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**CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN POVERTY:
CHILDREN'S LIVES IN AN OTTAWA LOW - INCOME NEIGHBOURHOOD**

by Nancy L. Collins B.A. (Honours)

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts

Department of Sociology/Anthropology

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

June, 2001

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acceptance of the thesis

**Child Development and Urban Poverty: Children's Lives in an
Ottawa Low-Income Neighbourhood**

submitted by Nancy Collins, B.A. Hons.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Brian Given, Supervisor

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
July 6, 2001

ABSTRACT

Much research asserts that densely populated neighbourhoods are significantly detrimental to a child's academic, social and emotional capabilities and development. This research focuses on the child development needs of a particular group of children who live in an Ottawa low-income housing 'project' with the intention of gaining a clearer understanding of their needs in order to assess present child development program priorities. The study explores the children's views of themselves, their peers and their future aspirations through interviews and weekly interactions in their music program. Through these interactions, and reflections based on many years working with such populations in Ottawa, I have delineated two distinct groups of children in this study. Their differing needs were apparent when I examined their lives through Oscar Lewis' distinctions between intergenerational poverty and a transitional form.

Most of the children that I have worked with could be described as living in the form of poverty that Lewis associated "transitional". Their parents commonly see their situation as more hopeful than those in long-term poverty do, transmitting more positive views to their children. Immigration or a major life change has financially strained their parenting resources. The children in these families are experiencing difficulties developing skills for a participatory adulthood. They are also challenged by the negative social experiences that the children perceive in their densely populated neighbourhood where unaccepting attitudes are directed toward their social or ethnic status. These children are stalled at satisfying their 'Belonging and Self-esteem Needs', as defined by Maslow. However, social service providers and child care workers are limited to offering interventions which appear to focus on the lowest development levels defined by Maslow.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank professors Brian Given and Karen March for their helpful and inspiring guidance throughout this research project. Their commitment and patience is deeply appreciated. I am also very grateful to my parents, and to Larry, who never doubted the value of this project, or my ability to complete this work.

Many social service workers, teachers and parents offered their insights and observations of the children, and to them I am also grateful beyond measure. Their dedication to the developmental needs of these children is also commendable, especially since their work is not easy or always light hearted.

Last, but never least, I am eternally indebted to the children who contributed so much of their time to this study, and who instilled hope in my heart. Thus I dedicate this paper to them, and all the children who I have worked with over the years, and to the dreams that they carry for their futures.

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- west- Navaho Dr.-Eriandale Dr.-Makland Av.

Figure 1
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Self-actualization needs: self-fulfillment and realization of one's potential
Esteem needs: to achieve, be competent and confident, gain approval, respect and recognition
Belongingness and love needs: companionship, family, to affiliate with others, be accepted and belong
Safety needs: security, stability, protection, freedom from fear and danger
Physiological needs: hunger, thirst, sleep etc.

Adapted from Hilgard, Atkinson and Atkinson,
Introduction to Psychology, 1975.

INTRODUCTION

Risks to healthy child development are particularly high among children living in poverty, children living in densely populated low - income urban housing 'projects', and for children in single-parent households. When one or more of these factors exist, the risks to healthy child development are exacerbated (Offord 1995:18-20 and Canadian Institute of Child Health 1997:17). For the past twelve years I have worked as a child development programmer for such 'high risk' children who live in Ottawa low - income 'projects'. This experience has caused me to question whether dominant theories of poverty are sufficient for understanding child poverty and for meeting children's developmental needs. While increasingly reliable epidemiologic research documents the extent of childhood poverty and its negative consequences on child development (Offord 1995:18-20, Health Canada 1997:262-263, Canadian Institute of Child Health 1997:17), the daily experiences of the children themselves are not well understood.

As Harry Wolcott said: "*the anthropologists' contribution to what social workers and parents try to do for their children could be to help them understand and appreciate what is already in the heads of the kids*" (Wolcott 1994:302). Taking this approach, the following study examines how a group of children are affected by living in an impoverished community. Therefore, much of the data collection in this study focussed on talking to these children and the adults involved in their care. Using an ethnographic approach, I examined the experiences of children who live in an Ottawa low-income housing 'project' as a way of understanding how they see themselves and their world. I then compared their experiences and perceptions with the theoretical literature to see if their needs are fully understood by academics, policy designers and service providers. This process is described in the following pages.

Many of the perceptions of, and policies directed toward, low-income children are based in the assumption that such children can be understood as part of Lewis's 'Culture of Poverty' model (Lewis 1970: 68-76). From this perspective, children are seen as being subjected to the helpless and defeatist views of adults who are too distracted with their own debilitations and unhealthy 'coping styles' to provide the direction and skills required to help their children develop full potential. When Maslow's framework of child development needs is attached as a corollary to this model, these children are portrayed as being 'stuck' at lower levels of development struggling to have their 'Physiological and Safety Needs' met. These perceptions often influence teachers and social workers who believe that children living in poverty will not be able to meet the expectations that are placed on their middle-class peers and direct a lower value system toward them. In consequence, assessments of their behaviour or academic work can be misunderstood. They are often labelled as 'Attention Deficits' (Sehkar 1999: 1-8) and their parents are blamed for their socio/economic position (Laroche 1992 and Reitsma - Street 1993). Because these extra-familial adults occupy positions of power and authority, it is essential to understand how these views are perceived by the children with whom they come into contact.

Two groups of impoverished children are identified in this study. One group represents the type of children described by Lewis's 'Culture of Poverty' model and who demonstrate the characteristics of children 'stuck' at the lower stages of development described by Maslow's 'Physiological' and 'Safety Needs'. A larger group of children represent a more advantaged group in the neighbourhood. These children participate in a music program offered within the community. Many are from immigrant families. As such, they appear to be existing in a transitional state of poverty. These children do not fit Lewis's intergenerational version of a

‘Culture of Poverty’. The social capital provided by their family background also appears to be helping them move more successfully through Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Recognition of this group requires a reorientation of our perception of the impact of child poverty. Programs also need to be shaped to address the needs of these types of children and a more diversified view of child poverty is required. This study represents an initial step toward highlighting this situation.

The ‘high risks’ to child development associated with poverty are child neglect, abuse, academic failure, social dysfunction and homicide. Most importantly, poverty’s effects in children’s developmental years can seriously restrict their future options and roles in society (Schorr 1991:437, Larochelle 1992:108, Offord 1995:18-20, Health Canada 1997:262-263, Canadian Institute of Child Health 1997:17). Parent isolation, adolescent parenting, family violence, substance abuse, mental health problems, and a parent’s own history of maltreatment are other familiar elements that often interweave into the circumstances of economically disadvantaged children (Offord 1995:18-20). Personally, I have daily encountered many behaviours in the children I work with that can be attributed to stressors and traumas that commonly accompany poverty (Sehkar 1999:1-8). These common characteristics of urban poverty frequently reverberate from one generation to the next and within neighbourhoods. Although the data in this study demonstrate that not all children living in poverty succumb to these patterns, they still exist in their daily interactions with neighbourhood residents and appear too frequently to discount or ignore (Schorr 1991:437, Larochelle 1992:108, National Council of Welfare 1996:1, 2, 15, 25, Health Canada 1997:262-263, Canadian Institute of Child Health 1997:17, First Ministers’ Meeting 1997:2 and National Council of Welfare 1998:5). For this reason, the perceptions of both types of children are examined in this study.

There are two opposing views of poverty based on conflicting assumptions about agency that influence the need-assessments of children experiencing poverty, program designs and program goals (Larochelle 1991:109). One view perceives the condition of poverty as a consequence of an individual's unwillingness (or inability) to participate in the economy. In this view, the skills, character and motivation of the adult or parent become the central focus for reform in policy designs. Those who adhere to this view may also believe that poverty related dysfunctions are either genetically based or the fault of the individual (Reitsma - Street 1993:9 and Jordan 1996:4-13). Solutions that develop from this perspective usually focus on educating poor communities to "help themselves", largely accepting the existing institutional structure as needing limited change (Larochelle 1991:108-109, and Reitsma - Street 1993:9).

A contrasting view of poverty is understood more as a result of the economic and social systems found in State societies. In this view, poverty is seen as a catalyst that creates not only material deprivation but social dysfunctions as well. People who perceive poverty in this manner often believe that the solution to problems of poverty lie in institutional changes which would increase accessibility to job training and income opportunities for low-income adults (Reitsma-Street 1993: 8-10 and Larochelle 1992: 105-119). Programs offered to low-income children that reflect this perspective strive to counter the unequal opportunities for learning that this class of children have historically experienced. Such programs often include recreational and non-academic skill-building opportunities with the hope that the low-income children will be placed on a more equal footing with their middle class peers. These opportunities are believed to broaden children's views of themselves and aid them to participate and feel accepted in the broader community. A wider skill base in the social realm and in personal achievement are

understood as improving their life chances (Offord: Sept. 2000, Canada Parks and Recreation Association 1999: 6-12).

The predominance of these conflicting views means that an effective solution for child poverty has not been formulated that would satisfy the majority of Canadian citizens. As a society, we have not been able to form a consensus. We seem unable to counter beliefs that poverty's negative dimensions are exaggerated, distorted or unavoidable when we try to gain support for preventative interventions. Thus, a fully informed and united strategy designed to fight child poverty has not been achieved. Yet, the urgency for a united strategy is emphasized by the findings of Statistics Canada which cites a 16.3% poverty rate in Canadian families, over 4% higher than the 12.1% rate of 1990 (Statistics Canada 1996). Clearly poverty is increasingly touching more Canadian families (Offord 1985, Schorr 1991:437, Health Canada 1997:262-263 and Canadian Institute of Child Health 1997:17).

Although these types of statistics describe the present trends, they also mask the individual impact of poverty on children. Over the years, my co-workers and I have encountered child poverty first-hand in children from infants to early adolescence. Our program content and goals have always focussed on understanding and meeting children's individual developmental needs, and nurturing positive characteristics identified as important. Bi-weekly assessments are made to keep our priorities aligned with these changing needs. Positive conflict resolution skills and coping skills are commonly modelled and nurtured. There are very sad 'situations' where child protection 'supports' or family resources are painfully inadequate. Many children are exhausted and distracted as their parents struggle with incredible stresses and emotional pains that they carry with them each day. As well, these stressors appear to compound and persist over

the years for many of them. The lives of many of the one hundred and sixty preschoolers we see regularly each year seem unfairly strained with frustration, anger or neglect. Such children have no voice in our society. In contrast, this study represents an effort to explore and identify their needs and give them voices.

In the early 1990's, the low-income neighbourhoods described in this study experienced an overwhelming shift in ethnic identities, values and life aspirations. Suddenly Ottawa Regional Housing neighbourhoods hosted huge numbers of refugee and immigrant populations. Many worked in low-wage jobs, for long hours, or were involved in resettlement programs (Regional Housing Authority: Feb.24/00). Many workers, like myself, became aware that the needs of the children in the community had altered due to the dramatic changes created by this cultural mix. The lives of the host residents and the diverse experiences of the newer residents represented unique circumstances requiring different responses. The 'old neighbourhood' was experiencing a range of needs that had not been predominantly present before. Immigrant integration and struggles of poverty were frequently resulting in some reactions and incidents that were not positive. The residents still exhibited the familiar struggles associated with poverty; but now communities seemed to be divided by misunderstanding and intolerance as well.

Many host residents seemed unaware of the circumstances outside of their lives that had resulted in the shifts of demography in their neighbourhood. Discriminatory and suspicious attitudes were often expressed. Clearly the nurturing ground of the neighbourhood children had altered. We workers wanted to create programs that would assist all of the residents in developing a safe nurturing ground so that all of their children could interact in a positive manner.

Existing programs were realigned and new initiatives offered in an attempt to most appropriately meet the needs of the children. The community music program, where this research was conducted, represents one of the initiatives created in an attempt to meet these changing needs. We hoped to provide the children with stress-free settings where they could regularly explore their capabilities, develop their self-esteem and respectful attitudes toward 'difference'. These types of opportunities enable children to recognize correlations between their own behaviour and outcomes. This awareness has been correlated with more positive social skills and achievement (Rotter 1954 and Carton 1996: 753-757).

The music program was created three years ago for school age children in the target neighbourhood of this study. The foundational motives and the design of the program aimed to counterbalance the inequities of opportunity that children living in poverty face (Laroche 1992: 109, Canada Parks and Recreation 1999 and Evans 1992 :142). The program was designed to meet the varying needs and age levels of our twenty-five participants aged six to twelve. As such, examination of the impact of the program on impoverished children's lives offered an opportunity to test the belief that regular participation in new experiences broadens children's perception of self and their world, and helps them to develop strong self-esteem and social skills.

The children who have access to the music program represent cultural groups from Somalia, Kuwait, Kenya, El Salvador, Guatemala, Cambodia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Eastern Europe and Canada. Thus, a large majority have been globally transplanted into a world that is very different from the one where their families originated. Therefore, the music program explores the diverse styles of music that their culture of origin displays, as well as modern forms that they enjoy. The intent is to have the children develop respect and appreciation for difference and the

benefits of living in a diverse community.

An example of the conflicting ideologies held toward poverty can be seen in the music program. Some of the teachers believe that discipline and rigid expectations should be the highest priority while others believe that flexibility for individual circumstance must be the 'bottom line' (Music Teachers' Survey: Feb. 2000). Some teachers perceive a few of the music participants as ill-equipped to practice self-discipline, or lacking support to practice regularly. These teachers set low expectations for these children. Such assumptions are characteristic of traits which Lewis associated with intergenerational poverty (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996). In contrast, other teachers approach the children's developmental process as stages on a continuum of Maslow's hierarchy of developmental needs (1969) and Lewis's distinctions between the conditions of a 'Culture of Poverty' and more transitional conditions (1970). Once 'Physiological and Safety Needs' are met, through the music group and their teachers, flexible problem solving can be more appropriately achieved. Children are helped to overcome any barriers that they encounter through a more accurate response to their personal circumstances. For example, practice times are provided during the week so that the children who do not have instruments at home, or where a lack of support at home does seem to exist, the child can both regularly practice and encounter circumstances that fulfill their developmental needs through belonging to a positive group.

For this study I conducted eight group interviews with ten children, between eight and eleven years old, who participated in our music program. The settlement needs of the immigrant children, their experiences prior to living in the target area, and possible conflicts in cultural values were issues that I expected to surface. Racist and hostile encounters amongst adolescents,

in the Ottawa Housing neighbourhoods where I worked, were perceived by residents and workers to be increasing so this factor was a special concern. I wanted to identify, if possible, which children seemed to be most vulnerable to their “high risk” environment, the specific difficulties they were experiencing, and whether the current perceptions of academics accurately depict their needs. More importantly, I wanted to identify the most effective elements needed to guide children in these neighbourhoods to productive and healthy adulthood. Examining the children’s understanding of their world, and highlighting the different perspectives of others closely associated with them helped this reflective process. It deepened my understanding of their developmental needs and helped me identify whether any significant priorities were being overlooked or misunderstood. What is important to these children? How do they view their world, their place in it and their eventual adulthood? These questions guided my research.

The study is presented in five chapters. Chapter One defines the theoretical framework used to examine the children’s lives. First I define the economic realities and common social barriers for the children. Then I describe the varying understandings of poverty itself (Lewis 1970, Larochelle 1992 and Reitsma - Street 1993). The two opposing views of poverty can be basically summarized as either the fault of the individual parent or due to the institutional barriers found in our society that perpetuate inter-generational deprivation. Furthering this, I outline the distinctions that Lewis identified about conditions of poverty. Following this model, the children in this study appear to be situated on a continuum where Lewis’s ‘Culture of Poverty’ is the low end and transitional poverty is the high end (Lewis 1970). Next, I outline the stages of child development needs defined by Maslow (1969) and provide visible indicators of

what needs level the children of this study predominantly focus upon. The children in this study who might be considered as part of the 'Culture of Poverty' appear to be 'stuck' at the lower two needs levels of striving to have their 'Physiological' and 'Safety Needs' met. Those in the transitional form of poverty seem to have successfully traversed these levels and are focussed on fulfilling their 'Belongingness Needs'.

The work of Bond, Beleny and Weinstock (1996) supplement this understanding because it emphasizes the ways that adults transmit their values of themselves, their priorities and their world to their children. Five distinct 'Ways of Knowing' are defined. These researchers assert that the 'Ways of Knowing' predominantly associated with poor parents are the two least flexible "methods of organizing and creating meaning of intellectual foundations and experiences" (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 469). I then present some of the literature which identifies common mitigating factors that counter the negative conditions associated with poverty and child development (Rutter 1985, Offord 1985 and 2000 and Canada Parks and Recreation Association 1998).

Chapter Two defines the methods used in this study to obtain the perspectives of the children, and the adults most familiar with their circumstances. Ethical considerations are discussed, as well, since conducting research with school-age children requires sensitivity and respect to their privacy and individual developmental maturity.

Chapter Three describes the research setting, the children's neighbourhood, services available and resident profiles. An example is provided of the daily consequences, to the children of this study, of the conflicting ideologies that shape service designs and the decisions of service providers.

The analysis of the data is integrated into Chapter Four and Five. Chapter Four examines the children's experiences and perceptions through the developmental stages defined by Maslow (1969). The specific factors in the children's lives that interfere with consistent fulfilment at each 'Needs' level are introduced and exemplified. The children who I consider as living in a 'Culture of Poverty' are struggling to have their 'Physiological and Safety Needs' met, which Maslow asserted as a requirement before a child can explore the higher needs levels and develop some personal mastery (Maslow 1969). The immigrant children are mainly experiencing the transitional form of poverty. They also have issues associated with safety due to painful memories that may have precipitated their migration; their "racial" identity and cultural barriers; the stereotyping associated with the neighbourhood where they live and the frequent moves common with migrating to a new country. However, most have found a consistent level of gratification of the lower needs levels of their development and now seem stalled in fulfilling their 'Belongingness Needs' with their peers and greater society. Still, many have significant factors in their lives which are associated with mitigating poverty's negative influences to child development (Lewis 1970, Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996, Offord 1995 and 2000).

Chapter Five highlights the children's perceptions of poverty and themselves. We discussed their understanding of what poverty means and their awareness of discrimination that is based on their address and their physical differences. This chapter also strives to determine their present coping styles and their expectations for the future. The concluding chapter summarizes the main arguments presented in the study and makes some possible recommendations for future research and program development.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORIES OF POVERTY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

All of the children in this study live in families whose income qualifies them for an Ottawa Regional Housing unit. Ottawa Regional Housing Authority assessments closely relate to the General Welfare Allowance (GWA) Cut-Off Rates used to discern a family's eligibility for Social Assistance. Whether a parent in this neighbourhood is receiving social assistance, attending school or working - their family responsibilities must be met with an income that is far below the 'poverty line' defined by Statistics Canada (Service Provider Interview: Feb. 24/00, National Council of Welfare 1998 and Statistics Canada 1996).

Living on Welfare in a densely populated neighbourhood, with high poverty rates, is a condition which presents multiple risks to a child's healthy development (Offord 1989 and 1995, Reitsma - Street 1993 and Canadian Institute of Child Welfare) . Since Welfare mainly serves single-parent households, it is these children who are most at risk. Living in persistent poverty is strongly associated with increased behavioural problems in children, and these children are the least "school-ready" when they enter the school system (Lefebvre and Merrigan 1998:14-16 and 43-46). Over 50% of pre-schoolers and school-age children from single-parent families experience behavioural problems, emotional disorders, physical aggression or oppositional attitudes, at a higher rate than the general population (Ross, Roberts and Scott 1998: 10-14). By the time these children are eleven years old 28% of them are in special needs classes. This is comparable to the 6% of non-Welfare girls, and the 12% of non-Welfare boys attending similar facilities (Offord 2000). Clearly, increased disorder outcomes are common where there are added 'high risk' conditions such as subsidized housing, single parenthood and poverty, which

are common to low-income or new immigrant families (Reitsma - Street 1993: 7-10 and Offord 1989: 8-22).

The difficulty in meeting the specific needs of these children lies in the conflicting views of poverty described in the introductory chapter. Poverty is sometimes described as a condition where one lacks the resources to adequately meet one's basic needs ('having less'). Poverty, however, is more often understood by society at large as an economic and social condition of 'having less' and 'being less'. Thus impoverished parents are often seen by broader society and the media as deserving to be living in poverty (Larochelle 1992:107-109). Consequently, support to help them provide full developmental opportunities for their children is difficult to gain from certain sectors of our society. Social disdain is experienced by many who live in poverty, and negative depictions are often reinforced by the media, the public and through political priorities (Reitsma - Street 1993:8-10). This 'blaming ideology' can be internalized by the child.

