a higher ratio of staff than that provided for the children without special handicaps’ (p. 94) and the council recommended that ‘more special units be provided for the children who cannot be fitted in with normal children’ (p. 94).

The segregation of children, where children who are constituted as disabled and classified according to diagnosed conditions, may have constructed a social hierarchy where consultants working with particular children, excluded others (Connell, 1993). In doing so educational institutions, arguably, are complicit in the production of inequality and exclusion (Slee, 2010), as they produce particular kinds of knowledge to particular users (Connell, 1993) and determine who is ‘normal’ through the identification of the ‘abnormal’ child in educational settings (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). It is arguable that this has impacted on consultants, where particular techniques have been practiced and privileged through time, and generalised and normalised in this process. This may have lead to what may broadly constitute PSFOs practices in the present and the sites, such as preschools, in which techniques are administered.

This (inter)connection has explored the relations of power and its effects through official Victorian state government policies upon PSFO practices. Knight, Smith and Sachs (1990) contend that such ‘policies attempt to represent the world in factual terms so that certain
kinds of practices flow ‘naturally’ from them’ (p. 133). The discussion here indicates that the efficacy of government initiatives has directed PSFO practices and techniques. In this way, historical government policy agendas set the conditions by orchestrating how PSFO programs would practically implement and apply technical knowledges upon children, families and practitioners in ECE community sites.

I turn now, to move forwards-backwards, (inter)weaving through the analysis to discuss (partially), the current political context of education in Victoria and its relationship to consultative practices in early childhood educational sites. In doing so, I seek to discuss Foucault’s notions of governmentality (1977) through the dominant discourses, which I suggest, are operating through consultative practices. Thus, space is made to understand how ‘power is exercised upon individuals and how they are subsequently constrained to behave in particular ways’ (Allan, 2008, p. 85).
Passage Six: Negotiating-mappings-musings with discussion

Current political context

This passage details the current political context in Victoria and contemporary reforms to education. Cheeseman (2007) notes that ‘acknowledging the contexts in which early childhood services are framed is crucial…as these contexts influence the form that public provisions for early childhood programs will take’ (p. 245). In this sense, detailing the (partial) current climate through policies operating in ECE in Victoria can contextualise how consultative praxis may be influenced and constructed by governing bodies. Ball (1994) suggests that processes surrounding government policies are complex incomplete interventions, where the process of construction is always unfinished, as policies are (re)produced through discourses in situated contexts and (re)interpreted by actors in multiple ways.

The next passage, musings with discussion, moves into the analysis of the documents which genealogically descend through discussion. Present day documents seen as Victorian State Government texts (DET, 2015a; DET 2015b; DET, 2016) are discussed through a detailed analysis to show the epistemologies in operation in the PSFO program. The juxtaposition of competing discourses which prevail as truths within a context (Ball, 1994), including documents, can ‘signal difference and struggle as well as epistemic continuity in policy formation’ (Knight, Smith & Sachs, 1990, p. 135). Foucault (1980) noted that particular conditions in the world prevail over other positions due to ‘moments in time, space and social conditions that provide the rules that specify truth and the economic and political role it plays’ (p. 132). In this sense, as certain practices emerge as facts and are seen as a natural course to follow, a public interest in official state policies and what they look like is warranted (Knight, Smith & Sachs, 1990; Apple, 2012).

Space is made in this passage to detail the arrangement of consultancy, namely the PSFO program, in contemporary times. The (inter)relatedness to early childhood educators and settings is explored here through an (inter)textual negotiated-mapped-mused reading, where each contemporary document is examined and discussed in accord to the (un)veiled
discourses in the analysed data. Documents retrieved from the past are brought to light and detailed through (inter)connecting musings and are unearthed and noted through each decade, and interpreted (inter)connectedly through the analysis of discourses that have become established and accepted as truth (Blaise & Nuttall, 2011, p. 127).

A (partial) contemporary contextual landscape

In November 2014, the Australian Labor Party (ALP) were elected into State Government in Victoria, lead by the new Premier Hon. Daniel Andrews (MLA) (Victorian Electoral Commission, 2014). As part of a suite of election promises, the Andrews Government declared a goal of making Victoria The Education State (Victorian Labor Party, 2014). Through this election platform, the Andrews Government sought to create an ‘education system that produces excellence and reduces the impact of disadvantage’ (DET, 2014). This was identified as an election issue as the ALP had suggested that significant funding had been reduced towards education and consequently, had disadvantaged families under the previous government (Victorian Labor Party, 2014). As part of this reform, targets were introduced to provide a ‘quality education for every child, regardless of their background, circumstance or postcode [and] the Education State agenda covers the whole cycle of education, from early childhood, through to schools and into adulthood’ (DET, 2014, np). Through this reform, targets were stated by the Victorian Department of Education and Training to meet this agenda through the four main themes of:

- Learning for Life: Excellence in reading, maths, science and the arts and in critical and creative thinking.
- Happy, Healthy and Resilient Kids: Building resilience and physical activity in our children.
- Breaking the Link: Ensuring more students stay in school and eliminating the connections between outcomes and disadvantage.
- Pride and Confidence in our Schools: Making sure every community has access to excellence, in every school and classroom.

(DET, 2014)

Since the election of the Andrews Government and its declaration of making Victoria the Education State (Victorian Labor Party, 2014), the DET, through the services of the Capire
Consulting Group in 2016, sought broad community viewpoints with parents, early childhood educators, service providers and governmental organisations for opinions about contemporary early childhood education. Noting that the ‘Victorian early childhood system is in many ways strong, the consultation process was an opportunity to seek ideas about how to further improve it’ (DET, 2015c, para 4), though it was not evident from the report the exact terms of reference initially proposed by the Victorian DET of the intended viewpoints to be elicited. Releasing the document *Stakeholder and community engagement key findings report: The Education State, Early Childhood* (Capire Consulting Group, 2016), the intention was to ‘provide a summary of the early childhood engagement and issues discussed by participants during the engagement period [and] present the range of significant ideas, concerns and views documented during face-to-face consultations and via submissions and toolkits’ (Capire Consulting Group, 2016, p. 3). While the scope of this thesis cannot allow for a detailed analysis of this document, significant findings stated in this text under the Victorian State Government proposed Education State themes, included the importance of early childhood development, earlier intervention and universal service provision and support for positive parenting (Capire Consulting Group, 2016). The release of this document detailing community views, concomitantly with the Victorian Government’s Education State platform, has seen a declaration to provide extensive funding into some aspects of early childhood education through the 2016/17 Victorian State Government budget.