Larochelle, Reitsma- Street and the research of Bond and her associates state that children are recipients of their parents' self-images and emotional states. Children being raised in a low-income neighbourhood may also feel judged negatively by their peers at school, or simply accept a view that they are undeserving of some of life's opportunities around them. (Larochelle 1992: 107-109, Reitsma-Street 1993 and Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:466-468).

LEWIS AND THE CULTURE OF POVERTY

Another distinctive consideration about the influences of poverty on child development can be found in Oscar Lewis's cultural ethnographies of families living in poverty around the globe. Lewis views poverty as having two distinct forms (short term and long term). He defined long-term conditions of material deprivation as a 'Culture of Poverty'. As described by Beiser,

people in this condition are in the “end stage of a cycle of disadvantage, despair, family dysfunction and alcohol abuse”(1998: iii). In addition to alcohol abuse, other destructive ‘coping strategies’ associated with the ‘Culture of Poverty’ include drugs, domestic violence, crime and negative mental patterns such as learned helplessness. Lewis asserted that people experiencing low - income conditions are situated somewhere on a continuum between this subculture and a transitional phase of poverty, where people view their options and lives with broader possibility, skill and hope (Lewis 1970: 68-76).

Lewis believes that children raised in a ‘Culture of Poverty’ do not experience the prolonged period of protection that is associated with childhood and valued in our society. He asserted that this tendency occurs because they are often restricted in their personal time for developmental opportunities due to the substantial household and child care duties given to them at an early age. As well, they often experience stresses or abuses that deprive them of a sense of security. Furthermore, Lewis asserted that these children commonly encounter dysfunctional coping strategies, which often erase the usual dreams and aspirations of a well-nurtured child (Lewis 1970:68 - 76 and Offord 1995: 1-20).

Parents entrenched in a ‘Culture of Poverty’ may be plagued with deep-rooted feelings of helplessness or isolation due to a lack of involvement in society’s institutions, low-wage labour, chronic under-employment or unemployment. Lewis saw these characteristics as adaptations or reactions to their long-term state of economic and social marginalization from the greater society. His ‘Culture of Poverty’ model differentiates people’s understanding of poverty, largely based on the length of time an individual or family lives in poverty, and their associated mental and emotional perspectives toward their low - income status (Lewis 1970: 68-76).

Lewis claimed that the 'Culture of Poverty' is largely found in places where, over many generations, there is an absence of hope for upward mobility or of changing the conditions in one's life. Although he clearly felt that most North Americans did not experience the 'Culture of Poverty', he stated that exceptions did exist, usually for people who are marginalised by their ethnic identity, as well as being poor. For example, Lewis considered Natives and Blacks to be the most susceptible to this condition due to unequal access to opportunities, barriers that still exist in our society (Lewis 1970:68 - 76 and Stasiulis 1995:96-99, 109-114). Seven of the group interviewed were Black, two were Asian and one was Native. As well, the life experiences of the resident adults of this research project are immersed in social policies that often hinder their efforts to move away from long-term poverty. Furthermore, their debilitating problems seem to qualify many of the residents as being part of this 'Culture of Poverty'. As such, Lewis' model presents a framework of analysis for examining the children's views of their parents, their personal experiences in the family unit and neighbourhood, as well as their eventual adult goals.

Contrary to a person who is steeped in a 'Culture of Poverty', where there is a lack of 'forward thinking' and a focus on surviving in the present situation, persons living in a transitional form of poverty have resources which support and nurture hope. Although their circumstances are stressful, they have models in their lives which reflect other possibilities and provide them with a longer vision (Lewis 1970: 68-76). With this in mind, we may find a distinction between groups of children (e.g. new immigrants) who live in the impoverished neighbourhood in this study, but who may be less likely to stay, and children who appear to be second generation inhabitants.

MASLOW AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Because this research is concerned with healthy child development, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs serves as a useful framework for examining the opportunities or hindrances affecting healthy identity formation in the children in this study. Maslow identified five levels of development needs. They are Physiological Needs, Safety Needs, Belonging Needs, Self-esteem Needs, and Self Actualization Needs. Maslow asserted that a child's healthy development requires that each level of needs be consistently met before the child can learn skills and achieve mastery on the next level. Once one level is met, Maslow asserted that the child develops a perspective urging gratification of the next level. First, physical nutrition and sufficient rest are required for proper brain and body development. Then 'Safety Needs' must be consistently met. Maslow's next levels of developmental requirements are 'Belonging Needs' (achieving acceptance) and 'Self-esteem Needs'. Lastly, self-fulfilment needs preoccupy the individual (Nguyen 1987:43 and Maslow 1969). Maslow concluded that the fifth level can be most strongly and consistently achieved when the lower levels of development have been well nurtured and maintained. Maslow also asserted, in his later years, that the 'Being Needs' of the fifth level (justice, beauty and truth) are not just eventual values that only a self - actualized person internalizes - but are necessary in every stage of a person's development. He believed that these needs are crucial to a human's proper diet, as essential as our 'Physiological Needs' such as magnesium or zinc (Hoffman 1996:89-96).

Physiological Needs

Using Maslow's model, a cursory scan of the children of my study reveals a link between his model and recent research which suggest links between poor nutrition and stressful

households with diagnoses of Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorders (ADHD). This link helps to explain the finding that more children living in poverty are given such diagnoses (Laroche 1992: 110, Evans 1992:142, Orton 1999 and Schorr 1993:438). Almost 16% of children living in poverty are given these labels, usually early in their school life. This is almost 6% higher than children from less 'pinched' economic circumstances (Beiser 1998:15).

Within a small preschool program I coordinate, two parents have seven year old sons, each diagnosed with learning disabilities frequently expressed through behaviour problems at school (Schorr 1991:437, Health Canada 1997:262 and Hoffman 1996:97-98). A thirty year veteran in the field, Jacqueline Stordy (Orton 1999), asserts that malnutrition is often diagnosed incorrectly as a hyperactivity disorder. Stordy stresses that at least five daily servings of fresh vegetables and fruits are essential for full cognitive development and performance (Orton 1999:11). This dietary requirement is often difficult to meet, or unknown to some low-income parents. Many parents have described the difficulty they have in providing a healthy diet, based on Canada's Food Guide (Service Providers Interview 2000: Feb.26 and Parent Interviews 1999: Nov.14, 16 and Feb. 10). Given Maslow's model, these children often become trapped at the level of attempting to resolve the social problems that accompany their behavioural difficulties. This, in turn, causes many of them to have problems gaining acceptance and love on a consistent basis. Furthering this, their self-esteem increasingly suffers (Orton 1999:11, Service Providers Interview 2000: Feb.26 and Parent Interviews 1999: Nov.14).

Safety Needs

From the perspective of developmental capabilities, there is also strong evidence that the brain 'wiring' process is most crucial during the first three years of life. Adequate stimulation

and an environment that is not traumatic or chaotic is essential if synapses and neural pathways are to develop to their full potential (McCain and Mustard 1999:34-36 and Orton 1999:11).

Many of the children I meet do not have adequate nutritional support and exhibit lethargy and erratic behaviours so that they become recipients of parent's, teachers' and workers' frustration.

This often creates negative reactions in children which can further endanger positive and consistent care. Traumas of abuse and neglect, for some of the children, also cause many of them to become frozen at their 'Safety Needs' level (Sehkar 1999:1-8).

Bullies, aggressive pets, high degrees of discord and hostility in the neighbourhood (and racist attitudes) all distract the children from feeling safe. Through Maslow's framework, these factors hinder them from feeling fulfilled in their 'Safety Needs' and moving confidently on to the higher stages of their development (Hoffman 1994: 89-98).

Belonging Needs

Like Maslow, Jean Vanier believes that a child knows that she is loved and brings joy to her parents when she feels she belongs. He asserts that language, growth, nourishment and security all stem from belonging. "It is through this sense of belonging that she begins to discover who she is and who she is called to become. Belonging, then, is a school of love where we learn to open up to others and to the world around us, where each person, creature and thing in our world is important and respected"(Vanier 1998: 41). Participating in the world around us, then, is dependent on having a shroud of acceptance from the social community of the child.

The list of difficulties associated with traumatized children and the problems commonly attributed to hyperactive disorders can conflate, resulting in assessments or treatments that do not match the child's actual needs. Inappropriate or awkward social skills (such as an inability

to share or negotiate) are common to both categories. The same can also be said for regression, separation anxiety and fragile or unpredictable tolerance of frustration. Hyperactive behaviour often includes repressed feelings of fear, anger, grief or resentment. Anxiousness, startled responses, fearfulness or frequent sleep disturbances are as often stress related as rooted in hyperactivity. (Sekhar 1999:2-5 and Rutter 1985).

Many of the school-age children I have encountered in Ottawa Housing neighbourhoods exhibit these characteristics, commonly interfering with their mastery of belonging and self-esteem needs levels, as Maslow defined. A high proportion of them are assessed as having hyperactive disorders in their early careers as students and given medications to calm them.

Self-esteem Needs and Self Actualization Needs

Once children feel secure in having an accepting identity group, and sources for companionship and affiliation are satisfying, they are then motivated to develop competence and earn respect for personal skills and characteristics. The children are able to look beyond their basic needs and discover their role in the outside world. These are the levels of needs that examine the contradictions of life and require resolution. The child is working through his / her own incongruent experiences to establish a worldview that provides meaning for existence and a future direction to focus upon. For children in poverty to become 'well-adjusted adults', they must resolve the differences between their personalities and the negative encounters they have endured - and the social biases against their economic status. They must resolve the difference in their material world with their personal self-worth. Maslow asserted that daily doses of 'Self-Actualization Needs' (i.e. truth, beauty and justice) enable a child to form a balanced self-love

and compassionate values. Thus the 'Self-actualization Needs' are actually necessary at every level of the child's developing identity (Maslow 1969 and Hoffman 1996:89-96).

According to Maslow, positive social relationships, self-esteem and empowerment are less conscious priorities for an immigrant child who struggles to have his/her physiological or safety needs met (Nguyen 1987:43 and Maslow 1969). This is also the case for many children in stressed families, who struggle with the multi-faceted problems common to poverty. In this view, the social problems of poverty can precipitate and even plague a child's developmental progress (Schorr 1991: 437).

THE TRANSMITTANCE OF BELIEFS

Maslow's theoretical framework defines the 'normal' course of child development needs (1969). Research of Bond, Beleny and Weinstock (1996) adds to this by showing the specific parental beliefs, and associated daily parenting styles and priorities, that are most often transmitted in intergenerational or transitional phases of poverty. The work of Bond and her associates identify intricate exchanges, and values attached thereto; and also helps describe the ways that the children's developmental needs, as defined by Maslow, fail to be consistently met in long-term poverty.

The research of Bond, Beleny, and Weinstock (1990, 1991, 1992 and 1996) examined a group of low-income, socially isolated young mothers in the United States. Bond, and her associates, concluded that a child's world is created through the interrelationships of a mother's view of herself, the world in which she perceives she is situated, her views on child development priorities and her consequent role as a parent. Through questionnaires, interviews and observations of the mothers' interactions with their children in play, more specific patterns

and influences were recognized. Bond and her associates discovered that a high percentage of the low-income mothers in their study adhere to “Ways of Knowing” that perpetuate attitudes of powerlessness and a view of life as having narrow options. Their study described five distinct ‘Ways of Knowing’, which were defined as ‘Silent’, ‘Received Knowledge’, ‘Subjective Knowledge’, ‘Procedural Knowledge’ and ‘Constructed Knowledge’. According to Bond, Beleny and Weinstock each ‘Knowledge’ level increasingly allows a woman to participate more fully in her society, with the most progress occurring at the ‘Constructed Knowledge’ level. The ‘Silent’ view is most rigid in terms of having a belief that her voice is wrong or not valued. As each view develops further away from the ‘Silent’ perspective, the parent is increasingly capable of considering the relevance of context in assessing a particular situation (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-472). As such, she also becomes more capable of recognizing and responding to her children’s needs.

The Silent Knower

Of the five distinct beliefs about the world, defined by Bond, Beleny and Weinstock the women in the study predominantly viewed their circumstances either through the ‘Silent’ or ‘Received Knowledge’ perspective. The majority of the women in the study were defined as ‘Silent’. This ‘Way of Knowing’ is exemplified in individuals who see themselves as occupying a powerless position in their world. These mothers tended to see knowledge as outside and unobtainable to them. They often viewed themselves as deaf and dumb, voiceless and having no input into their environment. Bond and her associates claimed that these mothers tended to have difficulties expressing their thoughts and held the view that words were dangerous because

they often experienced unpleasant consequences when they did express themselves (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:470).

“ As children, many remember a school system and a peer culture that demeaned the way they dressed, the way they lived, and the way they talked: many describe being treated as outcasts, condemned to the margins of the school and peer cultures because they did not have the economic resources or the social “know-how” to be accepted. Others describe the dramatic presence of this marginalization and voicelessness within their own families, perpetuated by parents and other adults who felt voiceless themselves. Verbal and physical abuse were prevalent among these particular families. Intellectual dependency and personal isolation were working assumptions within many of these households; attempts to deviate from these norms were often treated as additional evidence of stupidity and insolence and met with greater rejection and isolation”.

Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:493

Parents who hold this view have overwhelmingly isolated lives, where their voice has not been felt to be important or adequate. Consequently, these parents never develop conversational or deductive reasoning skills to assess knowledge of their own circumstances. This has often been the case within their own families of origin. Their lives are impoverished and represent a marginalised portion of society. Through their parent’s ‘Silent’ attitudes and perceptions, children learn that knowledge is inaccessible to them and that their views are not valued by those closest to them (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:467-484).

Bond and her associates believe that parenting styles stemming from this ‘Silent’ worldview are usually authoritarian and lack active collaborative problem-solving activities. Furthermore, the lack of confidence, awareness or willingness to explore different ‘Ways of Knowing’ sets the context for ongoing reinforcements of this view of the world. Parents with this view do not expect that the child will understand boundaries set on his/her behaviour and consequently the parent tends to tell the child how to do new tasks, or define the boundaries of his/her relationships for the child. As well, if a parent believes that she holds little control in her environment, she may nurture traits in her child that she perceives will assist him/her to live successfully within this worldview. She may consider conflict-avoidance, passive social behaviour and accepting ‘unfair’ predicaments as priorities to instill in her child to have their ‘Safety Needs’ met (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:467- 469).

The Received Knower

For the ‘Received Knower’, there is only one way to see things, only one body of correct knowledge. The parent’s consequent parenting style reinforces the child’s adoption of her ‘Way of Knowing’ (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:467-484). According to Bond, and her co-researchers, the ‘Received Knower’ also presents a limited and controlled world to her child. Problems are seen as having ‘only one answer’. Learning is gained through memorization and loyal conformity. This perception of life works to a certain degree, especially in traditional cultures where great respect is given to elders and traditional ways, or for newly immigrating families where conformity is crucial to integration. However, in the circumstances of non-egalitarian cultures such as ours, the marginalised poor are kept subverted through their unquestioning acceptance of their passive role as receptors of the dominant social norms

negatively directed to them. Persons holding this view of knowledge usually do not challenge what they are told, and as a result they do not recognize the context of their life and reality. They are unable to transform their present predicament (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:471).

Parents who view the world through the 'Silent' (or 'Received Knowledge' framework) will have a very difficult time recognizing when they are in an abusive circumstance. Similarly, they will have difficulty seeking outside resources to help them change what they perceive as unchangeable (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 470-471).

The Subjective Knower

The 'Subjective Knower' tends to nurture traits that we in North America deem as positive, such as assertiveness or interactive decision - making. Bond and her co-researchers assert that such priorities stem from an appreciation for ideas that originate within oneself and one's experiences. Thus the child is usually given opportunities to express his/her own ideas and to discover his/her own inner voice. There is less emphasis on training and modelling the 'right way', and fewer responses are rooted in reactions to stress, trauma or unmet physiological needs (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-473). This broader view has naturally developed in many impoverished parents who I have known in the study neighbourhood, who initially clung to a narrow path of coping in their disempowered position in life. These young single parents or new immigrants eventually displayed flexibility and a returned (or developed) ability to assert and negotiate with others. Once their phases of adjustment resulted in their lower needs reliably being met, as Maslow defined them, they were able to look beyond their rigid perspectives.

The Procedural Knower

Bond and her associates consider a parent who uses procedures to evaluate and guide her thinking to find answers, and strives to nurture similar skills in her children, a 'Procedural Knower'. Knowledge and situations are increasingly assessed through context. Such parents, they assert, help their children learn to negotiate and reflect upon a situation and to discover the best answer in a particular situation. This perspective offers a foundation for tolerance and a less judgmental view of those holding alternate worldviews or coming from vastly different life experiences (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-473). In the neighbourhood where the children of this study reside, intolerance to "race" or alternate life-choices appear common. For example, one child called a child she did not like 'a lesbian' because in her world this lifestyle is judged harshly. The tendency of hostile adolescent 'cultural clusters', and judgmental gossip that is frequently encountered, demonstrate a lack of ability to accept 'difference'. Bearing this in mind, and through observing such encounters between the children, program workers strive to nurture more 'Procedural' cognitive processes in the children.

The Constructed Knower

The 'Constructed Knower' has developed the capacity to see knowledge as evolving and unique to an individual's experiences and present predicament. Such parents are not afraid to invite outside perspectives; they maintain confidence in their place in the world. Children raised with this perspective learn to examine their thoughts and feelings, developing strategies to find suitable answers for their immediate circumstances. They are able to share processes that led them to their present view, and find resolutions. The 'Constructed Knower' naturally nurtures these skills in her child. A respect for another's perspective and an ability to listen to others

without feeling one's own reality is threatened, is strongly developed. Thirst for an ever-evolving understanding of self and others is a close match to Maslow's Self-Actualized self (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-473).

In the plentiful examples of parent-child interactions that I witnessed daily in Ottawa Housing neighbourhoods, the more collaborative and flexible forms of parenting (and seeing the world) were less common. Overall, many parents who I have known in Ottawa Housing neighbourhoods lack the levels of analysis described by Bond and her co-researchers as Subjective, Procedural, and Constructed. Economic struggles, narrow options and, too frequently, abusive relationships compile stresses and negative coping strategies and distract from the possibility of seeing things in a different way. Some of the parents (and children) carry personal histories that confound the mind and could possibly explain why growth is slow in their 'Ways of Knowing'. Low income urban 'projects' do not nurture spiritual and intellectual development. The point is that children in this environment, where negative characteristics of long term poverty are more prevalent, are much less likely to develop 'Subjective, Procedural or Constructed Knowledge' skills. Such 'Ways of Knowing' are not modelled to them as frequently as they are to their higher income peers. Most low-income parents I met experienced an inability to access opportunities for their children. Emotional and spiritual struggles continually preoccupied their vision. Outside supports are crucial to winning this battle, or in helping parents recognize other long term options for themselves and their families.

NEGATIVE STEREOTYPING

In closing, a child's future adult role in society is nurtured from a very early age. Lewis, Bond, Beleny and Weinstock associate an intergenerational transference of self that impacts

children's worldviews and creates negative coping strategies for children in long term poverty (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996 and Lewis 1970). Although people with more economic resources do not escape extreme emotional trauma, people living in perpetual poverty often face multiple disadvantages and lack the financial or social resources to escape their predicament. Parents living in poverty are those most often marginalised from well-paid job opportunities or economic security. As well, they are usually trying to provide their child with basic needs and developmental opportunities on a very limited budget. The shortcomings of their everyday economics can be regarded by others and felt by themselves as a personal flaw, showing that they are 'failures', a position that can place further limitations on one's self. These views describe the 'Silent' or 'Received Knower's' perspective as defined by Bond, Beleny and Weinstock (Schorr 1991:437, Health Canada 1997:262, Hoffman 1996:98, Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996 and Lewis 1970). In short, their identity and circumstances exclude them from full social and economic participation.

The social stigma of poverty, perceived by the parent, is often the most difficult to endure and counteract. Society's negative perceptions of poverty have massive consequences for children who are less sophisticated in their views of society. Furthermore, children inherit these conditions, and often internalize the self-incrimination that their parent expresses. They do not easily develop the positive strategies needed to move outside of these socially designated positions and thereby recreate the 'Culture of Poverty' reported by Lewis (Schorr 1991:437, Health Canada 1997:262, Hoffman 1996:98 and Lewis 1970).