Declaring the aim to give ‘every child the best start in life, with quality early childhood development, and support to learn, play and grow’ (Department of Treasury, 2016, para 2), the budget towards ECE has designated $10 million in funds to build mainstream kindergarten and child care centres within children’s hubs\(^1\) in order to offer family services such as maternal and child health nursing services, child care and kindergarten programs under one roofline in a single location (Mikakos, 2016). Additionally, a provision of $4.4 million was made to small stand-alone mainstream kindergartens in rural communities to obtain state government funding to remain viable and accessible (Mikakos, 2016).

\(^{12}\) The word *hub* offers two meanings – a) ‘the effective centre of an activity, region or network’, and b) the ‘central part of a wheel rotating on or with the axle, and from which the spokes radiate’ (OED, nd.). In this sense, hubs could be considered as a network of integrated care services for children and families in a single location alongside other services, (Harris, Cartmel & Mcfarlane, 2015) and also as a panoptic site of surveillance in an ‘arrangement of his [sic] room, opposite the central tower, imposes on him [sic] an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is a guarantee of order’ (Foucault, 1977, p. 200).
Significantly, $133 million in funds has been allocated to the provision of maternal and child health services, as this investment is noted by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) (2016), as aiding the provision of support and advice on parenting, regarding the health and development of children and families and the identification of early learning issues.

The proposition of the Victorian State Government Education State platform incorporating multiple layers of education in the formation of policy illuminates and relegates particular discourses, which are manifested through this arrangement. The Education State platform, upholding school-based themes as targets, arguably upholds and maintains a focus on discourses of school readiness. Through the construction of hubs as mainstream ECE services and under the gaze of panoptic surveillance (Rabinow, 1984), in this institution, individual children may become objectified and classified through a myriad of integrated services as (un)developmentally (un)ready for school and under the continuous scrutiny of consultative bodies could be viewed as (dis)advantaged.

Legitimatised through economic conditioning and a desire for quality education for every child, the Education State has propelled through the establishment of hubs a change in how consultative bodies deliver services so that discourses of health (and development), positive parenting and intervention (with supervision) are now also brought into play. Within this context, in relation to consultative practices operating in ECE in Victoria and in the context of the VEYLDF, certain questions are raised about governmental decisions, the certain ideas and practices which are privileged over others and the way power is deployed in systematic structures and maintained and mobilised (Knight, Smith & Sachs, 1990).

Questions such as how does the Victorian Education State platform, designed to encompass all educational levels, appear to contradict this position by focusing targets only towards school aged children, inform current practices and techniques in the PSFO program? What

---

13 Whilst the term preschool field officer has the word school as part of the title, of note, the word school is not used in either contemporary document regarding the PSFO program analysed in this study. It may be implicit through the PSFO title that there is a specific focus on preparing children for school, however, whilst the Education State agenda (DET, 2014) highlights transitioning to school as an important consideration for young children, this position is contradicted in current texts specific to the PSFO role as it is absent from the texts. Omitted from the discussion in consultative literature, where the VEYLDF is discussed at length, are transitions to school, preparation and notions of readiness of young children, evident in the cycles of education as part of the Education State (DET, 2014).
are the effects of allocating significant funding to maternal and child health programs, to
advise families in the recognition of children’s early learning issues and creating the means
for surveillance of children and families in hubs as a mainstream setting, for the PSFO
program? The Education State agenda seeks to reduce the impact of disadvantage (DET,
2014), yet, in which conditions might ECE communities be (dis)advantaged by particular
budgetary decisions? Are PSFOs in a position of power to privilege/relegate certain
communities and locations in this process? Through this next passage, looking at current
documents which shape the PSFO program, space is made to interrogate these questions and
the (dis)allowable conditions which bring power into play.

Talk-in-text – Preschool Field Officer Program Fact Sheet

The Victorian DET produced the Preschool Field Officer fact sheet in December 2015 (DET,
2015b). The three-page fact sheet is accessible via the DET website via a downloadable and
printable digital file. There is no cover page attached to this document, however there is a
distinct overarching heading on the right top hand corner in bold print stating Preschool Field
Officer Program and in smaller, distinguishable print Fact Sheet December 2015. The left
hand side in large print holds the Victoria State Government emblem and in smaller print
Education and Training is identified, thus, assigning governmental authority and sustaining
power through the document (Fairclough, 2013), while simultaneously legitimatising the
PSFO program. Interestingly, in contradiction, the word department is omitted from the
official state government title of Department of Education and Training. This may be to
appear to detach the PSFO program from a hierarchal body of government, as the program is
funded by the State Government DET, but managed through local government and
community service organisations (DET, 2015b). This suggests that the program is prioritised
by the DET in terms of funding, regulation and conduct, however underlying what is omitted
in this extract, is the assumption that local governments and community organisations
manage daily operations and the PSFO relations with educators, families and children.

The fact sheet opens with a key statement:

The first years of life are crucial to lifelong learning, wellbeing and success – we are making
Victoria the Education State by strengthening early childhood services for children and families.

(DET, 2015b, p. 1)

Beyond this prominent statement the fact sheet is divided under sub-headings in a ‘frequently-asked-questions’ format. However, while the format of the fact sheet suggests a style where questions and answers may be repetitively asked of government organisations, it is not explicitly stated by the DET that these questions and answers are actually warranted, or by whom. Of interest, therefore, is the assumption made to format the content in this way by the DET and the questions and answers, which were determined by the government as relevant to the readers.

Each question is made distinguishable in bold print and answers are provided in a smaller font, with text and dot points to clearly identify some information. Answers are arranged in paragraphs where paragraphs are of a maximum length of five lines. Occasional sections include two paragraphs, signifying an assumption of importance of the question and answer to the audience. Two questions are answered at length: Do PSFOs work with families? and What does capacity building of early childhood educators mean?

Whilst the target audience on this fact sheet is not explicitly stated, it could be that this document is produced as a resource to families and educators. It appears that families and educators are the aimed recipients of government department information given the length and prominence of the answers to these two questions. It is arguable too, that the provision of the governments’ utilisation of power to produce information of their agendas to their targeted audiences (Fenech, Sumison & Goodfellow, 2008), sheds light on the discourses which are to be privileged and conveyed to educators and families.

Further analysis of the data from this document also recognises particular discourses which thematically became prominent in the reading of this text, such as development (additional needs), parenting, supervision and governmentality which are illuminated and intertwined throughout this passage. Additionally, the caption used in this document: Preschool Field Officer Program, signifies the importance of this program, where each question and answer relates back to this title.
Talk-in-text – Preschool Field Officer Program Guide

With some similarities to the production of the factsheet, the Victorian DET distributed the Preschool Field Officer Program as a guide in December, 2015 (DET, 2015a). The sixteen-page fact sheet is accessible via the DET website via a downloadable and printable digital file. Printed, this document has a cover page and heading, titled: Preschool Field Officer Program. Halfway down to the bottom of the cover page, the document refers to publishing details, including the division of the State Government department, copyright, licensing standards and authorised bodies to produce this document. Whilst the document alone does not indicate the targeted audience, the website notes that the guide ‘provides information and high-level guidance for organisations funded to deliver the PSFO program and the PSFOs they employ’ (DET, 2015a, paragraph 3). In this sense, as local governments and community organisations are auspiced to provide the PSFO program, it is arguable that this government document is intended to be compelling (Rapley, 2007), so that employers and PSFOs are persuaded with information about the expected role to be performed in practice.

A key difference to the fact sheet document is the signification to attribute governmental authority to this text utilising a range of organisational and disciplinary methods. A contents page is included and offers: an introduction, a background section, details of the PSFO program, the VEYLDF principles, desired qualifications and capabilities, performance monitoring arrangements and references of current research. Each section is divided under these stated headings and dot points are used to distinguish information.

Of the sections, the passage headed The PSFO Program is the most detailed. This section is expatiated over five pages with sections. Each section includes paragraphs, which are up to eight lines in length, where most passages are contained to two paragraphs. One exception is The PSFO Role\(^ {14}\). This section has five paragraphs, indicating the importance of explaining

\(^ {14}\) The etymology of the term preschool field officer could not be located in any of the documents, despite an extensive search, and in light of contemporary documents noting the role being undertaken in funded kindergarten programs (DET, 2015 a). To explore how this term may be defined I sought the Oxford English Dictionary (nd.) to gain an understanding of the language used. Preschool relates ‘to the time before a child is old enough to go to school’. This could be interpreted as a site and/or as a period of learning before school. Field can be defined as ‘a piece of land used for a particular purpose’, ‘a particular branch of study’ and ‘a space or range within which objects are visible from a particular viewpoint’ (OED, nd.). Officer is noted as ‘a person holding a position of authority, especially one with a commission’ and ‘a holder of a public, civil, or ecclesiastical office’ (OED, nd.). Thus, the PSFO could be considered in multiple ways - as an actor holding official
the role of the program as an aim, rather than the role of individual PSFOs to the audience. The entire passage includes some similar information, such as purposes of the program, as to that provided in the fact sheet. This might be so that families, educators, employers and PSFOs are all in receipt of the same governmental information as to the designated aims and practices from the program. Juxtaposed with the fact sheet however, the guide elaborates further here on the purposes of the PSFO program, to include research trends in high quality programs, family support and interventional methods to target ‘the cycle of disadvantage’ and links for PSFOs to facilitate families access to support and services (DET, 2015a, p. 3).

The partnership of the VEYLDF with ECIS literature

The background passages detail the significance of the VEYLDF (DET, 2016) and early childhood intervention services (ECIS) literature, referring to the Revised ECIS Literature Review (Moore, 2010), as a significant site of resource material to the PSFO program and PSFOs. The importance of the VEYLDF is framed in terms of current early childhood educational practices and, it could be claimed to reinforce to PSFOs, the governments’ expected practice principles of early childhood educators. Of note, the document highlights the desirability of collaborative practice and incorporates the PSFO program guide into this element of the VEYLDF text. A reference to early childhood intervention services (ECIS) literature is also drawn in this section. The ECIS literature highlights two themes:
collaboration and capacity building reinforcing to PSFOs and employers, as indicated by the large volume of text referring to these concepts, of the desire of government to signify these discourses as important.
An ECIS model of services is provided by professionals from a range of health and educational roles to support families who have a child determined as having a disability\textsuperscript{15} (DET, 2016). ECIS services are considered to have shifted from a medical approach (Reiter, 2008) to a family-centred model (Brown & Remine, 2008). The term family-centred is grounded in a philosophy of beliefs and practices (Dunst, Johanson, Trivette & Hamby, 1991), which highlight social ecological contexts, the strengths of families, parental choice and decision making, and an aim to promote collaboration between educators and families, and professional services (Brown & Remine, 2008). However, Millet and Lee (2007) counter this position by arguing that early intervention services are supported financially by government to instead assist in the preservation of social order and welfare in society, by intervening and enabling the realisation of the potential of families to focus on the wellbeing of the children.

A key component of family-centred practice is based on the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) who developed the ecological social system. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) theory ‘considers behaviour and development to be multiply determined by experiences and opportunities emanating from different settings and sources of support and resources’ (Dunst, 2005), which includes the micro, meso, exo, macrosystem and chronosystem where each system influences one another (Dunst, 2005). As a recipient of ECIS, a child may be viewed through a social ecological lens where family-centred practice focuses upon practitioners valuing and understanding the family’s structures, routines, cultural values and local communities in order to implement interventions that fit into familial contexts (Marshall & Mirenda, 2002) and to share the social values of the family with the various environments to which the child and family are engaged (Reiter, 2008).