SUMMARY OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout this research, I have clarified the varying conditions and values held by those struggling in poverty by utilizing the distinctions emphasized by Oscar Lewis' (1970), Offord (1989, 1995 and 2000) and Bond, Beleny and Weinstock (1996). Lewis explored the conditions of poverty, rather than the causes, and asserted that one form can be associated with people who are economically struggling, usually due to a crisis such as divorce or an illness. Lewis believes that this is often a transitional form of deprivation for the individual, or family, which will eventually improve. In contrast, he believes that people found in the second form of poverty, that he identified, have entrenched attitudes and behaviours that commonly perpetuate long-term conditions of impoverishment. Lewis called this transmission the 'Culture of Poverty'. He believes that intergenerational poverty is most common where people have no reasonable hope that their situation will improve. He also believes that people in a more transitional form of poverty seem to manage throughout life with no higher incidence of sociopathic tendencies, than those in the higher socio/economic classes. However, those in the second classification exhibit maladaptive characteristics that trigger dysfunctional life conditions. Lewis listed over seventy characteristics which he related to a 'Culture of Poverty' (Lewis 1970: 59-68). Using these characteristics as a framework, I explore whether the children in this study described themselves as part of a 'Culture of Poverty', or in a more hopeful transitional phase where their future aspirations hold broad possibilities.

Although Lewis's theoretical framework is a useful categorical scheme for distinguishing between two distinct groups of people experiencing poverty, it does not offer a mechanism whereby intergenerational attitudes and behaviours are transmitted through daily childhood

experiences. Thus I have drawn from the research conducted by Bond and her associates (1996), whose work specifically focussed on the interchanges existing between parent and child. This research also concentrated on low - income single parents who Lewis would have identified as being in a 'Culture of Poverty'. Similar to Lewis's research findings (1970: 68-76), the research of Bond, Beleny and Weinstock indicates that there is a direct link between parents' perceptions of their world, the nurturing environment of children and intergenerational poverty. In addition, their research defines five specific cognitive views held by parents, and their corresponding child-care priorities and parenting styles. This framework offers identifiable characteristics for the analysis of the children's lives in this study by providing a way of identifying their parents' "Ways of Knowing" and how those "Ways" influence the child's developing perception of his/her world and his/her position within it (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:467-493). Other scholars have reached similar conclusions that generational and environmental transmissions do occur, which further guides my research (Reitsma - Street 1993:7-8 and Offord 1995:16-20). Thus, I examine the children's view of their lives and neighbours in the Ottawa low-income 'project' to see if the children hold similar helpless attitudes in regard to their daily lives and future possibilities, or if they carry perceptions that exhibit characteristics of Lewis's transitional poverty and the higher levels of 'Knowing' defined by Bond, Beleny and Weinstock.

Through Lewis (1970), Bond, Beleny and Weinstock (1996), an effective framework is shaped to assess the type of poverty in which the children are situated, and the possible (or likely) views and priorities by which they are nurtured. However, the analysis also needs a framework for assessing 'healthy' child development and a comprehensive way to analyse the children's experiences and child development progress. Thus, Maslow's defined stages of

healthy child development are used as a framework for examining the nurturing needs of the children in the study, as well as the priorities for maximum adult success. In addition, Dr. Offord's more recent research (1989, 1995 and 2000), and his dedication to programs for children raised in low - income 'projects', provides invaluable insight into the needs of this particular group of children. He has extensive experience with children struggling with behavioural and emotional problems, as well. Dr. Offord's work demonstrates both an integration of Maslow's framework and a knowledgeable sensitivity to the consequential expressions of deprivation when these needs are not consistently met.

MITIGATING FACTORS - RESILIENCE

To supplement Maslow and Offord's research, I have also drawn upon the findings of Canada Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA 1998) and Rutter (1985). This material points to some identified conditions which have successfully countered the 'difficult and stressful' lives of children'. In these cases, the children built a resilience that resulted in their ability to set goals and find satisfaction in their adult lives, despite the chronic stressors and multiple handicaps of their childhoods. The factors present in such cases are strong self-esteem, positive stress-management, constructive conflict resolution skills, and a broad range of successful achievement experiences, which have added mastery and compensating experiences to their negative home environments. Another common element in most of their lives was a reliable and positive relationship with adults with whom they could bond and who modelled healthy behaviours and attitudes (Rutter 1985:608).

According to Canada Parks and Recreation (CPRA), regular participation in physical or recreational activities minimizes the risk factors common to children in urban poverty, and

fosters resilience. These experiences often improve relationships within families and among peers. Furthermore, these opportunities build self-esteem and social competence by offering children opportunities to master personal skills. However, barriers to optimum child development (through recreational activities) are most often associated with low-income families and those with minority status (CPRA 1998:6-10). Offord's extensive years of experience also support these findings (Offord 2000). Proof of this is found in his willingness to form Christie Lake Camp (based on these principles) specifically for children from low-income backgrounds. This camp has become a reliably successful year- round support to such children for decades.

The main focus of this research is to highlight the children's views of themselves , their neighbourhood and their futures to demonstrate that academic understandings of the high risks of child development (such as multi-faceted family problems, academic difficulties, behavioural and emotional problems) are not accurate depictions of the experiences of the children of this study. The trap (for many of us who work with these children) has been in assuming that the majority of them live in a 'Culture of Poverty'. As such, our assessments and program designs fail to build on the positive elements in the children's lives, incorporating their strengths into experiences that constructively guide them to their full potential. It is also hoped that this study will offer reflective tools for assessing appropriate interventions in the future.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Through their ethnographic writings, anthropologists give 'voice to the voiceless' (Briggs 1998:20). These writings tend to deal with the experiences of a few individuals with a particular group-identity. In this study I have collected data from two main sources. The first data set consists of self-reports of the specific perspectives and experiences of ten school-age children who live in one poor urban neighbourhood who participated in eight group interviews. The children were all between eight and eleven years old and there were four boys and six girls in this focus group. I also interviewed twenty-one adults who associated with the children regularly. These interviewees included five parents, seven teachers, nine community service providers (e.g. an immigrant outreach worker, the community centre director, the YMCA Counsellor for traumatized children, the Family Service Centre's children's counsellor, two Ottawa Regional Housing community liaison workers, the director of the Family Centre, the Chaplain of Carlington Chaplaincy and one contract community development worker).

Secondly, I conducted research for two years as a participant-observer with all of the children and their parents in the music program setting.

My third source of information is twelve years, spent full-time, working with over 1,000 children who live in several Ottawa Regional Housing neighbourhoods. Through these on-going interactions with the residents I have gained insight into the context of their struggles and the meanings they attach to their behaviour. The three child development programs that I helped initiate have made it possible for me to learn about and research many aspects of the impact of urban poverty on child development. Two are preschool programs that aim to enhance the

learning opportunities and social skills of children living in Ottawa Housing neighbourhoods.

The third is the music program mentioned earlier. It is offered to school-age children and is provided in the Ottawa Regional Housing neighbourhood where they reside. The music program, in particular, has offered me rich opportunities to observe the childrens' world and to find residents and service providers willing to share experiences relevant to my research. Working in these contexts allowed me to learn about the ways in which many of these children and the significant adults in their lives understand and respond to the child-development programs that target them. The perspectives presented, as Briggs might say, " may not be the children's in every case - but they could have been; they are culturally possible, and I think that is the best any of us can claim for our understandings" (Briggs 1998:20).

I have also examined a range of perspectives relating to poverty, low - income urban ghettos, child development and immigrant integration. I have triangulated the data from the individual and group interviews; the multiple perspectives from the informants (children, parents and service providers), and my own experience of working in this area for twelve years, including my personal reflections during the research process and my observations relating to the broad range of theoretical research. I believe all of these sensitizing research experiences helped to highlight my understanding of the children's needs.

My insights and analysis, based in the work years before this formal study began, allowed me to observe behaviour in context. Looking at natural behaviour in a participant observation role involves the focus of the research inquiry aligning with the research questions (Palys 1992:206). As the program designer, I constantly focussed on the physiological, safety, belonging and self-esteem needs of over a thousand children living in urban poverty. These

observations helped shape my understanding of their needs, and of the children's behavioural responses to a lack or satisfaction of these needs. Palys stated that such intimate associations can provide very analytical and insightful information that "has an immediacy of direct involvement" (Palys 1992:208 and Pellegrini 1996:vii-viii).

Palys pointed to four criteria that separates 'knowing about' a population and 'knowing' through direct contact, which is met through my work with this population. The four elements are (i) the researcher should have been close in the physical sense of conducting his own life in face to face proximity to the persons he tells about", (ii)"this physical proximity should have extended over some significant period of time and a variety of circumstances", (iii) "a researcher should have developed closeness in the social sense of intimacy and confidentiality" and (iv) the researcher "should have conducted his recording activities in such a way that his reportage can give close and searching attention...to the minutiae of daily life" (Palys 1992: 207). My 12 years of regular interaction with the children and their parents in a wide range of activities and settings, the continuous assessment of the children's needs and behaviours for program design and implementation and my monthly reports all focussed on the thematic needs defined by Maslow, main elements of this research design.

My privileged contact has several advantages, one being my long-term immersion in their culture. Another advantage is that the risk of the data being shaped by those who are 'studied' is eradicated, since behaviour was not altered based on the knowledge that I would be writing an ethnography about the children's culture. This includes the children, their parents, service providers and teachers.

Quantitative data can provide useful information when attempting to identify or communicate patterns of our society, and I was able to utilize some quantitative material for this purpose. However, relying on a numbers approach does not describe the daily realities and human implications of the inquiry. Therefore, I decided that a naturalistic inquiry would provide a suitable vehicle for understanding the daily realities of the ten children, and their families' present situations. I believe this process provided a valid opportunity for me to explore the variations of the children's circumstances in poverty, and gain some insight into their world as they see it. This work is another attempt to bring a group that has little voice in our society into the living rooms of the 'unacquainted' (Briggs 1998:17).

CHILDREN'S INTERVIEWS:

Over the period from February 1999 to March 2000 I conducted weekly three hour participant observation sessions with a group of twenty - four school-age children who attended our music program. As I mentioned previously, I held eight focus groups with the ten children from the program, as well as four individual interviews with children from this discussion group. Each individual interview lasted no longer than half an hour; the child's attention and interest was usually fading by this point. Each of the eight group sessions was from one and a half to two hours long. Often these sessions were long because we would eat first and sometimes stop in the middle to play a game, or to take a break.

After obtaining written permission from the parents I was able to conduct the children's interviews. (The Letter of Intent which I sent home to the parents can be found in Appendix D.) I described the purpose of my research, before each session, so the children clearly understood that I wanted their views of their lives. I refrained from expressing my own views, or those I

encountered in literature about children living in poverty, in an attempt to ensure I did not infect them with ideas that they themselves did not hold. Neither did I want to influence the children's responses, so I let the children lead the discussions. I hoped that my lack of guidance would allow their issues and priorities to surface. I have summarized the ethical considerations of this approach at the end of this section. During these discussions, I had hoped that the immigrant children's attitudes and experiences relating to 'being ethnically different' would surface. Due to the obvious delicacy of the topic of racism, especially among children, I waited for their introduction of this issue however during these earlier interviews, the issue never surfaced. I initially remained committed to the view that efforts to direct themes of an interview can sometimes result in the loss of opportunity to draw more contextual understanding to the surface. The children discussed incidents of teasing, bullying or peer difficulties but due to my decision to not shape their conversations, I did not ask to what they attributed these incidents. I gained further insight, however, when I later learned that some of the incidents of bullying had included references to the colour of their skin, or hurtful racial concepts. This formed the basis of some discussions in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

The four remaining group interviews were semi-structured. I used this technique to gain access to gaps of information that I discovered when I analysed the earlier interview data. During these interviews, I strove to learn more about their experiences at school, their relationships with their families and peers and their future aspirations. Furthermore, I tried to develop some understanding of whether or not they were aware of their economic status. Finally I sought their awareness of their parent(s)' views of their world, their present life and their emotional state, and whether or not they felt victimized by the world.

I also explored the assertion that the development of resilience and happy adulthood, for children raised in poverty, often included a caring and reliable adult who encouraged them in their lives (Canadian Institute for Child Health 1997: 17-21). I asked each child whether or not he or she had a strong supportive adult in his/her life.

During the last few sessions of the research process, the children were asked to quietly write down their answers to questions that I raised. I do not believe that they influenced each other's answers because they were not discussing what they were writing while they answered their questions. (The questions that I asked the children can be found in Appendix A).

ADULT INTERVIEWS:

I also conducted individual or group interviews with parents, community liaison workers and teachers. I spoke with the Immigrant Support Worker, the Youth Worker, the Ottawa Housing Public Relations worker, the Ottawa Housing Security Manager and the Directors of several neighbourhood support services (the city Community Centre, the Family Centre and the Community Chaplaincy Support Centre). All of these services are community based. The views of the parents and the other community adults contributed greatly to the understanding of the children's neighbourhood experiences. As well, they identified some of the immediate needs of the children that are not being met. As Maslow asserts (1969), these identifications could not be made by the children themselves, who were unaware that such opportunities existed or that they had such needs.

The adults who contribute to the success of our music program were invaluable resources for identifying program and curriculum priorities. These institutional goals often intersect or interfere with the issues surrounding poverty and child development. I also asked them about

their child development philosophies, their views on poverty, and the neighbourhood targeted in this study. I have attached a thematic list of questions that I used for each adult group or individual interview. Most of the above mentioned interviews were an hour long. (Please see Appendix B, for a precise summary of the themes that were discussed).

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION:

The three hour interactions with the children in the music program were conducted once a week over a time period of two years. These sessions offered me the opportunity to observe their behaviour in the social and emotional context of their peer and adult interactions over an extended period thereby ensuring that my assessments were not based on a 'one-shot' impression. I have also reflected on my twelve years of experience working with preschoolers and their parents, in four different Ottawa Regional Housing neighbourhoods. I believe these experiences helped me describe a more culturally valid depiction of the children's priorities and realities (Pellegrini 1996:vii-viii) than may otherwise have been possible.

One of the program volunteers video - taped two of the music program mornings and several of the children's performances held in the community . Overall, the tapes provided an evaluative tool where both the teachers and I could identify interactions or needs of the children that were previously overlooked. I watched the videos several times to see patterns of behaviour and themes of analysis emerging.

Briggs (1998) assumes that everything derives its meaning from associated experiences. Thus, she believes that her interactions - and years spent with Inuit people - have helped her form interpretations with culturally - informed validity. This is confirmed by many people who contributed to her exploration of Inuit values and socialization (Briggs 1998:17). I believe this is

the most valid and supportive 'review' a person can receive, when attempting to bridge understanding between cultures. The years that I have been closely working with children living in Ottawa low-income housing 'projects' has gradually given me an 'insider's view of these neighbourhoods and the cultural meaning attached to their behaviour and attitudes. For example, some parents scared me half to death when I began my work because they appeared to be so critical and resentful of me. It was only through time that a trusting relationship developed with each of them and I understood that their initial attitudes were defences toward a constant flow of service providers who in many ways had intruded in the privacy of their lives, simply because they could. Few middle-class parents experience the scrutiny of social workers, to the extent that parents have in such neighbourhoods, or have to submit to the judgements that sometimes are unfairly placed upon them. The majority of the parents that I meet sincerely love their children and struggle with incredible limitations caused by their economic situation. Furthering this, I witnessed many circumstances where parents sought resources and were ultimately betrayed by the systems designed to provide them with preventative measures. It was no wonder that my initial enthusiasm and interest in their children was met with suspicion and caution.

The same contextual knowledge began to inform my work with the children. Initially, many of their children exhibited behaviours that deterred them from maintaining friendships, or completing tasks that were given to them. Over time, I began to realize, as Offord asserts (1995 and 2000) that most of the 'behavioural problems' could be guided to more 'appropriate skills' by placing 'average' developmental expectations upon them and providing adequate ratios of staff. In this way healthy coping skills and conflict resolution styles are modelled and foundations of truth, love and fairness are recognized and learnt by the majority of the children.

In this way the children I have worked with usually made long-term gains in their capabilities to have their 'Belongingness Needs' met and in developing strong self-esteem (Maslow 1969).

MUSIC PROGRAM SURVEYS:

I was concerned during the early stages of the research that surveys about the children's personal lives and feelings could discourage future participation in the music program. However, with familiarity, a trust developed and toward the end of the 1999 program I surveyed all of the participants. This included most of the children in the overall study, as well as the rest of the music participants. The data which resulted provided me with the children's perspectives of their peers in the program. I also gained insight into the children's perceptions of their interactions with the leaders of the music program. For example, it was surprising to me to learn that several of the students had witnessed teasing or behaviour in their peers that they found frightening. I had not witnessed these incidents since, at times, each adult gave instrument instruction to a smaller group of children in a separate room. Thus, I gained valuable information that I had not observed myself. The survey also provided an opportunity for the children to assess the value of the program for them. I also was able to learn more about their expectations and their personal goals for the future.

ETHICS:

Letters of Intent were presented to both the adult participants of this research project and the parents of the children who contributed their time and insights to this project. The purpose of this study was clear to both the adults who contributed to this inquiry and to the parents, who gave written permission for me to work with their children. The children were told, at the beginning of any interviews or inquiries, that I wanted to write about their views of their

neighbourhood and their lives. It was their beliefs that I wanted to highlight in my paper. I told them that it is usually adults who write about children's lives, and I hoped that through their help, I could write a paper that reflected their lives more accurately. All participants were assured that they could be involved if they wanted, but their participation was completely voluntary. Any of the contributors could stop participating at any time. I also assured the parents that I would make every effort to not influence the children with my biases, except where attitudes might be hurtful to other participants of the project. I have made every effort to protect the identities of the informants or participants of this research project. Drafts of the research paper were available for the participants to edit before final submission; the possibility of misrepresentation was minimized through this process. (A copy of the Letter of Intent is attached, see Appendix D).

Obviously it was imperative not to reveal my hypotheses about poverty negatively impacting on child development - or my curiosity of whether racism was being experienced by the 'visibly different' members of the group. I did not want to implant notions they may not have encountered, or lead the direction of their concerns. Most importantly, I did not wish to generate any dissatisfaction in their lives where none had previously existed.

I also felt it was crucial that the children's discussions generate positive acceptance of differences and broadened perceptions of their world and future options, as well as nurture a sense of empowerment and humanism. This, of course, exposes a bias in this researcher, stemming from my role as the program coordinator who interacts regularly with many of the children. It was not my goal to make this a central element of these sessions, but where ridicule or intolerance were expressed toward a participant, I felt it was my responsibility to help the children examine their underlying motives and beliefs. Clearly, this inquiry was often an

interactive process. In a sense, it could be described as nurturing Bond, Beleny and Weinstock's Procedural 'Way of Knowing'.

I explored aspects of the children's lives that are, or may have been, difficult. However, I agree with Maslow's assertion that an attitude that understands that pain and joy are both on-going conditions of life, enables individuals to accept this reality and can set their minds on positive long - range goals. This perspective can change everyday behaviour (Hoffman 1996:100-103). Thus, where appropriate, I nurtured this attitude during participant observations and interviews. After all, this was part of my role as a Child Care Worker. Thus I sought the residents' views, but tried to counter any destructive or disrespectful attitudes when they arose. For example, in the interviews, when several children thought the view of another participant was silly or uncomprehensible, they began to belittle and insult the individual. We then explored the dynamics of attacking what we don't understand, or agree with, and explored how that behaviour felt to the victim. I then attempted to explore the area of debate with them through a respectful exchange of thoughts and feelings. Such occasions occurred rarely, and I did not detect that my guidance in those instances caused the participants to withhold their ideas or beliefs in later interactions.

SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS:

The goal of this research was to broaden our understanding of the potentially intersecting elements of economic disadvantage and child development stressors and any patterns of variation related thereto. How these elements translate into the lives of the particular participants of this project, has been the purpose of this inquiry. Thus I strove to learn more about their experiences at school and in the neighbourhood, as well as their relationships with their families and peers,

their future aspirations and their view of the world at large. I sought their awareness of their parents' views of their world, their present life and their emotional state. Specifically, I wanted to learn whether or not the children perceived their lives as 'underprivileged' based on their economic status and in many cases - ethnic identity.

It is understood that we enter precarious territory when we try to discuss causal relationships of child development. Identifying causal relationships between environment and behaviour can be difficult. Although program workers or teachers may be significant influences in a child's life - it is often unrealistic to assume that our contact with the child has resulted in any specific, long-term change. A change may have come about from a variety of possibilities, including 'natural developmental processes'. Certainly we can recognize the creation and maintenance of friendships; or we may feel relief if we have assisted a child to find a solution to a difficulty in his/her life. Ultimately, our specific influences, as well as a child's 'progress', is often immeasurable, at least in the short term.

Clifford Geertz's (1996) interpretive writing highlights the point of view of the people who are the focus of an ethnography. Geertz placed much importance on the local context and description of a community being studied and encouraged anthropologists to present the cultural meaning from the 'insider's point of view' (Geertz 1996). Thus, I have provided a description of the physical neighbourhood and the emotional and spiritual conditions that permeate the children's lives as a way to accentuate how the children's world appears to them. I believe that the views and actions of the adults in these children's lives have contributed to the description of the experiences of these children living in poverty. I do not wish to place higher importance on this particular group living in poverty, but I wish to avoid generalization of conditions of poverty

in rural or other settings. My familiarity with this diverse cultural group gave me an opportunity to gain some insight into who is experiencing a 'Culture of Poverty' (Lewis 1970) and whether or not ethnicity compounds the occurrence of these characteristics here.

In this study, workers frequently stated that the children who are most 'needy' in the neighbourhood are those who are the least likely to be actively participating in community activities outside their homes (Service Providers Interviews: Sept.17/99, Oct.27/99, Feb.2/00 and Feb.24/00). For this reason, the children I interviewed are the most regular attendees and represent some of the least isolated families in the neighbourhood (or a small proportion of them, since the program can accommodate only a small percentage of the school age children in the neighbourhood). The responses they gave cannot be generalized to other children who are isolated or living in violent or dysfunctional homes. It would be inaccurate to project the discussions in this study to groups other than those characterized by the unique circumstances of this particular area, but valuable insights can be gained for application in Ottawa low-income neighbourhoods and elsewhere. Without such a specific focus our understandings are too often general, superficial and incomplete. This often results in vagueness, leaving us unclear about the main issues or the validity of the descriptions and claims presented. Geertz stated " the banalities and the distractions of the way we live now lead us, often enough, to lose sight of how much it matters just where we are and what it is like to be there" (Geertz 1996: 262).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH SETTING - THE CHILDREN'S NEIGHBOURHOOD

The neighbourhood where the children in this study reside is a densely populated Ottawa Housing Authority area. The neighbourhood sits within a Statistics Canada census tract of 1.9 square kilometres containing a total population of 6,089. The Housing catchment area borders on Merivale Road and Caldwell Avenue, which curves north to meet with Cavan Avenue. This area is approximately six or eight percent of the census tract area. It contains two high rise Ottawa Housing apartment buildings, 230 tenement row-houses, several lower apartment buildings and an assortment of duplexes and single dwellings on its perimeter streets. A substantial portion of this tract is an industrially zoned area. Another portion includes a middle class section of private homes, with front and back yards (Statistics Canada 1996: Tract 023 and Service Providers Interviews: Feb. 24, 2000).

Because the Stats Canada figures are based on a larger neighbourhood than the one I investigated, the use of Statistics Canada figures may have created the impression that the average income levels of the residents of this study area are higher than they actually are. Hence, I approached the Ottawa Housing authorities to gain an accurate depiction of the population size and the average financial circumstances of their tenants (Statistics Canada 1996: Tract 023). The Ottawa Housing Authorities stated that their tenants number over three thousand people.

Usually, you must be a family of four or five to live in a Regional Housing row house, since each unit consists of at least three bedrooms. If your children are of a certain age and of the opposite sex, the Regional Housing Authority usually agrees that each child should have a

private bedroom (Statistics Canada 1996: Tract 023, Service Providers Interview: Feb.24/00, Mar.21/00 and Ottawa Regional Authority Guidelines). Thus, single parents with one or two children usually live in an apartment. An exception might occur when a family has been living in a row house, and one parent or an older child moves out. In such cases, a brief transitional period is permitted before the family must move to a smaller unit. Within the two largest high-rises, there are 78 one- bedroom and 241 two-bedroom units

The playground and park areas in this neighbourhood are cluttered with trash, often unsanitary and littered with hazards. In my many years as a child care worker here and in similarly densely populated, low-income areas of Ottawa, I have seldom gone to a park without a container or two for garbage, some bandaids and disinfectant. Extra precautions are needed when visiting the largest park; a constant watch must be kept for buses and cars that race by regularly. There are three small playgrounds sandwiched between walkways and townhouses. The children who frequent the play structures during the day encounter leftovers from night activities. Broken glass, discarded garments, the stench of urine, cigarette butts and candy wrappers are common. Sometimes we discover broken or vandalized audio equipment. Plastic bags, dirty diapers and other unsafe items occasionally appear near the play structures, as well.

Throughout the neighbourhood dog excrement is never far away. At the entrance to my workplace, kitty litter debris has mysteriously been tossed onto our walkway every morning for at least the past eight months. There are nearly twenty stories above the main floor which make the efforts of 'Security' to identify the culprit, and resolve this problem, difficult. From almost any household one can see rows of rusting dark blue garbage tins, bulging with garbage. The overflowing mountains of garbage bags, furniture and other unwanted items are scattered

around the containers throughout the week.

Maslow viewed “hideous urban neighbourhoods” (Hoffman 1996:94) as hindrances to achieving a sense of beauty, hope and self esteem; elements he saw as necessary for self-fulfilment, and daily emotional health. There are few areas of beauty and nature to be discovered in this neighbourhood. The children are likely to be negatively affected by the lack of attention, interest or resources devoted by the residents to keeping the neighbourhood tidy and clean - by the apparent lack of a community mind set which might value beauty. Furthermore, the lack of responsibility taken by some residents with how their actions affect others (for example in the cases of littering unsanitary debris in the parks or onto other person’s walkways) may transmit a message to the children that they do not need to consider how their own actions influence others. Or worse, their neighbourhood is comparatively dirty and unattractive because they come from the sort of people who do not know how, or do not deserve to improve their circumstances. I also wonder how a child can feel confident to develop friendships outside of their neighbourhood, to invite others to their home, when their comparative physical environment is unattractive and wrought with hostile neighbours and police calls. For example, a dispute resolution coordinator, who works in this area, described the demand for his work. He said the Ottawa Carleton Regional Police report that they receive more calls relating to conflict and violence from this neighbourhood than from anywhere else in the region (Abdulle 1999). This is the physical and social environment where the children in this study live.

SOCIAL SERVICES

In the community where the children of this study live, and where the music program is offered, various resources are available to the residents and the children's families. For example, the community chaplaincy offers a wide variety of supports to community adults and children. It is a small facility which is situated in an adapted three bedroom apartment on the first floor of one of the Regional Housing high rises. It is meant to offer a safe place for residents to meet casually, or to hold self-support or interest groups that they perceive as useful.

The community chaplaincy has a 'Baby Closet', equipped with donations of baby food, diapers, formula, baby clothes and parent resource materials. After helping a school age child with his/her homework or piano practice, we have occasionally wandered in and picked out a special treat for their baby at home. The interest and enjoyment shared often builds communal networks among the children and adults and inner strength within the child.

A small office and storage area comprise the second separate room. There are many shelves of books for children or adult support groups who struggle with violence, addictions, grief or abuse. Healing is nurtured and dreams are built, as well as constructive community - action.

Frequently the community chaplaincy receives donations of bagels, which are offered to people as a supplement to their food budget. A community vegetable garden was also initiated here. It is shared among, and is maintained by, residents in the community. Occasionally, donated items such as a single bed or high chair are received that can be useful to particular individuals.

In the two years that I have been involved in the children's programs offered at the community chaplaincy, I have met many parents. Almost all who are participating in the programs are single parents, both male and female. In the group of seven preschoolers with whom I work, two single parents are "Dads". I also encounter the people who regularly - or irregularly - drop-in during other parts of the day or evening. Some are elderly, some are disabled, some are single parents, some are seeking relief from a traumatizing divorce and some are struggling in an abusive household. Others are seeking employment, or adequate care for their children. As well, parents needing validation to 'feel adequate' in their efforts commonly seek support through this service facility.

Elderly, handicapped or sick people can turn to this support agency for bus tickets, a ride to the doctor, or a ride to the speech therapist. Many volunteers keep this service operating daily, in a welcoming and responsive environment. Offering an intimate Christmas dinner for those who had no way to visit family or friends was another recent event that helped increase the feeling of support in the community. The children received a visit from Santa that became a heartwarming celebration for everyone. Most of the non-Christians felt comfortable and happy to also attend. When I am at the community chaplaincy, I sense that family nurturance is present. It is spread by, and through, the residents who participate.

Immigrants can best sustain (or regain) strong mental health by receiving validation from others who have also experienced the conditions which motivated the family to leave their country of origin (for example torture, civil war or oppressive regimes). In some cases this may be gained within the family, or through social networks among ethnic-identity groups (Beiser 1995: 70). Where this is not possible, some supports are available in the community to assist

them with child-care, housing help, language skill or job search assistance. These services often provide newcomers with a link to their cultural history (through the people they meet), as well as a sense of belonging in their new surroundings (Beiser 1990:58-59).

The Community Health and Social Services Centre is another resource, situated within a mile of the neighbourhood. The immigrant family support worker operates from this centre, and also makes herself accessible in the neighbourhood through home visits, groups and office hours at the Family Centre.

Presently, there are some support groups in Ottawa for children who have experienced personal shocks due to war. Furthermore, some programs meet the individual needs of immigrant children, from language acquisition and academic skill-building to help with severe psychotic behaviour (Offord 1995:57 and Service Provider Interviews: Sept. 17/99).

The Community Health and Social Services Centre offers many other supports. There are health professionals, counsellors, preschool programs, community development workers - all striving to assist this area with its needs and goals. This service is largely funded through government sources, which have suffered drastic budget cuts that have reduced their availability.

The Family Centre is open each day, and is another community-based service. The volunteers offer a place for any adults wishing to access a phone or to meet with neighbours for lunch or support. There is also an Emergency Food Program. In September 1999, the diets of 647 children were supplemented through this service. Resource referrals are often made here, as well as personal assistance in getting to doctor appointments or other immediate needs. There are classes in English for immigrant adults; child care and resource linkages are also offered. During the December holiday season, collaboration is extensively made to assist families to offset the

additional expenses common during this time of year. It does not add up to a large amount, but it usually offers a little more food, or a few toys for young children (Service Providers Interview: October 26, 1999).

There is also a Community Centre which is managed and supported by 'the City'. The centre director is an easy-going individual who has great awareness of the needs and positive characteristics common in the children who frequent the facilities. She collaborates with area services, including the neighbourhood 'Tenants' Association, to offer programs that have been identified as helpful by the parents and children of the community. She has worked in this capacity for seven years, providing a stable adult figure in the children's lives (Service Provider Interview: Feb.2/00).

There is an Ottawa Housing Office on the first floor of one of the apartment buildings. Beyond providing administrative and security staff, it provides a community development worker and a children's program worker. These dedicated individuals all collaborate with other area workers to try to offer the most extensive range of opportunities for the neighbourhood families (Service Providers Interviews: Feb. 24/00).

During a recent discussion with two workers from Regional Housing, I learned that they feel frustration at the reduced time their jobs allow to do initial orientations with new tenants. One worker said that she was once able to spend about an hour with a new tenant, explaining the various services available in the community and developing a positive rapport. She can no longer spare this time, even though she believes that this link was crucial for community networking and supports. Furthermore, she informed me that the recent cuts to their budgets has resulted in a reduction in the ability of the various service providers to collaborate and provide safe and

nurturing activities for the community children. She said that the flexibility to respond to circumstances this way has been removed entirely. For example, on a hot summer day, workers used to be able to suggest that a hot dog lunch would be a good way to respond to the hordes of children with little to do. These types of spontaneous responses are no longer possible. Thus, children are left on their own even more than they were before the Social Service funding cuts (Service Providers Interviews: Feb. 24/00).

Most of the stressed families who seek the social service resources described above are in some form of transition in their lives. The resources that do exist are a positive opportunity for those who participate but they are not sufficient, especially in their frequently hostile environment which is stressful and often frightening. There is no settled and nurturing sense of community in this neighbourhood. Some resources are viewed as inappropriate by those requiring assistance, or they are viewed with distrust. Many of the reasons for such reservations can be seen in the events that are described below.

Three years ago a family arrived in Ottawa from a culture that is extremely different from their present 'urban housing project' environment. Last summer, their adolescent son's struggles to integrate culminated in some delinquent activity, which transferred their private family world into the public realm of the Canadian institutions of Child Welfare and the Department of Justice. At this point the son made some false allegations of abuse against his father. The son was placed in a Children's Aid Society (C.A.S.) group home, while he served his probation and the allegations were investigated, and the son eventually retracted. The parents were placed on a six month supervision order with C.A.S. The father, who had been unable to get reliable and consistent employment, obtained an excellent job in September which meant that he had to move

far away.

As required by the supervision order, the mother remained in Ottawa with their two youngest children, an eighteen month old and a nine year old. She communicated and visited with her adolescent son regularly. Two months later, she asked her C.A.S. worker if she could take her younger children to her original home and join her mother, her new grandson and family members for the Christmas holidays. She was informed that she could not, since the supervision order would not expire until January. The mother's court appointed lawyer informed me that C.A.S. removed the two younger children from the home to ensure that the mother would not take them out of C.A.S. jurisdiction. The children remained in care (in separate foster homes) for six weeks. Furthermore, they were not placed in homes of a similar culture, as the Child Welfare Act stipulates. Only in desperate emergencies can such arrangements be viewed as 'satisfactory'.

Upon initial apprehension the children were to be in care for four days, or at least this was what the mother was told. The children's return to the family home eventually corresponded with the expiry of the supervision order. Delays were continually exacerbated due to administrative procedures and staff holidays, when workers were unavailable. The family's lawyer, as well as the workers in the community who are familiar with this family, felt that these actions were unnecessary- if not inhumane. The actions were punitive and disruptive to the family's cohesion. The worker responsible for initiating the apprehension admitted to both myself, and the mother's lawyer, that she could now recognize that the intrusive measures she had taken had been unnecessary but since the process had been started 'the Agency' was obligated to follow the regular route that such legal arrangements take. A change in the

children's living arrangement could only be affected through reviews of the case plan and with 'proper legal procedures'. With the holiday season, this was prolonged further.

During this period, the mother would travel a great distance on several buses, to have an occasional two hour visit with her children at the C.A.S. office. I witnessed her constant dedication to try and resolve the situation through workers, translators and her lawyer. At the same time she regularly visited her older son in the group home, another bus trip in a completely different area of the city. As well, she was faced with her husband's absence due to his work. She spent Christmas alone. The children were transported to distant relatives of the foster families, who were from two to six hour drives away. Weather and road conditions, as well as other obvious concerns, worried the mother ceaselessly.

It was only through the volunteer action of several workers that she was able to have the children visit her in their own family home a few times a week. This required picking up and dropping off the children at their individual foster homes. These visits also required the worker to remain in the home during the visit. This constitutes an intrusion and a further message to the parent of 'being less'. The actual visits lasted two hours, but with travel time to fetch the children and later take them back to the foster homes, the total time required was four hours each visit.

My interactions with the children during this time caused me to believe that the older child (the younger being too young) understood the circumstance as being out of his parents' control. The child seemed well taken care of, but often asked when he could return home. Reunions during home visits were bittersweet to witness. The helplessness of the mother seemed to have been transmitted to the child. Yet the woman's strength and commitment to seeing her children as often as possible was phenomenal.

I wondered how the older child's relationship with the parent(s) would alter, after the separation ended. I wondered if the child would feel any anger or resentment toward the parent. I was concerned that behavioural problems might surface, considering the apparent lack of respect that the parent seemed to receive from society at large. I would also like to add that providing this account is in some ways a further intrusion into the privacy of this family, although I did gain their permission (of course) because "when the rich detail of individual lives, the essence of individuality, is left out - our ability to understand these lives is greatly reduced" (Briggs 1998:2). Thus, I hoped that this detailed account would help describe the complex matter of state intervention when there are insufficient resources to correspond.

The above account is an example of how well-intentioned workers can make poor assessments of a situation and add stressors to a family in crisis needing supports. In many cases, C.A.S. intervention is necessary, or perhaps 'morally justified'. Unfortunately, many cases needing some intervention and support have not been responded to in an appropriate or 'least intrusive' manner, as the Child Welfare Act stipulates. This case exemplifies an imperfect system (within a larger judicially imperfect system) that is understaffed, overwhelmed with requests and ill equipped to take action that suits the circumstances. Furthermore, the communities which house the largest percentage of C.A.S. ' clients' have seen drastic changes to their cultural and ethnic make-up and values. The community requires staff who are knowledgeable of the different needs and perceptions of the non-dominant values that are presently before them. A common perception of C.A.S. (by Service Providers) is that when C.A.S. is 'called', a brief visit (with a warning) may result. Unless the child is seriously injured, some claim, little more is done. Support visits and follow-up assessments are precariously

inconsistent. Preventative supports are very hard to access due to the long waiting lists. Thus, such services are largely reactionary and dangerously subjective to personal bias. (Service Provider Interviews: Oct.27/99, Nov.6/99 and Parent Interviews Jan.10/00, Jan.14/00).

In my discussions with C.A.S. workers, statements were made that the guidelines for the workers and the powers given to the C.A.S. have become increasingly punitive and rash. Dedicated workers are quitting at high rates due to these perceived negative and destructive changes. The C.A.S. was often seen as understaffed and non - collaborative with other existing services in the past; the condition is now seen as far worse (Service Providers Interviews: Nov.6/99 and Feb.24/00).

Another example of the intrusive experiences that families can encounter when they seek out support services is exemplified in another situation I became familiar with. In this case, the parent lost custodial rights of his two children to the Children's Aid Society when his marriage broke down. This occurred because this parent voluntarily sought support from the agency, due to the difficult adjustment of raising an infant and a toddler alone and working. Contrary to his expectations (that the agency would provide some resource supports) the agency drastically disrupted the family unit by placing the children in foster care. This action was based on the subjective judgement of a worker who understood the father's emotional stress and lack of housekeeping skills as a sign that he was incapable of providing the basic needs of his children, as well as a direct danger to the children's safety. It took the parent over a year and a half to regain custodial rights of the children, through the dogged support of the community chaplain.

Having the children removed from the home was a debilitating experience for the father and involved constant assessments by 'the Agency' of the father's ability to parent. One of his

children drowned and was revived, during this period of foster care. The father regularly visited the children at the C.A.S. office during the year and a half that his children were 'in care'. He also spent many hours with lawyers and in Family Court. The children were eventually returned to the father, after his residence and supports were deemed adequate. This meant he had to quit his well-paying trade job in order to comply to the Agency's conditions of being home and available to the children, rather than have the added stress of shift work complicate his child care availability. He left his rural home and set up house in this Ottawa Housing neighbourhood. Here, it was felt (now that the father had a reduced income), was an affordable location that also had a neighbourhood daycare. Now that the father was on Assistance, he could qualify for a subsidy so that his children could attend. The children adapted well to their return to their father, but continued to have supervision visits from C.A.S., for two years.

The child who lost consciousness in the pool, while in the care of the foster parent, suffers from language difficulties that the younger child now mirrors. Initially the father had difficulty accessing a speech therapist; they are in short supply. His lawyer could not access the medical reports, relating to the accident, because he was told that they were lost. Eventually his child began sessions with a language therapist who was available through a government program. His other child will hopefully begin soon as well. Both children still display serious communication difficulties. A further concern is that language problems frequently lead to behavioural problems in social settings such as the classroom. A child that can not communicate well with his/her peers becomes frustrated and often develops anti-social behaviours to gain the attention that he/she needs (Service Provider Interviews: Sept. 17/99 and Oct.27/99). These

developmental problems may have been avoided if the initial response from the C.A.S. had been supportive within the family unit.

There have been other circumstances, with children with whom I have worked, where the workers felt their families were in desperate need of supports as they were under severe stress. However, in many of these cases, the concerns were responded to by a short warning visit, which drove the families into isolation and reduced involvement with other useful supports in the community. The CAS does not have the staff or volunteers to offer consistent supports that might have promoted positive changes for these families.

WHO LIVES THERE ?