It is claimed that by focusing on the strengths of a child and family a meaningful partnership can be formed between practitioners, families and children which is based in collaboration (O’Brien & Sullivan, 2005). It is suggested that practitioners who value and employ a

\textsuperscript{15} ECIS practitioners work with families and children who have been diagnosed with a disability and referred to an early intervention service through specialised professionals, such as a psychologist or paediatrician. PSFOs provide ‘consultancy to early childhood teachers and parents to facilitate the inclusion of all children in state-funded kindergarten programs’ (VEYLDF, 2016). The DET (2015a), note that if a ‘child’s development is already supported by an early childhood intervention service, it is expected that the kindergarten educator will seek inclusion support from this provider, not the PSFO’ (p. 1-2).
collaborative capacity-building paradigm as part of ECIS will seek the experiences and knowledge of parents to deliver an effective individualised program that promotes competence among families (Dunst et al., 1991, Dunst, 2005; Porter & McKenzie, 2000). Thus, with the emergence of contemporary ECIS literature incorporated into PSFO programs, it is arguable that governments desire PSFOs to take interventional approaches. It could be claimed that this is to further develop collaborative partnerships with families, educators and children in ECE and could see interventional methods exercised by PSFOs with children and families. As ECIS professionals work with families and children who are diagnosed with a disability, questions may be raised as to whether children assessed by PSFOs using interventional strategies may be viewed in a deficit, rather than strength based model and in what manner this might be considered to be truly collaborative? Further, given the government’s promotion of the Education State (Victorian Labor Party, 2014), how might school based targets impact on the way children and families are observed and planned for?

Government shapes and directs the conduct of organisations and people operating within institutions (Rose, 1999). Thus, it could be claimed that consultants are subtly compelled by government through the knowledges privileged to their role to powerfully disperse thoughts and actions in early childhood settings and discretely spruik government ideology in this process. This has ramifications for participants in early childhood education. Thus, it is arguable that through the transfer of language and action in early childhood settings, that ‘objects, such as the family or the child are rendered into a particular conceptual format and made amenable to intervention and regulation’ (Miller & Rose, 1990, p. 6). In this sense, it may be argued that consultative practices appear inclusive of the voice of children and families. However, while it appears that this is a shift away from a deficit model, it appears that a lack of transparency and authenticity pervades in the relations between consultancy, collaborative partnerships and early childhood spaces.

The key information drawn from these sources appears to focus upon interventional techniques required to ‘build the capacity of key adults in the child’s life to support the child’s learning and development’ (DET, 2015b, p. 5) as a means to address children with additional needs. Curiously, the role of capacity building approaches relates to working with educators to focus on meeting the additional needs of children. Capacity building is further
explored under the headings of Capacity Building Support to Kindergarten Educators and Working with Families in this document and is a recurring theme throughout this text. Information about capacity building is noted across these three sections over four pages in this document, arguably to compel PSFOs to comply this approach and signifying the importance of this discourse.

It is arguable that the notion of capacity building and collaborative practices, based in interventional family-centred practice models and within the context of The Education State (Victorian Labor Party, 2014) agenda, is what is meant through the opening statement of PSFO documentation where it is noted that: the first years of life are crucial to lifelong learning, wellbeing and success – we are making Victoria the Education State by strengthening early childhood services for children and families.

Governing the governed: Monitoring PSFOs

An interesting focus of this document, not identified in the fact sheet, is the prominence given to monitoring PSFOs. Monitoring is noted in two distinct ways in this document: through qualifications and performance reviews. The document highlights the qualifications and capabilities expected of PSFOs. I speak first to the former term. Qualifications include a degree in early childhood education and extensive experience as desirable capabilities listed in the document. All educators wishing to teach children in a state funded kindergarten are required to hold a four-year qualification in early childhood education (Cheeseman & Torr, 2009). However, I argue that the notion of experience beyond obtaining this qualification can be challenged. How might experience be measured? Whose experience is privileged and in what context is experience measurable? This is not explicitly stated, however, it could be assumed that the extensive list of characteristics would demand an educator wanting to apply to be a PSFO, to demonstrate knowledge of complex experiences based in developmentalism, additional needs education and strategies and health when working with children, families and communities.

In this sense, it could be argued that a promotion to a PSFO position does not require an additional qualification to colleagues working in ECE settings, but does require particular
types of experience. Given that contemporary consultative practices are attuned to ECIS standards and interventional methods, and that many ECIS workers hold qualifications in a health based discipline, it is of interest that PSFOs are not required to obtain further qualifications, yet are expected to demonstrate particular types of knowledge of children based in experience. Quality, therefore, appears to be measured in neo-liberal approaches of individuals holding autonomy and responsibility of the self and the ability to be self-reflective and flexible citizens (Millei & Lee, 2007).

Furthermore, under a neo-liberal model individuals are required to self-govern, whilst being productive and accountable for individual actions, where conduct may be governed through frameworks, codes and targets (Rose, 2000). In the instance of PSFOs, desirable characteristics are listed and conveyed to both employers and PSFOs, potentially used to measure, as Marianne Fenech (2011) notes, the quality of performance, confining and maintaining actors to working to a particular set standard (Fenech, 2011). The monitoring of PSFOs is also conducted through performance measures and targets (DET, 2015b). The document states that ‘government funded organisations that deliver PSFO services are monitored against the performance measures and targets specified for this activity in the service agreement’ (DET, 2015b, p. 13). Furthermore, should PSFOs fail to meet performance targets funding may be impacted and the funding arrangement may be deemed invalid (DET, 2015b). Thus, it could be argued that given quality of conduct is measured upon how many ‘clients’ are visited and the level of satisfaction from families, the notion of quality services through the PSFO may be impacted by this arrangement.

I move backwards-forwards to concluding thoughts after the next (inter)connection. The next (inter)connection looks to the past to unveil discursive themes. Beyond this (inter)connection, I begin to draw the analysis together through concluding thoughts.
(Inter)connected musings: reading water play

Figure 5: Reading water play (Roper, 1971)
I titled this (inter)connected musing: ‘Reading water play’, (Figure 5) as I accept that it could be interpreted through various readings. The image depicts a young girl playing in a kindergarten setting standing against a water trough. In terms of viewing this image through the Piaget’s theory of cognitive development (1954), which, interestingly, was my first impression, I notice the child’s physical capabilities. This girl is using a whole handed grasp to hold a cup in her right hand. Appearing to concentrate on this task, by holding a funnel to a tube with her left hand, it seems that she is aiming to pour water into the funnel. As an educator, I might view the mathematical and scientific concepts of this activity and in that moment, spoken with her about this experience through this lens. Using intentional teaching methods, I may have surveilled this scene and used techniques and normalising judgements to correct and coerce this child into performing this activity to an expected standard (Allan, 2008), according to her age and developmental stages - expecting her to assimilate this knowledge and use these acquired skills in future.

The photograph could also be viewed as an open-ended therapeutic sensory based activity, designed as a calming experience with no defined or expected result. This child may be playing with water for pure enjoyment and satisfaction. It is unclear from the image why this child chose to play with water – it may be a regular activity she enjoys; it may be an experience that enables her to feel relaxed and content in the moment; or an experience she prefers to engage in quietly and alone. Thus, reading water play can be interpreted in various ways in particular moments.

*Negotiating through documents: developmentalism with additional needs education*

Piaget’s theory of cognitive development (1954) saw children as active learners, whose minds were inhabited by rich knowledge structures. These knowledge structures, Piaget claimed, develop in an immutable sequence of stages from birth through to adolescence adulthood (Raban, Nolan, Waniganayake, Ure, Brown & Deans, 2007). Since this framework understands children as biologically determined and moving through stages of development, the approach determines the ‘universal child’ as problematic if a child is not
able to move through predetermined stages of development (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2001). The effect of using a developmental approach, according to Allan (2008), is that individuals can be surveilled and measured in terms of universal norms, and if determined as deviating from standardised norms, disciplinary techniques can be used to correct behaviours.

The 1985 Report of the Department of Community Services states that teachers had training to plan programs. Emphasising particular aspects of education to particular users (Slee, 2010), the promotion of children’s developmental physical and social skills and to plan ‘appropriate intellectual tasks’ (p. 37) were identified as key areas of development to promote. Additionally, planning for preschools was contextualised as needing to be receptive to families and ensuring the rights of children were upheld (p. 36), and setting objectives to develop and monitor services for ‘Aboriginal, ethnic, isolated and disabled children’ (p. 36). Supported by field officers, the report also noted that preschools aimed to ‘integrate children with special needs into regular kindergartens’ (p. 39) and ‘where it seems that a child would benefit and the other children and the staff would not be unduly penalised, placement in a regular kindergarten, at first on a part-time basis, is recommended’ (p. 39).

It could be claimed that whilst the government’s aims were to uphold children’s rights and acknowledge families, not all children and families during this period were included. The integration of children deemed in this timeframe as having special or additional needs, including disabled, Aboriginal, ethnic and isolated children – was contingent on the support of field officers who would monitor and assist the development of children and would recommend whether a child should be accepted in a ‘regular’ stand-alone kindergarten. Arguably, a regular kindergarten, in this context, may have been considered as a mainstream setting for children performing to normalised standards of development, rather than as a setting which practiced welcoming all children.

The Report of the Consultative Council on Preschool Child Development (1973), held a strong focus on health prevention and advice as a way to educate families to develop their child’s potential (p. 10). Through the initiation of constructing multidisciplinary complexes,
it was envisaged that specialists operating in the complexes would be able to advise and educate, demonstrate and discuss materials and activities to prevent disease and to also support the child’s development (p. 14).

In addition, the report noted that the management arrangements and roles of advisory services appeared convoluted, with a range of employers – from local governmental bodies to church organisations - regulating the actions of consultants. As part of a fleet of recommendations, it was suggested that the Victorian State Government Department of Health manage and supervise consultancy practices in ECE, with localised facilitated support from smaller organisations.

These two recommendations, arguably, have influenced the role of PSFOs working in ECE through the past and into the present. By having the Department of Health’s overarching supervision of consultants, key government agendas regarding children’s desired health and development outcomes could be conveyed effectively to families and children via consultation to teachers. Additionally, PSFOs could be seen in ECE communities, through attachment to a governmental body, in a position of authority. As a representative of a government, it could be claimed, PSFOs could compel teachers and families to comply with particular recommendations about children’s health, wellbeing and development. Simultaneously, the conduct of PSFOs, via reporting mechanisms, would ensure that the conduct of consultants remained under the surveillance of governmental authorities.

The focus on developmentalism and additional needs can also be seen in the *Annual Report for calendar year 1962 of the Director of Maternal, Infant, and Preschool Welfare* (DHS, 1962), where medical examinations were conducted on children in kindergartens. The report indicated the types of ‘health defects’ (p. 18) found by doctors in children, and included physical conditions such as enlarged tonsils and eczema to speech delays, behaviour problems and mental retardation. The report notes that guidance on the health of children was not only conveyed to the Department of Health, but to preschool consultants, who advised teachers and families of children’s conditions and made recommendations to give ‘guidance in health and education matters’ (p. 14).
Evidence of developmentalism with additional needs discourses are also noticeable in a psychologist’s one-page report for the *Annual Report for calendar year 1962 of the Director of Maternal, Infant, and Preschool Welfare* (DHS, 1962). It is not explicitly stated who the psychologist is or the exact rationale for a page to be dedicated to the psychologist’s report in the document. However, some details raised allude to the importance of this position in the State Government Department of Health by the prominence of the length of this report. Thus, ensuring to readers that developmental psychology is noted as a valued service of the Victorian Government and signifying to practitioners that this service is considered to be beneficial in ECE.

Of note, is that the psychologist is the only employed person in this role through the department and is limited by what ‘can be accomplished by one person’ (p. 19). This point is signified with the number of children to be assessed and the expeditiousness required to assess and remediate young children, as by ‘school age valuable years have been lost… to aid the adjustment of school children’ (p. 19). Attention is given to the problems faced by young children, where the individual is rendered problematic. The psychologist’s role in this event is ‘not to protect, but to help the individual to develop his [sic] resources and learn to cope adequately’ (p. 19).

Interestingly, the psychologist draws on the need to advance the ‘skills and insights of teachers and nurses [so that children] can be helped through the normal educational and infant welfare channels’ (p. 19). Teachers are identified as a resource to support young children and so are psychiatrists. However, the psychologist pointedly notes, that ‘between these two groups are the children who need something more than education though somewhat less than psychiatry’ (p. 19).