All residents in this neighbourhood live far below the 'poverty line' defined by Statistics Canada, which defines poverty solely as a state of material deprivation. All of the individuals living in the neighbourhood face some of the social detriments that poverty frequently perpetuates or reproduces (Lalonde 1993:58, Coelho 1994:309). The majority are experiencing these factors personally; some are affected through close contact. The majority of the parents in this neighbourhood are single-parents (Service Providers' Interviews: Feb.24/00). Domestic violence, substance abuse problems, custodial battles, child neglect and abuse are issues that directly occur in the lives of the children studied in this research project, or they are aware that these elements are realities for families near by.

Ottawa Regional Housing Authorities estimate that 85% of the residents in this neighbourhood are visible minority immigrants or immigrants. Ottawa Housing's figures are based on information in lease documents and the files that they have for each of their units.

These documents show that the immediate neighbourhood is highly diverse culturally and

densely populated. The immigrants in this study came to Canada because of a harsh political regime, for economic reasons or simply with hopeful aspirations. Some had to flee his/her country of origin (Service Provider's Interviews: Feb.24/00).

In 1961, the neighbourhood I studied had a total of 315 immigrants. The demographic make - up of this community has altered markedly since then. In 1989, the neighbourhood was described as being composed of 50% immigrants and 50% long term Canadian poor (Service Providers Interview: Feb. 24/00). Over three hundred immigrants settled in this neighbourhood in 1996 alone (Canadian Census 1996: Tract 023 and Citizenship and Immigration 1997:75). Many of these immigrants entered the city with no recognized job skill or entrepreneurial initiatives. They required affordable housing until they could gain access to language training and jobs. Due to the shortage of affordable housing in Ottawa, many people new to Canada found themselves seeking shelter in an Ottawa Housing area. A large number of them, like all of the children who I interviewed, were initially housed in shelters. During their first year in Canada immigrants do not qualify for welfare. Until very recently, immigrants were not able to work for the first three years that they were in Canada. They were expected to find financial assistance through their sponsors (Service Providers' Interviews: Feb.24/00 and National Council of Welfare 1998).

A description of the 'ethnic make - up' of the area is offered here, for the purpose of gaining a more complete picture of the community's cultural reality. There are at least thirty - five (Canadian) Natives living in the neighbourhood. Over half of the residents are from Jamaica, Ethiopia, Somalia, Haiti, or from the Russian Federation and Romania. Other 'ethnic residents' include people from the Philippines and China. Residents, and Ottawa Housing

Authorities, state that Somalis are the largest group of recent immigrants presently living in the area (Ottawa Regional Authority Guidelines, Service Providers' Interview: Feb.24/00 and Citizenship and Immigration 1997: 3, 75 and Canada Census 1996: Tract 023). Clearly, a wide representation of visible minorities with a variety of religious and cultural beliefs are present in the community. Some of the cultural traditions, values or expectations (such as gender roles and religious observations) conflict strongly with the 'dominant norms' of Canadian institutions.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ECONOMICS

Presently, 80% of the residents in this subsidized housing population are receiving social assistance of one form or another. Twenty percent of the population are low-income wage earners, mainly one adult from a two - parent family (Ottawa Housing Service Providers Interview: Feb.24/00). Of those on social assistance, disabled persons represent 27%, single parents represent 48%, and parents with two children comprise 26%. We are also told that 60% percent of female single parents live in low-income households (National Council of Welfare 1996: 1,2,15,25 and National Council of Welfare 1998:5). Children represent 40% of the people living on social assistance, (Ricciutelli 1998:105).

In the neighbourhood, single persons, single-parents (with one or two children) or couples with two children, who receive social assistance, all live with an annual income that is only 40% to 60% of the 'poverty line'. Statistics Canada determines the 'poverty line' by assessing family size, composition and the size of community of residence (National Council of Welfare 1996:1, 2, 15, 25, Ottawa Regional Housing Authority 1999 and 1995 Statistics Canada Census Tracts). The table on the next page shows the amounts people in the lowest - income range receive.

	Welfare Allotment	Poverty Line
single person	\$6,809	\$16,061
single parent / one child	\$13,676	\$21,769
couple with two children	\$18,076.	\$31,862

(National Council of Welfare 1998:2)

Parents who are struggling with poverty often feel that they are treated intrusively and punitively for their efforts to break out of 'the cycle of dependency'. The term in itself implies blame, yet General Welfare Assistance (GWA) procedures clearly impose dependency. Parents find that many policies inadvertently limit access to educational or work opportunities. A parent, who participates in a training program or who works, pays Ottawa Regional Housing over four times the rent of a non-working tenant, with an equivalent sized family (Service Providers Interviews: Feb.24/00). A lack of affordable daycare is another common barrier for parents who struggle to relieve their poverty by obtaining training, education or work (Reitsma - Street 1993:8-10 and Service Providers Interviews: Feb.24/00).

A further complication of the dominant values that have shaped our national institutions is the stress on 'upward mobility, social competitiveness and possessive individualism' where the present fight for limited resources often takes racial tones (Rahim 1990: 32 - 35 and Davetian 1994:135). Although the children of this study do not understand the motivators behind such conflicts, they have witnessed hateful exchanges of this nature (Children's Interviews 2000:Mar. 11 and 18). For example, some longer-term residents complain about specific ethnic groups whose members obtained resources or a subsidized unit before someone who has been on 'the waiting list'. In other words, the newcomers are perceived as gaining preferential treatment.

Children are not always 'out of earshot', when these impressions are stated. In this sense poverty and racism can be intersecting conditions that some families in the neighbourhood experience, especially for those who are visibly different.

Parents' frustration levels are high where there is no perceived realistic path to improve their predicaments and can result in 'shorter fuses' in their interactions with their children. Patterns that children often adopt to cope with tension or trauma are fearful and overly obedient responses, or the opposite - behaviour which demonstrates detachment or an apparent lack of awareness of their surroundings (Service Providers Interviews: Sept. 17 , Oct.27/99 and Sinclair 1985:88-89).

A child is often aware that the parent feels stressed. The child may witness his/her parent with family or neighbours, regularly discussing their frequent and common financial and emotional frustrations. Most of the low - income parents of this study are immigrants, often exhausted from resettlement adjustments, over-work in low-paying jobs, and the uprooting of all that was once familiar to them. A parent is often distracted with concerns and common stressors of poverty, such as custody disputes, family problems or illnesses that other siblings are experiencing which can result in a child feeling a lack of security. Distracted in their worries, the amount of the parents' 'quality time' with their children can feel inadequate (Igoa 1995:40 and Larochelle 1992:109). The children in this study live these conditions and from this they develop their view of themselves and their world.

In this chapter I described the children's physical and social environment that may have an impact on the children's abilities to fulfill their lower developmental needs and transfer their attention and skill-building to the higher levels of needs defined by Maslow (1969). The

following chapter discusses each of these needs levels through an assessment of the obtained data from this research project.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHILDREN 'S EXPERIENCES IN POVERTY

This chapter is divided into five sections, based on Maslow's Needs Hierarchy, where the data gained through this research project has been integrated. As discussed previously, Maslow's child developmental process requires consistent fulfilment of one level of needs before a child can move to a new level of development criteria that the child must recognize and master. Maslow also believed that children need to experience qualities of justice, truth and beauty in their daily lives (values that are most clearly appreciated on the highest developmental level). However, Maslow believed that these elements are essential in each developmental level (Maslow 1969 and Hoffman 1996: 73-74). Below is an outline of these developmental stages, where the fifth level is the final stage of development:

Child's Hierarchial Developmental Needs

1. Physiological Needs: hunger, thirst, and sleep.
2. Safety Needs: security, stability, protection; freedom from fear and danger
3. Belongingness (Love Needs): companionship, family; affiliate with others; be accepted and belong to an identity group
4. Esteem Needs: to achieve, be confident and competent; gain approval, respect and recognition
5. Self-Actualization Needs: self-fulfilment and realization of one's potential (beauty, justice and truth values)

Adapted from Hilgard, Atkinson "Introduction to Psychology" 1975

Before the presentation of the children's experiences, at each developmental level, I first provide a brief summary of behaviours that commonly are exhibited when a child's needs are not

being met. All children experiencing stressful home lives, suffering abuses and those experiencing trauma or violence in the home will tend to demonstrate several of the characteristics listed below. In my view, the preschool and school-age children that I have worked with respond to the inconsistencies experienced when their Physiological, Safety and Love Needs are not being met, by utilizing some of the negative coping strategies listed below. More of these symptoms will be present in traumatized children, and at a higher frequency, than those in well-adjusted children (Sehkar 1999:1-8). Not only has their full development been delayed, it has also been corrupted by the preoccupations of their unmet needs and the negative response from the outside world to their negative coping methods. It is interesting to note that all these characteristics are rooted in Maslow's Physiological and Safety Needs. Particular symptoms tend to emerge at different ages:

Preschoolers:

Physical Complaints: stomach or head aches, sleep disturbances, insomnia, aggressive behaviour

Emotional Disorders: fear of the dark, resistance to bedtime, bed wetting, excessive separation anxiety, whining, clinging and anxiety, failure to thrive

School - Age:

Behaviours: staying close to home in the belief that their presence will control the violent (or traumatic behaviour) i.e. 'protect Mom', or the opposite behaviour (avoiding home as much as possible); become seductive or manipulative as a way of reducing tension at home; aggression; eating disturbances (hoard food or over / under eat)

Emotional Expressions: low- frustration tolerance; fear of abandonment; fear of releasing their anger, or of another's anger; distrust in their environment, especially if there are frequent separations; fear of being killed, or that they will kill someone else

(Sinclair 1985:88-89 and Sehkar 1999).

PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS

As noted in Chapter One, a diet low in fruits, vegetables and protein are standard for the children of this study (Service Providers Interviews: Feb.2 , Feb. 24/2000 and Oct. 16/1999). The ten children who participated in the interviews appeared to demonstrate that their physiological needs were not a constant focus, as Maslow hypothesized for children who struggle to have their basic health needs met. They appeared healthy enough. However, their appetites were insatiable during snack time in the music program, and during our pizza lunches. As well, they often asked if they could bring food home to their siblings, when there were 'leftovers'. These ten children may be a more privileged group, or their physical fitness is hard to assess from their visual appearance. However illness was frequent for many of the preschoolers who attended the programs offered in several low-income 'project' neighbourhoods where I worked. Some were robust individuals who seemed to succumb only to the usual childhood colds and sickness. Many, however, had the pale, sallow skin, sunken eyes and listless demeanor associated with high stress and inconsistent attention spans associated with poor nutrition and physical care.

Over the years of working with preschoolers in low-income neighbourhoods, I saw many examples of children struggling to have their 'Physiological Needs' met. Some hoarded food at 'snacktime', or seemed insatiable. I will never forget the four year old who we suspected of being in a very negligent home. One morning, while all the other children were playing at the

various activity centres, she was gobbling down a fist full of orange peels. This same child also demonstrated that her 'Safety Needs' were not fulfilled as her caregiver reported that the child had taken her eighteen month old sister over to the caretaker's in the middle of the night. These children wandered out into the cold winter night, in their underwear, apparently seeking refuge and security from this woman who they trusted. It is probably not surprising, if we follow Maslow's model, that these two children demonstrated weak social skills in the program. In fact they usually seemed disinterested in their peers. As Maslow asserted, children will not recognize or master a higher 'Needs level' when their lower needs are not consistently being met.

As previously mentioned, the children's physical environment also creates questionable conditions for maximum physical and mental health. The parks are scattered with garbage and the children report that there is "dog poo" everywhere. As well, a significant number of the children living in Ottawa Regional Housing high rises are diagnosed with asthma (Service Worker Interviews: Feb. 2, 24/00). Some of the interviewed social service workers wondered if the bi-monthly pesticide spraying in all of the apartments was not having some damaging effects upon the children's health. These applications are in an effort to eradicate the cockroaches that the children described in their responses. The bugs are so prolific that we caught an eight month old leisurely chewing on one in one of the preschool programs housed on the first floor of the high rise.

During one of my first sessions with them, several of the children spoke about the profusion of cockroaches in their present homes. One day they spoke passionately - for fifteen minutes - about their distaste of cockroaches. They spoke about the masses of dead ones behind the stove and the multitude of active ones in moist areas. They spoke of all the ways to 'treat

them'. They spoke about friends who had so many of them in their homes that they did not like to visit them. Their knowledge of the life cycles of cockroaches, where they could most abundantly be found and the general familiarity they held about them was significant (Children's Interviews: Mar.6/99).

Another remark made by one of the Ottawa Housing workers describes the severe difficulty and emotional stress that many parents feel in trying to provide basic health needs to their children. She reported that the most standard firstaid supplies that you will find in homes which are not assessed as 'below the poverty line', are absent in these households. "Baby aspirins do not exist upstairs [in the subsidized apartment buildings]; the children's clothes are all second hand and their meals are predominantly potatoes and pasta" (Service Worker Interview: Feb. 24/00). A parent who I considered very conscientious made a remark that underlines the frustration that many of them have expressed "providing one's children with nutritious meals regularly is impossible" (Parent Interview 2000: Jan. 11).

SAFETY NEEDS

Safety needs, rather than physical health, seemed to be more of a concern for the children in this study. Many of the descriptions of their peers in the neighbourhood consisted of accounts of bullying and physically aggressive encounters. An overriding pattern was that the children had difficulty feeling secure and safe in their neighbourhood. This focus on safety was particularly relevant for the children who had recently settled in the neighbourhood who had encountered more severe forms of violence in the past.

Most of the immigrant children with whom I talked seem to understand that their family came to Ottawa to escape their war - torn countries of origin. One of the Cambodian boys came

to Canada when he was two; therefore his knowledge is based on his parents' relayed stories. He told us of a time "when some soldiers came nearby, my mom hid with me in a tunnel with a rifle". His mom hid until the soldiers passed, then returned home to find their father trying to get into their house. The boy has moved eight times and also told us "there is a lot of army in Cambodia. The whole country is army - cause it's everybody - it's all over Cambodia. My Mom left first, my Dad stayed there". Another child added "there are a lot of wars in Africa". A girl from El Salvador explained that her family came to Ottawa because "there are no wars and it's not as violent" (Children's Interviews 1999: Mar. 6). It was also part of one girl's answer when she was asked what made her mom sad: "when she hears that someone in our family (back home) gets killed, it makes her cry" (Children's Interviews Mar.18/00).

As Nguyen asserts, the families of the immigrant children in this study are still struggling to satisfy Maslow's two lowest need levels. Many of them have suffered traumas, all have been relocated at least four times and chronic family problems were unfortunately part of the process of adjustment, for many of them. These stressors leave many children uncertain of their security (Nguyen 1987: 50, Service Providers Interviews: Sept.17/99 and Oct. 27/99). If discrimination based on their 'visible difference' or ethnic identity is experienced, then threats to their security may seem to be added handicaps. Sorenson (1992) asserted that 24% of the immigrants who are making recent socio / economic adjustments into Canadian life, have encountered discriminatory practices (Sorenson 1992:80-83, Pawliuk 1996:119 and Jordan 1996:13). The children did report encountering such biases, which I discuss in the section on their 'Belonging Needs'.

A worker who offers play therapy groups for preschoolers who have been 'traumatized' by war, abuse or a major incongruence in their lives, also believes that safety and nurturance

needs are the most important priorities for these particular children. At least in their initial healing process, these children are constantly assessing the safety of their environment and the reliability of the workers and other adults in their lives. She stressed that part of the children's healing process requires predictability and consistency in their surroundings, and a resolution of their Safety Needs, before they can concentrate on the demands of school work and social acceptance (Service Providers Interview: Sept. 17/99).

During the initial adjustment period, for the children in the study, the family unit still provided some familiarity. However, breakdowns in most of their parents' marriages and the disturbing accounts of war, told by family members, reinforced the impermanence of all things. Their sense of safety was not assured. Such preoccupations, as Maslow stated, limit the children's freedom to explore their social world and personal potentials - activities and priorities which promote fulfilment of the higher Needs Levels (Maslow 1969).

Peers

A loud and animated discussion developed during one of the interview sessions, when one child complained about the bullies and thieves encountered outside his home. He described many incidents in the schoolyard, where he was blamed for troubles that someone else started. He believed that these children 'pick on him' "because I don't want to fight". He expressed a lot of helplessness, in these situations. He stated that "the parents don't know what their kids do", and he doesn't know where they live. Other children described teasing and bullying in the school yard and believed that the teachers were not able to do anything. They reported that the teachers were often misinformed and ill - equipped to deal with these struggles. Furthermore, there seemed to be a belief amongst the children that the teachers, or adults in their lives, were not a

reliable source of help in these circumstances. The boy who initiated this topic stated that “maybe they [the bullies] had a lot of bad things happen to them in their life. A lot of people are like that....” One of the children he was referring to is an eight year old girl! So much for gender stereotyping! “I always get beat up. ..so I’m used to it. That’s why I stay at home, mostly...so I won’t see these kids...”(Personal Interview Mar. 13/99). This boy was prioritizing his ‘Safety Needs’ over his need for companionship, thus hindering his development in the Love and Belongingness realm of needs. Over the summer this boy moved away from this neighbourhood, so we could no longer follow his progress.

A white ten year old girl, who attends the music program, frequently comes home from school with accounts that she has encountered a particular bully at school who regularly violently attacks her. Last week she had a black eye. She is able to describe this bully in detail, and is very discouraged about the apparent inability of the school authorities to end these incidents (Mar.18/00).

One child had her bike stolen by another child. Another child spoke about his friends throwing rocks at him, causing him to fall off his bike. Another boy spoke about some children who wrecked his bike. Another interrupted a masked robber, who had just broken their window, and was entering her home. She “went to the basement to get a metal bar my father had shown me...to use if there was ever a need...” (Children’s Interviews: February 28, 1999).

During an immigrant child’s early adjustment into the community, threatening incidents may be internalized and outwardly expressed through behavioural problems stemming from anger, anxiousness or fear. For the child who interrupted the intruder, this may have been an upsetting reminder of terrorist activities in her country of origin.

Clearly their environment does not evoke trust. As Bond, Beleny , Weinstock and Lewis assert, where the children's safety is not secure, and all efforts by the adults in their lives have met with no effective solution, a stance of 'helplessness' (Lewis 1970) and a perspective of the "Silent Knower" (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996) can develop or be nurtured. An attitude that one's voice is worthless prevailed, in the children's accounts. The children in this study displayed attitudes of helplessness and seemed resigned to taking on attitudes of least resistance in their encounters with others.

Aggressive Adults

The child who had her bike stolen spoke about the public beating the boy received from his father for stealing the bike. Another child interrupted her and said that "a lot of parents are mean" (Children's Interviews: February 28, 1999). Such incidents/verbalizations support Maslow's notation that children need to experience justice, beauty and truth in their daily lives in order to develop positive social relationships, strong self-esteem and healthy roles in their adulthood.

A long-standing member of the family violence intervention field, Debra Sinclair, asserted in 1993 that 39% of London Ontario children experience family violence and commonly live in poverty. Nationally, 7% of Canadian children are sexually abused (Ricciutelli 1998: 106). Since reporting abuse within families is often avoided for fear of further violence, or the mother may fear that the father will leave with the children, these figures are likely low.

Children who are living in violent homes have a harder time 'standing up for themselves', or taking protective action as adults. Sinclair (1985) believes that victim behaviour is learned. Unless someone intervenes, the cyclic repetition of violence continues, cross-generationally.

Fifty percent of Ontario's offenders, who committed violence against people, were exposed to domestic violence as children (Ricciutelli 1998:106). However, Sinclair (1985) stressed that it is crucial that children experiencing these conditions understand that they will not necessarily develop to be violent adults. She believes that there are interventions that can likely help children avoid these outcomes (Sinclair 1985:87-88), although many children experiencing domestic violence are never identified or are unable to access existing supports. These isolated children commonly learn to suppress their feelings in family environments that have a fearful atmosphere. They learn that their parent(s) can not always be relied on to deal with the child's feelings, or the parent(s) may not always be aware of the child's emotions (Zigler 1998:349-352 and Sinclair 1985:87-88). Many normalize the violence they witness or experience in their lives (Bandler and Grinder 1978).

Children who have experienced violence, or other traumas in their home, often develop "hugely inappropriate coping skills"(Worker Interviews: Sept. 17/99 and Oct.27/99). For example, some of the children from violent homes constantly monitor their environment to assess their safety. A child may glance around regularly to be sure that the same people are present, and no 'risks' have entered the room. The child may keep a protective eye on his/her mother, fearing she may abandon him/her (Worker Interviews: Sept. 17/99 and Oct.27/99). In my work, I began to notice a pattern in preschool siblings who we suspected were living in violent homes. One child would often 'protect' a sibling when an adult spoke to her/him. The 'protector' commonly would answer for the sibling or run to his/her aid, in any situation that might present a perceived need. Furthermore, the 'protector' was not necessarily the oldest, he/she was often the child that we suspected as receiving the brunt of the violence at home.