In drawing this information together, the psychologist raises the perceived importance of early childhood development and in remediating perceived problems in children prior to the start of school. It could be claimed that this is a signifier to the importance of managing perceived delayed development in young children where problems identified in young children are individualised and with support, are remediable and fixable through psychological assistance (Cologon & Thomas, 2014). Underlying this perception is a
medicalised model of disability, identifying disability as an impairment in individuals (Thomas, 2004). It could be claimed that the role of consultants, such as advisors, could have been given a platform and the authority to perform and assist in observational methods. This performance, it could be argued, supported the role of psychological science through psychologists and psychiatrists to diagnose and remediate children considered as developing abnormally in the year prior to school.

It is evident in the report from the 1960s timeframe that medical attention conducted in ECE settings identified health problems in young children. Through a medical process of assessment where children’s needs were identified by ‘distinguishing the abnormal from the normal’ (Allan, 2008, p. 87), techniques such as psychological approaches were adopted to remedy problems. However, as identified by the psychologist unable to accomplish tasks alone, ‘something else’ needed to be situated between teachers and psychiatrists to support young children. It could be argued, that consultative practices, were seen as the tool, within the constraints of psychology and medical models, to surveill and ‘sort and regulate individuals to behave in certain ways’ (Allan, 2008, p. 87), and the context set to sustain this role, operating now as the PSFO program, in contemporary times.

I turn now to the concluding thoughts passage of this thesis. As identified in the introduction, I do not seek to draw conclusions, but through questioning have sought to (re)imagine ways to (re)conceive the PSFO program. I seek to draw concluding thoughts regarding the analysis together. Next, I aim to identify the limitations of this study. Finally, I aim to discuss how the PSFO program could be (re)conceptualised in new ways.
Passage Seven: Concluding thoughts ~ ongoing problematics of consultancy

The focus of this ethnographic and Foucault’s genealogical approach (1977) to this study was to problematise what may now be (un)known about consultative practices, specifically the PSFO program, operating in Victoria. The PSFO program was problematised in order to gain an understanding of how the program and the practices within have been shaped in the present. My personal experience as a child under surveillance, an educator working with consultative support and as a consultant examining children also motivated me to pursue this research.

The paucity of research or reviews related to consultancy and the PSFO program to my knowledge (see DET, 2015a; DET, 2015b; DHS, 2001), has been one catalyst to closely examine this program and the power-knowledge relations in practice. Contextually, the pervasiveness of this program throughout funded kindergartens across Victoria to support children with additional needs and families, since it was formally titled in 1984 (DHS, 1984), and the focus upon building the capacity of educators (DET, 2015a; DET, 2015b) to collaboratively work with children and families (DEEWR, 2009) has also prompted me to inquire into this program. In addition, the official recognition and endorsement by the Victorian State Government of the PSFO program in 1984, partly influenced the timeframe chosen for this study.

Drawing from a range of documents, both written and visual, this (inter)connected study sought to analyse the complex policy shifts from the 1960-1985 period and setting this period against the latest reforms to education in Victoria. The discourses which have operated in the past, and are maintained and dominant in the present are foregrounded. Some discourses, too, have shifted and are silenced in the PSFO program to educators and ECE communities as detailed in these concluding thoughts. This is significant as there is no research which has specifically studied this program and the practices within operation, to my knowledge.
Through concluding thoughts, I do not seek to draw specific conclusions about the PSFO program. My aim is not to argue that the program or that PSFOs individually work in ways which are detrimental to children, families or early childhood communities. My thoughts here about this program seek to open up democratic participation and acknowledge that a range of perspectives exist which raise uncertainties and complexities (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999). In doing so, it is hoped that I may demonstrate that the program and the practices of PSFOs may be questioned and practices can possibly be made different. The role of governments and the technical and managerial nature which drive the control and standardisation (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999) of children, families and educators in terms of the ways and means they are compelled to act, has been explored in historic and contemporary times in this thesis. Here, I draw findings together as concluding thoughts and raise possibilities for future research.

**Drawing Concluding Thoughts Together**

Having completed this small scale study where the PSFO program has been read through a Foucauldian genealogy and ethnographically, I return to the questions I sought to answer throughout this thesis and draw together concluding thoughts:

- What are the effects of historical issues from 1960-1985 in Australia on what is presently known about the PSFO program operating in Victorian preschools?
- What have been the struggles among the different ideas, discursive practices and relationships of consultancy to Victorian early childhood settings in Australia over this timeframe?
- How have historical issues and events influenced present-day-power-knowledge relations that are exercised between consultants and preschool educators in early childhood education?

In the methodology passage I suggested a slightly curved line could represent a singular thread. I noted that through the conjoining of each thread each piece could form part of a
complex whole. Turning to these questions, it appears that many threads brought together have helped shape the PSFO program in its current form. Yet, from this small scale study it also appears that some strands could seem loose and threadbare, leaving unanswered questions and spaces. Thus, I seek here to draw together concluding thoughts and expose these loose and threadbare elements which may highlight future areas for research.

The effects of historical issues from 1960-1985 in Australia to understand what is presently known about the PSFO program in Victoria has been explored in depth through this study. The numerous social and political changes since the 1960s in Australia (Davies, 2007), including the rise of medicalised practices (Cologon & Thomas, 2014) and psychological science evident in educational institutions (Burman, 2008), as noted in the historic Victorian documents chosen for examination to unveil how the PSFO program came to be – and can be seen today – has been extensively detailed within the literature review and through (inter)connected musings. In doing so, I aimed to contextualise and identify dominating discourses operating in the PSFO program through past and contemporary social and political standpoints in Australia and current early childhood literature and research influencing ECE and consultative practices.

By positioning the PSFO program in-between these contexts I sought to highlight how discourses have dominated consultative practices in the past and, in effect, continue to influence contemporary PSFO practices. It is arguable that consultative roles, including the PSFO program, has been historically situated and positioned in the middle of social and political agendas in play and theoretical educational positions operating in ECE settings. In effect, it may be claimed the contemporary PSFO program operates and shifts, weaving and threading in-between current State Government platforms and educational standpoints. This in-between stance arguably upholds the PSFO program as a powerful entity. It is arguably a program which acts as an authority and is protected from a governmental position, (with)holding and sharing particular knowledges discursively with ECE educators, families and children. The findings indicate collaboration and capacity building with families underpinned by early intervention theoretical frameworks and the VEYLDF, to prepare children for the school environment, as knowledges being currently privileged and foregrounded in the PSFO program.
However, this in-between stance also unveils complex silences and unheard moments in the PSFO program. It is arguable through the positioning of this program, between political rhetoric and educational research platforms, it has been difficult for the program to transgress from particular State and Commonwealth Government agendas and monitoring historically and in current times. This is seen in terms of qualifications and in the lack of individuality in the role of the PSFO.