These circumstances attest to Maslow's belief that children become 'stuck' in the Needs Level when 'Safety Needs' are not being met (Maslow 1969). These children were so obsessed with safety that their social interactions were avoided, abandoned or half-heartedly attended. These children are unable to develop and explore their social skills because their lack of trust and security dominated their thoughts. This can be exemplified by the conflicts and possessive battles over toys, for example.

Transference of Aggressive Resolutions to Conflict

Bond and her co-researchers assert that discipline styles relate to the parent's "Knowledge" level. If beatings are a standard parental response to misbehaviour, as the children of this study reportedly witness (Children Interviews: Mar.6/99), a child is more likely to use similar tactics as a parent. The 'Silent' or 'Received Knower' demonstrates a rigid view of how things are, and shows a lack of ability to negotiate, common characteristics in parents entrenched in long-term poverty (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-469). Lewis also believes that such family patterns represent negative coping strategies that can be reactions to the helplessness and lack of hope for a change in one's circumstances experienced through the 'Culture of Poverty'. Where hope for a better future is carried by the parent, as in transitional forms of poverty, victim attitudes are less common (Lewis 1970). This model parallels Bond, Beleny and Weinstock's description of the cognitive beliefs held by a 'Procedural Knower', or the more advanced reasoning frameworks which they defined (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:469-472).

Where a child has weak emotional control, intergenerational transference of such social problems are more likely to occur. The unhealthy coping patterns experienced in some family

situations commonly cause such a child to repeat partner choices, parenting styles and conflict patterns which he/she experienced growing up (McMillan 1996:381-384). Many children who witness violence in their homes learn that violence solves conflict. Most children in our society receive the message that physical force imposed by a person in authority, or who is 'right', is acceptable. For example, parents can hit a child for not thinking or acting in the 'right way'; 'bad people' are killed or beaten up to resolve conflicts in T.V. shows. Where children witness such responses at more frequent rates, they will more likely act out these messages (Sinclair 1985:71).

Bond, Beleny and Weinstock (1996) asserted that family problems are passed on to following generations because of the attachment patterns children learn in the home and the view of the world that is nurtured there. From this perspective, a child's concept of self is so damaged from adverse relations in the home that the child often carries negative self-concepts and relational patterns into all his/her relationships. Children who are abused, neglected or raised by alcoholic, bi-polar or depressed parent(s) are the most susceptible to these results and other social problems (McMillan 1996:385-386).

Two of the interviewees come from families with a history of violence. I am aware of this fact due to my familiarity with their case histories and my intervention work with some of the family members. As many researchers point out, these children often develop extremely difficult behaviours, expressed in self-destructive or externally destructive ways. They may commonly use violence to 'resolve' conflicts with siblings and peers (Service Providers Interviews 1999: Sept. 17 and Oct.27., Offord 1989,1995). When I asked the children what they would do if someone kicked them, most of them stated that they would kick them back. Two said that "I would kick the person back until they cry". When I asked them what they would do if someone

called them a name, they responded that they would call them a name back. "Some are bugs that you want to step on". Only two children responded more positively. One said "I would walk away and try to avoid them", the other thought that she would seek the help of an adult. Overall, the children seemed to believe it was best to react with equal or more severe efforts to hurt the initiator (Children's Interviews: Mar.18/00).

Overall, in the children I have worked with, children living in hostile homes tend to be extremely aggressive or extremely docile, with a penchant for occasional outbursts that contradict their usual apparent complacency. Those who did not demonstrate these two extremes exhibited other emotional problems, such as a strong inability to share their friends or a beloved worker; frequent expressions of elaborate fantasies about their lives or expressions of intense anger in situations that did not seem to match the extreme emotions attached to it.

The Children's Views of Their World

When I worked individually with the children to explore their sense of control in their lives, or whether or not they saw themselves as victims, I learned that they all seemed to view the world as being unpredictable and frequently delivering negative events. For example I asked them to finish sentences which allowed them to shape the story. I asked the children to write down their answers and not talk to their friends. One question was, "Two boys were walking to the store, something happened...what happened?" In this instance they all completed the sentence with a traumatic event. For example: "they were hit by a car", "someone beat them up", "they fell down". In another example, the children were asked to tell me what happened when a girl was babysitting. All but one reported violent or horrid events. Some of their responses were: "She killed the baby and buried it", "the house caught fire", "she dropped the baby", "she took a

knife and killed the baby” (Children’s Interviews: Mar.4/00). These responses indicate, as Bond, Beleny, Weinstock and Maslow assert, that the children in this study view themselves as having little control over their personal safety and as potential victims of outside events. This perception corresponds with the worldview of the ‘Silent Knower’, defined by Bond (1996) and her co-researchers, where individuals become passive reactors to those outside of themselves who are perceived as holding all the knowledge and power. Of course some of them have watched movies which had a story line that was similar to their answers, but most of us do not conclude from seeing such scenarios that these situations could happen to us. In fact, most of us are shocked as we go through life, when some negative occurrence happens. We believe that troubles and grief are elements that only happen to others. The children’s responses point to a view of the world where they are victims and have little influence or value (Children’s Interviews 2000: Mar. 6 and 13). Bond, Beleny, Weinstock, Lewis and Larochelle all claimed that this is a common perspective in people marginalised in long-term poverty (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:471, Lewis 1970; 60-69 and Larochelle 1992:105-110).¹

One boy announced, “once a man fell off the apartment building...bleeding. I asked someone to go into the building to get some help. Security came, then an ambulance...what would happen if that had been me?” (Children’s Interviews: March 6, 1999). This boy may be fearful that he may succumb to this himself, since he was the one most beleaguered by bullies. If the man ended his own life then this encounter reaffirmed that his environment is not a place

¹It also occurred to me later that a friend of the children had been struck down by a speeding car six months prior. This event may have still haunted them and reinforced the notion that ‘bad things do happen to good people’ (Children’s Interviews 2000: Mar. 6 and 13).

where problems are resolved, or justice and truth prevail. The community did not rally around to assist this person, or to protect the child - witnesses from the gruesome sight before them. The child may have come to realize the vulnerability of the adults in his community. This sad incident is imprinted in the child's memory. Furthermore, the boy likely recognized that hope and justice could not have dominated this victim's life, since he ended his life in such a desperate and public fashion.

The children's reports about late night intruders, mean parents, bullies and discriminatory incidents describe a threatening and insecure environment. They also reported acquaintances who have been, or were at the time of their remark, in a foster home. They also would casually refer to fights between neighbour's parents, that they had overheard or of which they were aware. The children seemed to recognize that security and safety can easily be disrupted, in their world.

To summarize, the data from this research can not be generalized to include all children in the area, but the information did shed light on the particular experiences of these children. My initial interviews suggested that the children did not like, but seemed to accept as natural in their present lives, the unsafe conditions of their parks, the aggressiveness of some of their peers, the possibility of theft and intrusion into their personal space, and the social despair that some adults express through violence or self - destruction. As such, their concerns with safety are validated and tend to take precedence over their ability to fulfill or satisfy Maslow's higher level needs of 'Belonging', 'Esteem' and 'Self-actualization' (Hoffman 1996: 73-74).

BELONGINGNESS AND LOVE NEEDS (PEERS AND FAMILY)

This preoccupation with issues of safety may explain why only one of the interview participants seemed to be confident and sufficiently effective in peer relations. He was popular

with the other children and showed compassion for them. He demonstrated confident leadership skills and had a joyful and respectful ability to resolve any conflicts that occasionally arose. The rest relied heavily on siblings, who appeared to provide a strong foundation for self-worth. This is at least the case in the interview settings and the community programs I participated in. For example, in the interview group there were three participants who expressed strong fear of their peers and two had such immense family problems that their motivation in the social realm was erratic. Some were afraid to leave their homes. When they did socialize, these particular children were shown acceptance and compassion from their peers - but their interactions were too irregular for strong growth at the 'Belongingness and Love Needs' level.

Poverty

Poverty is a barrier to satisfying Maslow's 'Belonging Needs' when children encounter peers outside of the immediate neighbourhood. One child said to me "a girl asked me....your parents are on welfare (they aren't you know...) how can you afford that in your lunch?" Another said that "just because I live here _____ isn't allowed to play with me. We used to be good friends...now she tells me her mom says she can't play with me" (Children's Interviews: March 13, 1999). These experiences tell this child that she is an undesirable playmate for her middle-class peers, due to her parent's economic circumstances. Clearly, these experiences challenge the child's sense of belonging in her peer group, and her sense of worthiness in society as a whole. Due to the judgmental attitudes that underline the received remarks, the child is faced with inaccurate and cruel perceptions of her circumstances, and their corresponding societal condemnations. Her peers from the neighbourhood, and participants of the focus groups, recognize the hurtful injustice of these experiences and the hierarchal values that exist in their

world (Maslow 1969 , Lewis's 1970 and Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996). In response to the social stigma they face, and other stressors, these children often adopt coping styles similar to those perceived in other family members, neighbourhood adults and schoolmates. Most commonly they incorporate strategies that they witness in their parents, and later their peers. Unfortunately, many parents struggling in this community have internalized (and passed to their children) the same message that they have received from society at large, that they are less valued (Larochelle 1992: 108). Because such societal judgements are beyond their control, they add to a sense of powerlessness in the children and create multiple barriers blocking the children's full developmental potential (Maslow 1969 , Lewis's 1970 and Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996).

When the child in poverty inherits shame, and fewer opportunities to explore her skills and individuality in the greater society, it is understandable that her development to adulthood will likely settle into what is most familiar and accessible. If this means a world of hostility, dysfunction and 'being less' she is lost to her full capabilities as an adult. As Vanier reminds us, children do not achieve true humanness or form a full identity in a solitary condition. It is through interdependence, belonging and acceptance of weakness that a child can reach full potential (Vanier 1998: 41).

Intolerance of Difference

The children that I interviewed, and work with regularly, did not express a perception that they had experienced any discrimination based on their ethnic identity until we came close to the end of our weekly interview sessions. Naturally they would not want to discuss their deepest hurts in a group setting which lacked trust, so it is now obvious that these issues remained hidden

until they knew me better and were able to privately write about their experiences. Until they felt safe and accepted, the children 'normalized' or repressed their painful encounters of this nature (Bandler and Grinder 1978:48-52). For example, when they reported incidents of bullying or alienation in early interviews they attributed the behaviour to "not having any friends" or "some people are mean" (Children Interviews: Feb. 28 and Mar. 6/99). In many ways this may have indicated a healthy coping strategy in social situations because where discrimination was not stated, it may not have been the cause of the ill-treatment. They may have been exercising good judgement to not jump to racist conclusions.

During these first interviews, the children described the teasing that they had experienced as targeting their appearance - "if someone wears glasses, is fat, has "sideburns", how your body is shaped. They make fun of you, call you names or make fun of your clothes, attitude, religion or race" More than half of the children mentioned experiences with discriminatory insults (Children's Interviews: Mar.4/00). The children seemed to have an understanding that teasing is usually a sorry example of a bully who has a limited imagination and therefore targets anything visible to feed his compulsion to hurt others.

However, during the later written responses and one of the last group interviews, several of the children talked about being teased for their 'race' or "because they don't like Black people" (Children Interviews: Mar.11/00). One of the oldest respondents told me that " Some adults were racist when we moved here. They told us to get out of here, we don't want Black people. They stopped...maybe because they realized it wasn't going to affect us"(Children Interviews: Mar. 11/00).

When I asked the children how they felt when they first lived in Ottawa, they responded with the following remarks: “left out”; “lonely”; “shy...but then I got a friend... and that helped”; “scared” and “our neighbours were racist at first, but then they stopped”. As immigrants, they certainly have experienced a sense of being marginal members of their society. Since their family life (and all that was once familiar to them) has radically changed, the satisfaction of having their safety and belonging needs met has been severely challenged. As well, the children may be carrying fears about their safety since they are not part of mainstream society.

Another child spoke about a continuous struggle she faced with several of her peers in the playground. At age eight, she did not, possibly could not, describe these incidents as anything other than “meanness”. Her Somali identity may have been a contributing factor to the maltreatment, but she did not articulate such a suspicion (Children Interviews: Feb 28/99).

Some of the children are learning to accept that negative elements are not necessarily due to their own shortcomings. Since they have found a sense of belonging in some of their peers, Maslow’s view would suggest that these children have a secure enough stance at the belonging stage to explore their self-esteem needs, if they have not already begun to do so. However, consistency of needs being met at the lower levels will determine if they are successful. Others may, however, remain at this level of adjustment and adopt negative coping styles (described on p.p. 63-64) As Maslow notes, children who do not feel that their ‘Belonging Needs’ are being met will remain stalled at this level.

Impact of Parental Perspectives

One mother spoke about “always telling [her child] that if people are being mean to her, they do not deserve to be her friend” (Personal Interview: March 12, 1999). Another soft -

spoken immigrant parent was reflecting during an interview about the reasons her daughter had not formed any lasting friendships in the four years she has lived in the neighbourhood. I wondered myself, as this child is a very kind and gentle individual. During the music program, she seemed hesitant and often appeared to feel 'outside' the group. This parent believes that the parent neglect she sees in the neighbourhood relates to the aggressive anti-social behaviour that some neighbourhood children exhibit, thus affecting her children's community environment. "Children do whatever they want; they are not mannered; they are not respectful of themselves, of others or of their property...the parents don't do anything"(Parent Interview: Jan.14/00).

One parent suggested that children do not learn to respect themselves or others, in the neighbourhood, because their needs and individuality are not respected within their own family unit. She attributes some of the 'misbehaviour' that she witnesses in children in the neighbourhood as relating to the parental neglect that she also perceives. For example, she described a neighbourhood family that struggles to provide for their seven or eight children's needs, which she acknowledged must be difficult. She stated that the children are not appropriately dressed in cold weather and seldom have shoes in the summer. She could not understand how this could be overlooked by the parent(s) when there is a used clothing store in the neighbourhood where items are reasonably priced. Further to this, the school age children are left to their own devices, too frequently. She stated that these children are often left unattended to roam about the neighbourhood until all hours. She also is concerned because her children are often targeted by these children (as well as many others) who appear to have a penchant for bullying and destructive behaviour. She reported that the teasing often related to ridicule about her five year old handicapped son (Parent Interview: Jan.14/00).

Another parent mentioned her concern for a friend of her son. She had witnessed the mother in a drunken state, on several occasions, when she came looking for her son (Parent Interview: Jan. 10 and 14/00). The risk factors of poverty, poor health, learning disabilities or an alcoholic parent have all been identified as the most recurring elements in the life of a child who develops damaging outcomes (Schorr 1991:440 and Larochelle 1992: 107). This mother holds this view as well, and reflected on the social and emotional problems that children experience, like her son's friend.

Because of the erratic nature of a family life that continually adapts to the actions of an alcoholic, a child's safety and nurturance needs are commonly inconsistently met. As well, a child may avoid bringing peers to the home due to these unpredictable conditions. Thus, the child frequently does not prove to be a reliably available companion since his/her needs are often secondary to the immediate condition or consequences of the alcoholic parent. Furthermore, the nature of the alcoholic parent's dependency (and blaming family members for the active drinking) is often internalized by the child. This frequently results in weak self-esteem and negative coping strategies.

The mother whose child had been unsuccessful in maintaining a close friendship speculated on whether some of the behavioural problems that she was witnessing, in neighbourhood children, related to the loss of engagement time some of them held with their single parents. She had observed that the greatest number of the neighbourhood children live with one parent. She wondered if many of the neighbourhood children might be jealous of her daughter, because they are a two - parent family and do many activities together on the weekend (Personal Interview: March 12, 1999). There is some support for this view as 36.2% of the

children in single-parent Ontario households, are experiencing some of these difficulties. For Ontario children living in poverty, 35.7% suffer from the deterrents to full development associated with long-term poverty (Mustard and McCain 1999: 94-98).

In the case of the ten interview participants, only one lives in a household with two parents. In fact, of the twenty-four music program participants, only one lives with both parents. The majority of the preschoolers that I have worked with, as well, were in households headed by a single mother. In many of these families, one of the main social deprivations is a lack of extended family supports. Thus one of the common barriers for many of these children's successful attainment of their 'Belonging Needs' relates to the conflicting responsibilities placed on the mother's schedule. A lack of financial resources means that hiring someone, on such occasions, is impossible. For example, some mothers struggling with sole-parenting sometimes would not get their children to school due to 'the baby being sick' or 'the baby was napping'. Often doctor's appointments for immunizations, a sick child, or her own ill-health, resulted in a child not participating in a community event for his/her age group. Many parents did not allow their young school-aged children to go alone to the community centre. The mothers usually took the child, and met the child afterwards. Appointments, and delays in the waiting rooms, can conflict with a mom meeting the school bus, especially when one is relying on bus schedules. Few single parents in this neighbourhood have a vehicle of their own. Many a time, a child felt abandoned since mom had not made it back from her bus trip with the baby, or due to other administrative appointments.

The Impact of Immigration

The issues that are particular to the interview participants, based on their immigrant identity, add more dimensions to the children's fulfilment of their 'Belonging Needs'. The children's accounts, and those of many parents and community workers, reminded me that newcomers often feel overwhelming rejection or indifference around them. The children attested to an unresolved tension between groups at school and in their community (Children's Interviews 1999: Mar.6 and Mar.13). These stressors, as well as different cultural, climatic and family changes can be overwhelming. The more stressors felt or encountered, the more difficulty the child has resolving emotions and uncertainties based in norms and expectations. Exhausted and frightened they hold their emotions inside, a 'silent stage' where children become extremely good listeners while making sense of all the newness in their lives (Igoa 1995:38-39).

Our most recent immigrant participant demonstrated such social difficulties through his solemn and distant positioning of himself in the music classroom. His fearful quiet nature further isolated him from his peers' attempts to interact with him. He could not focus on what was offered to him socially because he struggled with his safety and comfort levels constantly. His 'newness' to the neighbourhood and his unsteady social position with his present peers, seemed to overwhelm him. He had not been able to replace his best friend from his home of origin who he so vibrantly described to me one day. It became more apparent how alienated he really had been initially, after he developed a sense of belonging within the group. He became much more active and animated once he had a secure network of playmates. He was at times a little mischievous and silly, characteristics that were too buried to have been expressed before.

His adjustment to assimilative attitudes, where he felt expected to shed familiar cultural practices and language, inevitably manifested itself as a struggle within the boy since the security of familiarity was gone. Children who feel it is necessary to keep fundamental parts of themselves from the host culture, no matter how outwardly sociable they may appear, are isolated (Igoa 1995:50,63, Hanscombe 1994 and Coelho 1994:311). In the above case, the transformation of his personality was very noticeable when he felt comfortable with all of us. Unfortunately, severe family problems later built to a point where he withdrew and became isolated from the outer community again.

Some of the other immigrant children who participate in the music program are recent immigrants who also demonstrated painfully withdrawn behaviour. They too lacked a friendly network at the start of the year. They were completely quiet during social interludes and fearful when someone approached them for conversation. This naturally made it more difficult for those of us who wanted to ease their adjustment. Over the course of ten months, most gradually developed some confidence in the group, and eventually offered their input in conversations. These particular children, during their initial encounters with a new community, held back and strove to learn the right 'Way of Knowing'. Those who had emotional traumas to reconcile took longer to demonstrate any comfort in their social environments. For these children, their adjustment was very much like the world of Bond, Beleny and Weinstock's 'Silent Knower' or 'Received Knower', dependent on their length of time in the neighbourhood and their level of language adaption (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:470-476). Either way, the program gradually became a much noisier event as the children's sense of belonging developed and the newcomers felt more at ease to express themselves freely. The security offered within their

family unit can sometimes take less importance as their social domain broadens, offering them opportunities to become more secure within themselves about who they are in this broader context. As such, the music program acted as a facilitator in fulfilling what Maslow termed as 'Belonging Needs'. The children felt accepted and their lower needs were no longer a preoccupation within the program setting.