The findings indicate that the role of the PSFO is known and seen as the PSFO program. The individual role is not made explicit. It is arguable that the position of the PSFO is to deliver the PSFO program – and this program agenda is predetermined by governing bodies in power and through State Government rhetoric and economic measures. It could be that the purpose is to disperse particular government agendas through the program to educators, families and children. It may also be argued, that a lack of transparency exists for PSFOs to question and transform these program practices and agendas. The veiling over of individualism and diversity within this position alongside economic measures through monitoring, means that the uniqueness of each PSFO and the early childhood communities they work in, are in effect, unvoiced and silenced.

As referred to in the introduction and discussion passages, PSFOs are not mandated to gain an additional qualification to the four-year teacher qualification required of all ECE teachers. In contemporary times, a PSFO may be employed based upon vast experience as an ECE educator. Thus, it could be claimed that a PSFO may (not) have gained particular knowledges to guide educators, families and children in assessments and ensuing discussions. In addition, it is of interest whether a PSFO, with(out) broadening knowledge from current research in an educational institution, may (not) question motives and agendas of an elected governing body or of early childhood research positions privileged in the PSFO program. It could be claimed that through this service delivery model the status-quo of governmental departments is upheld. To transgress may be rendered difficult by PSFOs in their individualised role, thus, PSFOs perform to meet the agenda of the governing body in power.
Drawing from Julie Allan’s (2008) work, I have been mindful too of the need to consider forward shifts and moves over time. Allan (2008) notes that Foucault’s critique of how subjects are disciplined has been portrayed as pessimistic and discouraging of individuals being able to take action. However, Allan (2008) notes that a Foucauldian lens can offer opportunities for individuals to view themselves as capable agents who can transform practices. In this sense, through Foucault’s reading it is possible for actors to consider aspects in which are in need of change and to consciously act differently and operate in new ways (Foucault, 1985).

One unexpected aspect of the study which transpired through the findings and the discussion was the role of voluntary committees and their influence and power to transform change in ECE. The segregation and then integration for children with disabilities through the experimentation by government to create facilities for children who were hearing impaired to share with ‘normal’ [sic] children as a means for advisors and educators to observe and assess children together was highlighted in the findings. As noted, this policy change occurred through the lobbying of parenting bodies operating as stakeholders in ECE settings. The significance of this intense lobbying was significant: ECE educators gained technical experience – and arguably expertise – by working with children deemed as disabled, and, were able to then transfer and generalise gained disciplinary techniques as advisory experts appointed by governing bodies across ECE settings over time. Hearing impaired children were able to experience preschool in education settings who had previously been denied this opportunity with ‘normal’ [sic] children, and this situation has remained into contemporary times in Victoria.

The experimentation of enabling children of differing abilities to be together, created a move toward integrating more children in preschool settings and to constructing numerous preschool facilities across Victoria to accommodate children and families with varying needs onto singular preschool sites. Responding to parent-led lobbying for the right for children to attend preschool, governments acted upon and delivered facilities, stating the importance of inclusive education (Slee, 2010). This transgressive move was a significant finding from past practices which has impacted on many preschool aged children with a disability as it has enabled many children to attend preschool environments on a single site.
Throughout this thesis, this study sought to explore the discourses operating in PSFO programs and the tensions within the ideas and relationships between consultants and ECE educators in these discursive spaces. Through the generated data I was able to (inter)connect medicalisation and psychology to health with supervision, additional needs education with developmentalism, and community organisations with welfare as dominant discourses in operation.

Of interest to this thesis from the findings is the struggle among the differing ideas and dominating discursive practices between PSFOs and ECE services. Whilst there has been some change, exclusion is still evident where some children are segregated and attend early intervention preschool programs in Victoria. One implication of this struggle may be that PSFOS find themselves in the ‘often awkward position of showing a commitment to inclusive education while not letting go of the pragmatic foundations for special education knowledge and practices’ (Slee, 2010, p. 103). Through surveillance and medicalised and psychological technical measures and interventions to support particular children as required through the PSFO program, as part of ‘inclusive practices’ children may be selected or excluded and segregated into ‘other’ ECE environments. Within this struggle, it appears that little is known or questioned of the perspectives of individual PSFOs regarding how inclusive or exclusionary practices are viewed or performed.

These dominant discourses, it could be claimed, have historically influenced the formation of the PSFO program as a consultative model which continues to operate unquestioned in contemporary times. Given that these discourses remain in operation currently in ECE practices and settings, the PSFO program, I suggest, has sustained as a significant program in ECE settings for educators, and arguably families, in the present. It is also arguable that these discourses continue to remain deeply embedded and are reinforced in contemporary consultative practices and continuously form part of current governing agendas in early childhood education, as identified in current early childhood and PSFO program documentation.
Contemporary Times: Governmentality

Contemporary early childhood education in Victoria, and broadly Australia, has seen significant changes since the implementation of the NQF (DEEWR) in 2009. These changes have impacted on pedagogical principles and practices of educators, the requirements made to demonstrate children’s learning outcomes and high quality programs for young children endorsed through the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009), particularly in the preschool year. Additionally, the State of Victoria has developed the VEYLDF (DEECD, 2009), with a focus upon principle practices, the learning outcomes of children and transitions in early childhood education. The significance of this document is its connection to school-based outcomes and the transition period from early childhood settings to school for young children (DEECD, 2009) as noted in the literature review. This is also an important feature of The Education State platform (DET, 2014), the current education agenda of the Victorian State Government which connects the cycle of education from early childhood through school to adulthood. Thus it is arguable, a key government aim within early childhood education - or preschool - is to prepare young children for school and to meet key targets in formal education in Victoria from early childhood. In contrast however, current PSFO documents do not mention school or transitioning to a school environment in the texts, seemingly contradicting the current government agenda in this area, but underlying the rhetoric are the aims of this platform.