Family

Almost all of the children participating in this study have spent time with their families in settlement shelters, or in a women's shelter. The majority have lived in war torn places and lost family or friends. Some have witnessed horrific violence and most have felt the fear of not having their 'Safety Needs' met. Some have the complicated pain of having an abusive parent. One girl disclosed that she spent some time in a women's shelter, due to her parents' separation soon after their arrival. She revealed that:

"Mom and Dad got in a fight, after Thanksgiving...in the house. Mom wrote a note and taped it to the door, I didn't know why.. Then we moved to the shelter. Me and my sister had our own bed...my mom had a separate bed, with a fridge beside our bed. At Christmas we had a party and I got a watch. I expected to get something else. My sister got a pony, the kind that you put water on their eyes and they open. I got four books, and my sister got four books....and chocolates".

One boy left his country of origin with his mother, "My Mom left first, my Dad stayed there". He lived in a Montreal shelter for two years and said that he and his sister would often remain with other adults, "while my Mom and Dad would go somewhere. Mom and Dad didn't

like it because we were all in one room - the rooms were too small." Domestic violence and family breakdown eventually overcame this family, as well. Another area mother, whose son plays with this boy regularly, said that this boy's mom often came to their house, drunk, looking for her son (Parent Interview: January 21:2000).

Another boy also experienced the dual stressors of parental break up and having to leave his country of origin. He said " first we lived at the YMCA when he came to Ottawa, and then in a shelter. There was no T.V.... after two months, I was in school and around. At Christmas, I went to a different school."

Poverty, and the stress associated with living in cramped conditions which lack privacy, are also factors that contributed to the family breakdowns that occurred in these children's lives. Some came from large homes. Their parents were comparatively affluent, in their country of origin, compared to their present circumstances. Now, they often have no resources to help create distractions from their stifling nearness to other newly arrived families (such as going to a movie or museum). Frequently, the parents' time is focussed mainly on trying to find work, obtain language training, or a more desirable living arrangement. Those who are working outside the home often are gone for long parts of the child's day, and there is no extended family nearby (Service Provider Interviews 1999: October 25 and Nov.6). Many of the children that I have known, in such circumstances, demonstrate behaviour that I have come to associate with feelings or situations of neglect. For example, they may be 'clingy' or extremely manipulative, in order to gain attention. Clearly their 'Belonging Needs' are not being sufficiently met.

One parent stressed that having extended family near by was not always a support for her. She and her husband have had to cope without this commonly perceived support, because

assistance was not reliably offered by their extended family in Ottawa. She stated that their adjustment to Canada has been very hard. The couple has experienced several separations due to the stress. She believes this has been an added difficulty for her children because it involved more moves and emotional adjustments. Their daughter could not establish a close friendship for four years, and has only recently come to feel that she has a best friend who she met at school. Clearly, stress and disruptions in this girl's family hindered her ability to master the elements that allow one to fulfill Maslow's 'Belonging Needs'.

Some of the children in the study experienced family separation when they came to Canada; others remained together initially, but the stresses of their new life initiated separations. Most continue to have contact with the estranged parent, through letters or occasional visits. Some have more reliable contact than others (Children and Parent Interviews 1999). The confusion of sporadic relationships with estranged family members, or the death of certain members, meant that the children needed to integrate these new realities into their understanding of the world. They needed to reaffirm their sense of security within their family unit in order to have their belonging needs consistently met. However, the strained settings of the neighbourhood and their family unit have been real challenges to their overall adaption to their new world and to satisfying their 'Belonging Needs'. Their individual experiences of having their physiological, safety and belonging needs met determines the resulting rates and measures of their developmental focuses. The children with the most consistent and positive interaction with their estranged parent (or extended family) demonstrated the most secure stance, in terms of having their safety, belonging and self-esteem needs met. Those who were frequently involved with extended family, and who had siblings to play with, were also most secure in the settings where

they were observed for this research project. Maslow's assertions that the fulfilment of one level of needs is necessary to gain awareness, and master skills required on the next developmental level, are applicable to these children.

Another element in this discussion is that immigrant children, like most children who are experiencing family separation or loss, often 'pick-up' the emotional state of their parent(s). Homesickness, anxiety, frustration, grief or helplessness are common expressions. For example one of the children moved to the neighbourhood, with his family, a year and a half ago. They are from a distant and culturally different world, compared to urban Canada. Since they first arrived in Ottawa, three years ago, the family has lived in several homes. The mother is isolated and lacks a network of support. The neighbourhood, unfamiliar language and cultural change has been especially hard for her. The boy has had little to say during our discussions, except that he missed his place of origin. He became very animated, one day, in his description of the places and the times he remembered there. He seemed overly anxious with how his mother was feeling when she came to our performances and took a passive role in group situations. He seemed to fear doing anything that might be considered "odd", by his peers. he kept himself separate from the other children for many months. Eventually he developed friendships and his personality 'showed through'. Bond and her associates might assert that he was observing and learning about the 'right way of knowing', as a 'Silent' or 'Received Knower' would do (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:470-476).

Where the children's choices or interests conflict with the norms of their homeland, the dynamics are extremely difficult for parents to resolve. An example of a clash of values was expressed by one Muslim parent who feared that her children would adopt 'western morality'.

Consequently, the children could not participate in events that she felt were contrary to her traditions. This caused problems when the children wanted to go to coed swimming programs or events that conflicted with their traditional holidays, for example. Within this family context, the children's 'Belongingness Needs' become a tug-of-war between maintaining acceptance in the family unit and developing positive relationships with their peers.

Mitigating Factors - Resilience

The lack of time with their primary parent is eased, for some of the children in the study, by the presence of their grandmother in the home. She is seen by these children as a reliable adult in their lives, who helps with cooking and takes care of the children. "I love my grandma because she is patient with us and always takes care of us and we can see her every day". Grandma provides an unconditionally loving adult in their daily lives, alleviating feelings of a lack of safety security or belonging, that they reported. Their successful transition and healthy development is more likely where the children are given the direction of a caring adult who is with them for more hours of the day. It was clear in the children's reports that the grandmothers provide predictable nurturing and guidance for them. Many busy parents struggle with providing this consistent direction and the grandmothers ease this problem. Most of the children reported that they had some responsibilities in their home; they help with child care and cleaning (Children's Interviews: Mar.4/00). Sole-parenting can make this aspect of parenting difficult to oversee, thus grandma increases the consistency of expectations and rewards placed on them. As such, grandparents may act as surrogates by alleviating the impact of an absent, inaccessible or violent parent, contributing to meeting the 'Safety' and 'Self-esteem Needs' of the children.

Another helpful element in the lives of many of the immigrant children, in this study, is the critical emotional support gained from their extended family. This type of support can provide a strong foundation for easier social adaption (Igoa 1995:40). Researchers claim (Beeman, Turner and Avison 1997) that immigrant parents who feel that they have balanced and reciprocal supports, are less likely to become neglectful. Parents who lack these supportive networks have more difficulty providing a nurturing environment for their children. Furthermore, there are some indications that these absences can raise the likelihood of child-neglect (Beeman, Turner and Avison 1997:436).

One ten year-old girl spoke a lot about visiting with her cousins, playing in the park, or going to the pool with them. Discussions were animated about the many times spent with her cousins. Her mother's boyfriend eases the economic struggles by bringing them desserts making them feel special and deserving. Presently, this girl is responsible for doing the family's laundry on the first floor of their apartment building, and demonstrates inner strength which arises from her family dynamics. She visits her Dad, on Saturdays, and visits with her relatives in the city. "if you see a man in a red car, that's my Dad - he looks like me....I'm like my Dad a lot...we fool around a lot, when we go out for dinner..." Here, some semblance of an on-going relationship with the estranged parent has been maintained. Such reliable consistency helps this child have both her belonging and self-esteem needs met.

She also spoke about her uncle... "my Mom's youngest brother is coming, because he gets his visa in three days. I haven't seen him in four years. Mom told him to come before winter ends so he can experience it and know what to expect!" Mom's a chef: "...we're going to her graduation soon.... my uncle, her best friend, my aunt that lives in _____ is going to pick

them up. We're all going to the college. After, we're going to come home and have a holiday - whenever I go to my aunt's I sleep in the basement....whenever I go there they play tricks..."

One ten year-old boy spoke a few times about his family. His father remains in his country of origin, tending to their farm. "It's been four years since I saw my Dad. I'm going back in the summer to see him. My big brother is in Kansas city. My Mom and two brothers are here." One of his brothers is in the Reserves at Dow's Lake.... "where there are boats, and you can walk around a bit. He's in training My cousin comes every summer. He's probably not going to come this year because I'm going on vacation - with my Mom". His other brother is going to see their brother who lives in Kansas.

Studies largely support the view that parents who accept the dominant culture ease the integration experience of their children (Abu-Laban 1991:21,22, Hanscombe 1994, Pawliuk 1996: 118 and Das Gupta 1994: 63,66,67). However, this can decrease the child's sense of security in the initial stages of social integration, because fulfilment of Maslow's 'Safety Needs' requires continuity and reliability. Consistent with that, the children in the Moslem family, mentioned earlier, tended to follow their mother's expectations so that their 'Safety' and 'Belonging Needs' were met; but recently, one of the adolescent daughters has challenged and ignored some of her mother's expectations. This signifies both a common developmental phase of her age group and mastery at the levels of development that she was previously focussed upon. She now has the confidence and security to explore the world from the motivators most dominant in Maslow's 'Self-esteem' and 'Self-actualization Needs' levels.

School - Academic Success

Developing self-confidence, social competence and feeling accepted in the child's school environment plays an integral role in the process of nurturing strong identity and moral development (Maslow and Hoffman 1996:72-74, 89-96). However, many factors challenge the children in this study.

First, as indicated earlier, poverty in itself serves as a developmental deterrent in the school realm. Researchers assert that all ethnic or cultural identities, including white majority children, are equally affected by academic difficulties associated with poverty (Munroe - Blum 1989: 517-518, Coelho 1994: 309, Kivel 1996:186-188 and Offord 1989:2). The specific difficulties identified by these researchers, and experienced by many of the children of this study (and their siblings) are learning difficulties, low receptive vocabularies, low attention spans, high levels of anxiety, aggressive behaviours, hyperactivity and 'conduct disorders'. Furthermore, the difficulties that their parents are experiencing often compound the child's struggles.

Studies also show that children living in poverty are likely to remain in their socio/economic status throughout their lives. Since a higher percentage of children living in urban poverty will drop out of high school (over two times the rate of their peers from higher income homes) these patterns may be further understood. The average years of education for adults living in long-term poverty in Ottawa is no higher than 8.4 years, no matter what their ethnic identity (Ross 1994: 1-2, Offord 1995:1-20 , Schorr 1991:437-440, Kazemipur and Halli 2000:179-183 and Mustard and McCain 1999:35).

The children who participated in the interviews demonstrated a lower level of writing skill, compared to other children their age. During the second time that I asked the children how they felt about the music program, I was able to obtain written answers from the entire group.

This exercise, as well as the other interviews where I asked them to write their answers, made me aware of their poor writing skills. Most of them had very messy writing with many grammar and spelling mistakes. In this sense, the children exemplified the scholastic difficulties that many children in poverty experience. Clearly, they could benefit from some added instruction in this skill, yet the teachers stated that this difficulty would be surmounted through practice and was not a high priority during the other adjustments that the children were making (Teachers' Interviews 1999: Oct. and Dec.).

I agree with the teacher's concern about placing too many outside demands on the children during their initial settlement adjustments. But, in the case of the children of this study, they have had several years of adaptation into Canadian schools and their writing weaknesses are more an example of an under-resourced school that cannot adequately address the developmental needs of the children of this low-income 'project'. Many of these students need more opportunities to practice and develop their writing skills. This often does not occur because of the disruptive schedules that dominate their households, or due to the lack of language or writing skill that the parent would then be able to share. Since the parents are not available or skilled enough to assist their children with homework, or able to obtain the needed resources to stimulate their academic enthusiasm, the children are at a disadvantage, based more on structural barriers, than individual ability. Even the children who have validly assessed learning disabilities can not obtain enough 'special assistance' due to the school's budget priorities. These statements by teaching staff indicate that most of the children experiencing difficulties that stem from their immigration, or compounded life-stressors, are not expected to succeed at the level of their peers, and are often receiving the message that they are not capable or equal to their peers who have

more success in this realm. This is another message that they do not belong in the greater society, and are somehow less worthy. This message has damaging consequences for the 'Self-esteem and Belonging Needs' of these children (Teacher Interviews 1999: Oct 26 and Nov. 14).

The studies of Hanscombe (1994) and Coelho (1994) have shown that although language acquisition is important to these types of students, social integration and academic achievement rate higher. However, language skill clearly influences the children's other priorities. The present practices of our schools provide fewer opportunities for immigrant children to establish friendships with the other students. The immigrant children, whose skill in the dominant language of the school is weak, have reduced exposure to their new peers from the dominant culture, since they are usually placed in a separate classroom or part of the classroom for portions of the day. This practice is seen as an efficient way to help the children progress quicker in this area, but often adds to their difficulty in finding their place within the broader social climate of their school. Their curriculum is often diluted while they are learning English. For the children of this study, this causes some to feel frustrated by "baby books", or to feel they are behind their classmates (Children's Interviews 1999, Hanscombe 1994 and Coelho 1994: 311). As such, the above practices exemplify restrictions to the children's mastery of their 'Belonging' and 'Self-esteem Needs'.

Curriculum

As the major adult figure in the classroom, the teacher can assist or detract from the child's ability to fulfill 'Safety', 'Belonging' and 'Self-esteem Needs'. For example, the teacher's perception of each student's needs is influenced by his/her own ethnic identity, class, personal experiences and biases. In the classroom, if a teacher holds a view that poverty is either

a consequence of the structural design of our society, or a personal fault of the individual. This personal understanding shapes his or her view of the developmental needs of the children in the classroom, who live in a low-income home, and shapes the expectations placed upon them. Furthermore, these views will shape the actual program design and curriculum content which the children encounter daily (Coelho 1994: 309).

One concern for some immigrant parents is that education allotments and curriculum design mirror dominant European culture, and the experiences of the middle and upper class. Ideas developed in Greece, Rome and Europe predominate, with a diminished glance at other cultures. Many children do not recognize their own cultures, or have them validated, in the classroom. Furthermore, many do not see faces similar to their own in the ethnic and cultural identities of their teachers . What this means to one Somali girl is not clear but she did state: "We have one Black teacher in our school, she is the ESL teacher" (Mar.18 /00). The realities of colonialism, the dynamics of the western nations and the 'third world', racism, exploitation of class, gender or ethnicity are seldom mentioned. This also presents an incomplete depiction of the children's reality (Kivel 1996: 186-188 and Coelho 1994: 307-311).

Even at a young age, children can identify the distinction between themselves and the larger majority who hold the power. This can cause children to question their own identity and develop a diminished view of their ethnic group, creating drastic consequences on their sense of belonging in the school setting.. The children in the classroom who come from the dominant culture or class may consequently develop an exaggerated sense of importance of their group. In the same sense, the curriculum does little to help them understand the experiences of their 'new' classmates. Both are losers. Images in the text-books, statutory holidays and cultural celebrations

give strong messages to the students about what, and who, their school, city and country value. For example, one child in this study pointed out that there has been no presentations in her four years of Canadian schooling about her particular geographic, historical or cultural heritage (Children's Interviews 2000: Mar.6). Thus, the absence of relevant material honouring their cultural experiences is a clear indication of who is expected to participate. Students who are valued by the greater society perform more successfully in school. Those who do not feel this validation begin to lose their sense of self, and either pattern themselves on the 'other', or develop destructive coping styles (Coelho 1994:307- 311, Igoa 1995: 18,79 and Esling 1995:25).

Schools and Social Belonging

Often an immigrant child will become overwhelmed with what appears to be impossible adjustments still to be made, rather than focussing on the strength that they have already exhibited through their adjustment. As well, one's exceptional knowledge in areas that seem to have no place in the new country, can be undervalued. For example, I learned through considerable coaxing that one shy and withdrawn eight year old girl in this study speaks four languages. She demonstrated embarrassment about these skills, rather than pride. Perhaps her need to 'belong' has caused this present hesitancy to talk about her abilities, which are probably rarely found amongst her peers.

At school, children will often gravitate towards peers from their own cultural group. This is especially the case for children who have not developed an adequate competence of English or French (Coelho 1994: 307). Here, some fulfilment of their 'Safety' and 'Belonging Needs' may be observed. Judging by the social clusters in the community programs, the school age children tend to cluster toward their same language group, if not their specific ethnic identity group. The

most recent immigrant children tend to rely on their siblings or forge alone in social environments. Thus, 'Safety' and 'Belonging Needs' were somewhat met through their family, and those who they perceive as having shared experiences. This tactic provides some comfort amidst much confusion.

The most recent immigrant children in this study demonstrated that they are often unwilling to confide in service providers, or Canadian children. Most of the participants came from Africa or Asia; Canada's climate, language and the neighbourhood itself, are far removed from the cultural familiarity that the child had known. Thus, their demonstrated shyness, reserve and hesitancy can be understood as distress (Coelho 1994: 305).

For an immigrant child, a teacher can be a strong bridge to the host country. A child that discovers he/she can make a friend in the new environment will be more able to develop friendships (Igoa 1995: 79-80). Naturally I saw the newer immigrant children relying on a particular staff person when they developed their sense of belonging a little, but still had no reliable friendships. However, most school teachers have large numbers of students, thus restricting opportunities to assist the adjusting immigrant child.

Some teachers interpret an immigrant child's 'silent stage' as unwillingness, social deviance or unresponsiveness. Adjustment is made more difficult for the child if some teachers are not aware of his/her cultural norms. This can cause the teacher to misinterpret behaviour. For example, a Filipino child from our music program demonstrated that she knew that it is 'culturally correct' to be reserved and unassuming with strangers. Her instrument teacher, however, interpreted her demeanor as disinterest and an inability to learn. Fortunately, the child was not present when the teacher made these remarks! A discussion ensued at this time with

other teachers. We were able to help this teacher recognize that there were likely deeper issues at play, such as a struggle within the child based on not having her safety and belonging needs consistently met. Furthermore, the child's lack of practice time during the week may relate to her awareness of the teacher's initial view that she was incapable or a 'bad student'. An examination of these factors influencing a child's ability to explore her individual interests and skills, has been helpful for this teacher. According to Maslow and Lewis, most children aspire to what is expected of them (Hoffman 1996: 70-75 and Lewis 1970: 60-70).

An Inuit child in our program had been raised with traditional values that discourage intense emotional expression. True to tradition, the Inuit child sometimes laughed at embarrassing or painful circumstances and joked about extreme emotions (Briggs 1979:1-14). These reactions were misunderstood by new peers and teachers alike. Once this cultural tendency was explained to the offended parties, tension was eased and a raised interest in the child's background developed. The raised awareness of the cultural meaning attached to the child's behaviour helped both the teacher and peers to feel motivated to ease the child's task to have the 'Belonging' and 'Self-esteem Needs' met.

At the level of daily experiences, immigrant children face several barriers to successful integration. As previously noted, the majority of children learning English are placed in special classrooms, for part or most of the day, separate from the main school population (Coelho 1994: 307). Many move from class to class. Many parents claim that this practice detracts from the learning process (Parent Interviews 1999: Oct. and Dec. and Teacher Interview: Oct. 26, 1999). For some, it causes the child to relive uprooting experiences (Igoa 1995:6). Streamlining immigrant children into 'special classes', away from their peers, for language or other academic

support is often perceived by the immigrant parent as complicating the tendencies of children to lose sight of their already accomplished skills, to undervalue themselves and to urge them to shed traditional cultural practices, in the hope that it will ease their social acceptance (Parent Interviews 1999: Oct. and Dec. and Teacher Interview: Oct. 26, 1999). This practice also reinforces 'ethnic clustering' which in this neighbourhood increasingly contributes to conflict between groups, once children become adolescents with less adult supervision. Thus, the social world of the students does not appear to have sufficient supports to teach the children to respect 'difference' or abolish negative and discriminatory encounters.