The stated goal of the importance of early childhood education purposefully preparing preschool aged children for the school environment is not new (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999; Petriwskyj, 2014). Nor, is the role of professional expertise to assess and support early childhood educators to assist children and their families with specific needs in early childhood programs (Wong, 2014). However, it may be that the specific role of the PSFO program, in the support of educators to assist children and their families, is produced to prepare children for the school environment. This program, it may be argued based within the findings within the documents, is managed and guised as capacity building and collaboration. Through current government regulatory requirements and standards within this paradigm, relationships with families, educators and children are aimed to have knowledge and expertise shared to facilitate the inclusion of children in early childhood
settings. However, it could be that this partnership is not authentically inclusive between the PSFO program and stakeholders and it is arguable that this is part of a neo-liberal agenda. The PSFO program performs based on the premise of children, families and educators – who, subjected to meeting certain standards which ensure control within the environment through surveillance, examinations and techniques to fix individuals - simultaneously meet the expectations and regulations of particular governing platforms which are reinforced through the compliance of all actors.

**Implications of the research:**

It is possible to question through temporal shifts across spaces during the 1960 – 1985 timeframe whether deliberate action has taken place to think and act differently. It is arguable, that collaborative practices and capacity building paradigms are designed to recognize the significance of working with people with a desire that shared improvement may happen within the context of socially connected relationships between children, families and educational environments (Wong, 2014). One possibility is that this may be seen as a positive and progressive move forwards over time (Allan, 2008), towards working with children and families in meaningful ways. Whilst current documents allude to the importance of the PSFO program operating within collaborative partnerships and viewing families and children as having strengths, further research may be required to quantify and qualify whether partnerships with stakeholders are collaborative and the ways in which people who are involved in the program are considered as capable.

Further research could attend to the views and voices of families and children to gain an understanding of the collaborative and consultative nature of the partnership with PSFOs. The benefit of this could be to learn whether educators, children and families value the techniques and practices of consultants in early childhood communities and whether they feel included in practices and decision making. What might families view as important in this working partnership? Is school readiness important to families or are other types of learning and experience important? Is this an area of support which families seek? Families could be surveyed on whether the current fact sheet offers valuable information about the PSFO program and whether additional information is required to meet the diverse needs of the Victorian community. Importantly, insights could be made as to whether the current
model of consultation and practices employed is viewed as beneficial to all involved in this process.

It is noted too, that perspectives could differ widely in urban and rural areas between communities. Quantitative methods could be used to compare PSFO visits and duration of time in rural areas compared to urban areas. Given the current government’s commitment to supporting areas deemed to be disadvantaged, this could be a means to gain insights into visits in rural communities. Whilst quantitative measures can offer insights, an understanding of the relationships in multiple communities in rural regions through qualitative research could inform PSFO programs, governing agendas and practices into the future. Interviews could be conducted to learn the views of educators and families on the relationship of consultancy in rural areas and urban areas to ascertain whether there are key differences or similarities and the possible ways in which the program could be shaped to tacitly meet community needs.

As noted in the findings, the PSFO program is discussed in contemporary documents and aims are directly related to the targets of the program. Little is known about PSFOs perspectives on the performativity of their own roles and their ability to shape or transgress from governing agendas when working with children and families. Given the value accorded to this program by government and that this program operates across the State of Victoria, there is an opportunity to gain insights through surveys and interviews into how PSFOs view and enact their individual role, but to also learn about how they may wish to change or continue to work in early childhood communities and whether this differs to governing platforms. In addition, a study of this nature could ask PSFOs their views on current government documents about the program and whether this differs to the role being enacted.

Contemporary literature refers to the PSFO program working primarily in relation to children with additional needs. However, the role does not explicitly refer to working with particular communities or who the children with additional needs are deemed to be. It may be warranted to research who PSFOs actually work with and which community groups may not be included or marginalized in this relationship. It is unclear in the documentation.
whether PSFOs support refugee children and families who have experienced trauma for example, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and learn from Elders in communities to gain insights into culturally sensitive ways to work with children and families. It is unclear too, how PSFOs may support chronically unwell children, children with mental health issues or with families experiencing severe poverty. Researching this information, could offer insights into communities who may be seeking support, but are often unheard in this relationship.

As per the scope of this thesis, it has not been possible to draw on a range of research methods to study this program. I argue that document analysis is one means of exploring this particular government program and am aware this method is not tested in multiple ways or through the perspectives of organisations or individuals. I recognize that other methods could be used to gain insights into this program. However, through the use of documents in this study, I suggest, it offers new avenues to explore and examine this program further and into unchartered areas to gain the perspectives of children, families, educators and PSFOs. New ways of thinking about the role of consultancy in new times may then be made possible, where we have the spaces to ‘argue for a deep and lasting critique of the culture of expertise…toward a participatory, inclusive model, wherein power is shared and knowledge is co-constructed and continually reassessed’ (Novinger, O’Brien & Sweigman, 2005, p. 219).

As identified through this study, complex struggles have emerged among the differing ideas, discursive spaces and relationships between consultancy to Victorian ECE settings from 1960 – 1985. The historical issues identified in this timeframe has unveiled many aspects about what is known about consultancy as advisory services and the PSFO program in this period of time. Unveiled too is what may be now known about the PSFO program in contemporary times and the power-knowledge relations which are in operation and the impacts upon PSFOs, educators, families and children. This study, has also illuminated further areas of research and questions which could be explored in relation to the PSFO program – an influential and complex consultative practice, which appears as an unexamined service overall.
References


Department of Education and Training (DET) and Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA). (2016). *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: For all children from birth to eight years.* East Melbourne, Victoria: Early Childhood Strategy Division, Department of Education and Training (DET) and Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA), State Government of Victoria.


Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:
BROWNE, KIM

Title:
Problematising the present: the historical contribution of consultancy to early childhood education in Australia: 1960-1985

Date:
2017

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/213881

File Description:
Problematising the present: The historical contribution of consultancy to early childhood education in Australia: 1960-1985

Terms and Conditions:
Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.