One teacher remarked on the extreme exhaustion that immigrant children face during their transition. Occasionally she has allowed immigrant students to sleep at their desk, believing it was one way she could help the child deal with emotional strain and feel supported by the teacher, while raising awareness in the other students about the difficulties of being 'new' (Igoa 1995:50-54). I saw this as helpful for the child to gain fulfilment of his/her 'Safety' and 'Physiological Needs', as well as the 'Belonging Needs'. By the teacher permitting this behaviour, she was demonstrating that the child was accepted as an individual. I see this initial flexibility of the teacher as a significant step toward urging the child to feel that this level of needs can and will be met, thus the child can eventually move to the self-esteem level. Furthermore, her approach represents an ability to provide the child with the 'Self-actualization' (or 'Being Needs') that Maslow asserted is crucial at all levels of development. She recognized the child's individual needs and was fair about the expectations that she placed on the child. I believe that this is an important value to nurture in her students. However, other teachers I spoke with, who also work with some of the children in this study, can not incorporate such flexible

expectations in their classroom. Some of their children are behind in their academic work because of absences while they were in a woman's shelter for abuse, or in foster care due to family crisis. Also, individual adjustments to the child's work were perceived by other children as favouritism (Teacher Interview 1999:Oct.26).

Collaboration of School with Community

One role that Community schools try to fill, is to counter the lack of non-academic skill-building opportunities found in the majority of low-income 'projects'. This also provides much needed time with supportive and positive adult role models for the children. The schools are the center of community interaction, extra-curricular classes or sports, fund-raising activities, community fun nights or recreational activities for low-income families (Offord 2000). Unfortunately, parent involvement is less vocal in the neighbourhood schools. Thus, schools in the communities where Ottawa Housing projects dominate the population are often those most in danger of funding cuts and closings due to School Board reorganizations. I believe that there are many factors which contribute to less involvement by parents. Certainly some parents adhere to the views described by Bond, Beleny, Weinstock and Lewis (1996 and 1970), where they think that their priorities and concerns will not be respected. Another cause relates to their worldview where they assume that when their child is having academic difficulties, then it is a flaw in their child's ability to 'fit into the system'. Further reasons for parents lack of involvement are child care needs and lack of time due to work or training classes. For many of the immigrant parents, there is also the issue of language competence.

Related to the 'Received Knower' or 'Silent' parent's views, a 'lack of voice' in communicating his/her children's academic needs contributes in some cases to the quality of

teachers and programs in the school. I have witnessed extreme 'racist' attitudes and stressed teachers in the three schools where we regularly programmed for ten years - an unfortunate circumstance where the children's academic needs are reportedly high, and student populations are very multicultural. In one of the schools, a pedophile was teaching Grade 6; his history was known to the parents in the community. It took another charge against the teacher to eventually have him removed from such close proximity to children. Many workers feel that the quality of some teachers placed in schools serving these neighbourhoods, is a consequence of these populations being assessed as more expendable. Perhaps this is true, but many teachers in these schools are excellent. It is likely that if the less effective teachers' awareness were raised about the needs of the children in their classroom, and the low-esteem of many of their parents was understood, than better communication might result through such collaboration.

ESTEEM NEEDS

'Esteem Needs' are closely associated with the previous level. Consequently this domain is difficult to assess in regard to the specific elements that nurture self-esteem. However, Maslow identified a motivation for building self-esteem that relates to providing opportunities to children that allow them the freedom to explore their skills and interests. Through these experiences, children can master skills that satisfy their 'Self - actualization Needs' (Hoffman 1996:73-74). Thus, it was important in my interviews to identify what domains the children felt most comfortable exploring. From this information, I learned that most of the children struggled with their self-confidence in settings beyond the protected environment of the community programs that were part of the research. Some struggled even within these relatively safe environments. In

this light, their present model of skills and adult roles are largely found in their immediate neighbourhood.

If one has never been outside one's corner of the world, one has no reference point to assess life opportunities and options. By 'reference point', I am referring to the work of Merton (1968) and Tepperman (1994) who asserted that we are all motivated to change our conditions in life if we believe it is possible. If we recognize a discrepancy between our 'ideal' and our 'real' life and we know someone from our identity group of which we feel we are a member, who has reached this 'ideal', we will feel motivated to strive. When we do not know of anyone who we consider to be of our 'group' who has progressed towards the 'ideal' - then striving for an ideal life goal may not occur to us. In this instance we are likely to ignore the desire (Bandler and Grinder 1978: 47-51, 83-86, and Kazemipur and Halli 2000:150-151). This model reinforces the importance of Maslow's 'Belonging Needs', and how the fulfilment of them acts as a motivator to reaching one's potential. Thus, knowing where the children decide 'they fit' is of paramount importance in terms of what they will envision for themselves in the future.

Broadening the Children's Perceptions of Self and Their World

Programs offered within the neighbourhood are a main vehicle to broadening these children's views of their own capabilities and to explore and master their higher needs levels. The activities also provide opportunity and consistent fulfilment of their 'Belongingness Needs'. Those near the children's homes are naturally more fully and regularly attended. Parental support has also proven to be beneficial for regular attendance in the past. For example, any child in the neighbourhood could have enrolled when the music program was first offered because it is free. Most of the children who attend initially did so because their parent's perceived it as an

opportunity for their children. Aside from their hours at school, much of the rest of their week is left open and many of these hours are filled with television (Music Participants' Interview: Mar.18/00).

Many of the children expressed appreciation for the opportunities that the music program gives to them. Specifically the children mentioned how much they enjoy learning the new music material in choir, as well as the chance to learn to play an instrument. Many of them also stated that they liked most of the adults and children in the program which provides them with more friends and interesting adults to rely on (Children's Interviews: Mar.18/00). Thus, I believe that the regular attendees of the music program are enjoying this opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills base. Due to the popularity of the few activity programs available in the neighbourhood, however, and the limited enrollment capacity, I don't think the majority of the children in this district are able to explore and develop their capabilities consistently. Whenever we offer extra activities there is usually a strong response. This example indicates that although there are many barriers to them gaining fulfilment of their lower needs and to achieving a positive position with their peers, the difficulties are not unconquerable.

Deterrents to Consistent Participation

However, confidence to explore their skills wavers. Many of the children hesitate to express their individuality in the music program. In particular, most were concerned with the opinions of the group, and the groups' interests. They did not demonstrate this level of conformity during the individual or group interviews, so it is clear that they are still struggling at the 'Belonging Needs' level found in less 'safe settings'.

One of our music participants is an example of a child who is unable to flourish and explore his higher needs levels. He attends irregularly because he visits his father on alternate weekends. He does not attend every Saturday that he could. He comes from a large 'step-family' that is presently headed by a single mother. They live in cramped conditions in one of the Ottawa Housing row houses. The boy moves hesitantly and quietly, rarely smiling or initiating conversations with other participants or the adult teachers. Although he has been praised and encouraged (because he seems to have a 'natural talent' with his instrument), he seems to lack the motivation or freedom to pursue his skill and interest. A bump on his head caused us to worry about his circumstances at home, and his fearful closed face seemed to indicate some deep emotional struggles as well. Residents have informed us that he is experiencing many of the family difficulties common to poverty. He also is in an environment where adolescents form ethnic clusters and extend hostility toward ethnic identity groups different from their own.

The two boys, whose social status changed when they arrived in Canada (mentioned earlier) points to the importance of parental worldviews. They were very young when they came to Canada, not equipped to make economic and status comparisons, however it became obvious that a contrast had been pointed out to them. As well, it is likely that the boys have encountered some negative attitudes toward their non-white appearance, since some of their peers have expressed such hostility at different times. In this sense, these boys faced several elements which challenged their self-esteem and their developmental potential. However, one of the boys appears to have strong self-esteem, many friends and a flexibility of spirit that Maslow attributed to persons who are on the path to self-actualization (Maslow 1969:35 - 36). He appears to be well-equipped with traits that are often identified with resilience and adult success, stemming

from not being situated in inter-generational poverty where striving for self-fulfilment can be consequently seen as unattainable (Rutter 1985:608 and Lewis 1970).

The mother of this 'better adjusted' boy is a very attentive mother. She works outside the home, which may be a positive factor in her own feelings of worth. She certainly demonstrates a more positive vision of their circumstances by her long-range planning and her efforts to encourage her children to explore their skills in their social environment and within themselves. Those traits match those that Lewis stressed as being crucial indicators that people were not in a 'Culture of Poverty' (Lewis 1970).

The self esteem of the second boy is less solid. This boy's lack of confidence may be related to unspoken traumas that he has lived. His friendships are peppered with disputes and shifting alliances. His mother is perceived by some other parents as having a drinking problem, which is not unknown to the children. Certainly her alcoholism creates stressors that are very difficult for the fulfilment of the boy's 'Safety' and 'Belonging Needs' in the family unit. Her negative coping style means that the home is dominated by her addiction. Studies confirm that compounded stressors impact in a predictably negative way (Laroche 1992:108, Health Canada 1997: 262-263, Offord 1995:18-20 and Canadian Institute of Health 1997: 17). A lack of consistency, truthfulness and unpredictable moods of the addict, are some elements commonly experienced. In such environments, a child's feeling of self-worth is frequently diminished. Developing a reliable sense of security in this boy's life and mastering social skills with his peers are also seriously diminished. Fulfilling his 'Belonging Needs', developing strong self worth and healthy coping strategies have not been nurtured in this child (Maslow: 1969, Lewis: 1970 and

Bond, Beleny and Weinstock: 1994). These examples demonstrate the interplay between home/family life and neighbourhood intervention techniques.

There are many barriers to accessing the limited skill-building opportunities offered. The cost, location or time (when these activities are offered) are often difficult to negotiate for the single parent struggling in poverty. For immigrant and / or low-income parents, long work days or shift work are the most common forms of employment and these time constraints hinder children's participation, as well. It may mean that older siblings need to babysit and thus are unable to participate in activities with their peers. A lack of transportation is another common deterrent. In addition, families suffering in unceasing domestic difficulties are often isolated or unaware of the limited opportunities that may be nearby and affordable (Service Providers 1999: Nov. 6, Service Providers 2000: Feb. 2 and Feb. 24 and CPRA 1998:1-8).

Other deterrents to the children's freedom to explore their capabilities can be seen where some of the children are expected to assume many adult responsibilities. The time allotted to these tasks can take away from times with their peers, or for their homework. One child in our group who has an excessive number of chores at those times when activities are offered in the neighbourhood, often missing the music program due to her responsibilities in the laundry room. She also misses instrument 'practice times' during the week, as she cannot come and use the piano because she is often taking care of her younger sister. Her attendance has been erratic. Other children in the group also miss learning and recreational opportunities because they have to babysit younger siblings, or go on family shopping trips (since Saturdays are when many parents try to do these tasks) (Service Provider Interviews: Feb. 24/00).

Others have a low frustration tolerance level, or their distraction with their 'Belonging Needs' restricts their commitment. For example, a twelve year old boy who attends the music program has recently lost interest in his piano lessons because his younger sister's skill surpassed his. As this became apparent, he became increasingly disruptive in the group. We encouraged him to explore another instrument so he might excel on his own. He has switched to taking guitar lessons. However he does not feel that he is progressing quickly enough and his attendance is becoming increasingly unreliable. In addition, his particular single parent environment means that his father cannot always support the child in being consistent in attendance, due to shift work.

Another participant attended every second weekend because of the custodial arrangement of his parents. After he had missed a number of program mornings, I went to visit him at home to let the boy know that we missed him, since he had not been to the program for a month. He seemed to think I was angry about the 'borrowed' guitar that he had at his home. As soon as he saw me he quickly said "you want the guitar, it's upstairs...I'll get it". I have experienced such quick responses before, to alleviate trouble, in children from violent homes and I wondered if the negative accounts from residents who knew the family were indeed accurate. Sehkar (1999) clearly identified such responses as being associated with trauma. The boy's focus seemed to be predominately concerned with not getting in trouble (his safety) and it did not seem to occur to him that I was there because I cared about him. He did attend that week; he has not attended since. It is clear to me that his focus is on other things; and judging by his unhappy demeanor, it is possible that his concerns are focussed more on safety and the apparent difficulties in his home life. It is also possible that support by the adults in his life to commit to the program is

inconsistent. As discussed earlier, this is another common characteristic found in stressed families living in neighbourhoods such as the one in this study.

Self-Image and Poverty

I asked the children what 'being poor' means, as I wanted to see if they perceived themselves as being a member of this category. I was able to receive the views of only six children about this issue. All six did not see themselves as poor, in fact they said that they did not know anyone who was poor. Some described 'being poor' as a materially disadvantaged state, for example: "poor means not having a lot of money to spend on food and clothes". Some described poverty in a manner that seemed to designate some responsibility on the individual living in poverty, for example: "poor means you probably dropped out of school and now you have no money and no where to go", or, "yes, _____ she is a lesbian" (Children's Interviews: Mar. 11/00 and 18/00). In the children's world, this is the supreme insult. These attitudes can be the child's alone, or can possibly be views that the child gained through an adult in his/her life.

What is of particular interest to me in this discussion is the children's apparent ignorance of their comparative lack of wealth - as compared to their middle-class schoolmates. Thus, the particular children who were interviewed on this day have no reference with which to compare their present circumstances. They did not express a connection between poverty and self. As a result, it is likely that they attribute the behaviour they receive from others as personally evoked rather than done to their stigmatized status. If so, this is clearly going to impact on their self-esteem needs, if it has not already done so.

If the children in this study perceive the lifestyles on television as realistic, you would think that they would have a developing sense of injustice about their material life. However, it

appears that they have resolved that these depictions of an average family found on T.V. are irrelevant to their own circumstances. It is encouraging that these children did not seem to see themselves as lacking, on that day anyway. However, the week before, several of the children told me that they feel sad when someone gets something that they have wanted. This statement can be interpreted to mean that they do feel deprived sometimes. However, it is difficult to discern whether these remarks reflect 'normal' childhood impressions and emotions or deep-seated feelings of injustice. At any rate, they do not express dissatisfaction about their material life, in ways that we would typically expect.

It appears that the children's wavering contentment and dissatisfaction with their material world can be seen as typical processes for children working out their self-actualization needs of beauty, justice and truth. If the children discern, as they age, that their material world is consistently and comparatively 'less' - they will need to resolve these realities as beyond their personal traits. Thus, they will have to resolve their interpretations of justice, beauty and truth so that their self-esteem needs are not left unfulfilled by interpretations that they are 'less worthy' or capable than their middle-class peers. If they do not, then the models of Maslow's and Lewis support a concern that these children will suffer from low-self-esteem and possibly develop negative coping strategies common to long-term poverty (Maslow 1969 and Lewis 1970: 64-70).

When the children reported that other children in the neighbourhood stole things and hurt people maliciously, they indicated to me that they had a moral sense that these actions are wrong. The children also described some individuals from their peer group who were "coo-coo", "mean", "rude" or who they described as disrespectful of others. Therefore, despite the imperfect elements in their nurturing ground, the children in this study demonstrate an awareness

that rudeness and theft are not socially acceptable characteristics.

The above information is encouraging. However, some parents who I encountered in my years of work in 'tough low-income neighbourhoods' confessed to nurturing 'toughness' in their children. Some parents felt that their children needed to be tough to survive in their neighbourhood. This strategy mirrors Lewis' assertions about the views held by parents in a 'Culture of Poverty' (Lewis 1970: 67-74), similar to a 'Silent' or 'Received Knower', and explains how negative coping strategies are transmitted intergenerationally and across neighbourhoods (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 464).

In contrast, the children who participated in the interviews have been urged to transmit respect to others. As Bond, Beleny and Weinstock would assert, these children are demonstrating a "Constructed Knower" perspective where an individual accepts many perspectives and does not feel threatened of losing one's place in one's social environment, when a different attitude which contradicts their own moral values is encountered. Although this does not prevail in all areas of their lives, at this point this strength is developing in them. The children are capable of adhering to their view and accepting difference in the context of another's life. Their 'Way of Knowing' demonstrates an ability to hold to their values and not feel compelled to develop dominant social styles that they view as negative. These are important skills for success in fulfilling a child's developmental needs on this level, and provide a basis for their exploration of the Self-Actualization level (Hoffman 1996:73-74). Lewis would most certainly conclude that these particular children are not entrenched in views that are common to long-term entrenchment in poverty, where helplessness and negative coping styles prevail (Lewis 1970:48-68).

SELF-ACTUALIZATION NEEDS

In Maslow's view, experiencing truth, beauty and justice in one's daily life is essential for full moral and self-actualized fulfilment. Moral maturity is a phrase that can be hotly debated, therefore I am providing a definition which meets our needs here. Moral maturity can be viewed as personal integrity which enables an individual to transcend reactions based in fear, need, or wishes. Responses to an incongruence are most commonly made through abstract reasoning, in a respectful and non-violent way. Morality means fairness for all participants in a particular event (Gilligan 1980:517-518). The elements of truth, beauty and justice are independent, shaping the child's view of him/herself and the world.

Resolving Incongruencies - Defining Justice / Beauty

The remarks made about the children's low-income status and ethnicity exhibited to them the fact that people's lives are sometimes judged harshly and unfairly. Clearly they have encountered attitudes that are not based in respect (Children's Interviews: March 13, 1999 and Mar. 11/00). They reported that these attitudes had offended them and expressed various ways to address such circumstances. Although some of them will need to develop less aggressive solutions than those that they suggested, these children expressed an understanding that these attitudes are contrary to moral maturity.

In terms of social justice, I sought the children's awareness of their economic state, their self-esteem and their sense of a just world. Larochelle asserted that the encountered offensive messages have destructive consequences on a person's self-esteem and one's ability to function fully in the world (Larochelle 1992:107-108). From the children's interview data, I have learned that more conversations would be required to discover whether or not the social realities of poverty ('having less' and 'being less') are understood personally as developmental deterrents.

However, children can and often do question the 'fairness' of how their parent(s), teachers and peers treat them. One child reflected on the way her teacher singled her out, when general disruption occurred in school. Another was afraid to go outdoors alone because of the bullies that targeted him. Many of the children shared experiences that they had with members of their peer group that resulted in them recognizing that they are being treated as outsiders and not valued (Children's Interviews: Feb.28/99, Mar.13/99). As discussed previously, their inability to perceive/define 'poverty' may mediate these types of experiences leading them to view self as the source of these actions, rather than their social status.

Another obvious deterrent to developing a sense of justice relates to being a target of a parent's frustration and abuse. The children did not volunteer any personal information in this regard but they did report incidents that they had publicly witnessed which caused them to conclude that there are many "mean parents" in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, several of them could reflect on the excessive aggression or other anti-social behaviours of some of their peers as somehow connected to the 'culprit's' harsh or neglectful home (Children's Interviews: Mar.13/99).

However, one example obviously perplexed the children who were close to a child who was placed in a foster home, for several months. This event was precipitated by a violent confrontation that erupted between the parents. They all seemed to have heard varying accounts of what led to this placement, and their friend's demise had obviously been thoroughly discussed between them. They were concerned for their friend, worried that the child was lonely . They saw their friend as a kind- natured child that was unfairly situated in a home that was plagued with alcoholism and inconsistent nurturance. The fact that this child did not utilize mean and

aggressive behaviour contradicted their understanding of why others did (Children's Interviews: Dec. 4/99). This example challenged their understanding of justice, which Maslow stressed must be a consistent element to nurture in children to help them adopt socially harmonious values, a goal of Maslow's self-actualization level (Maslow 1969 and Hoffman 1996: 73-74).

Children who have been in a violent home and begin adjusting to a new environment with the non-violent parent, do not immediately shed the negative coping styles that they had developed. Familiar reactions to stress often reliably recur at times when the child feels threatened or upset. This happened in the family of one of the interview participants. The fourteen year old sibling was charged with assaulting an antagonist and was placed in a group home setting by the authority of the courts. This broke the privacy bond within the family and disrupted the continuous care and relatively safe nurturance for the removed child. Since there were insufficient supports to assist the family in the healing process, the negative event occurred while the boy was on a waiting list for an anger management therapy group. As well, the financial stress of their new life, without the abuser, had resulted in the child not being able to participate in the sports program that he had previously been dedicated to. Thus he had lost a healthy stress release and the bonds that he had developed there (Worker Interviews: Oct.27/99). This child sees his father free and unpunished for the violence he has inflicted on his mother and himself. He, in contrast, has been harshly judged and blocked from the healthy coping strategies he was developing. There is no sense of justice for this boy or for those in similar circumstances, who cannot gain the support they need to re-establish and heal.

As well as the cockroaches discussed earlier, the children were very upset with the dogs who roam the neighbourhood. Unattended, they chase the children, and some of the children

have been bitten. Two occasions were described where a “bully” instigated the neighbour’s large dog to chase a number of the children. Three children, from my small group, have been bitten in the last year. Several compared their present neighbourhood, to one’s they had lived in before. It seemed clear to them that “people don’t care about picking up the “dog poo”, even though it is the law”. Furthermore, when I asked them why the dogs were loose, and not on leashes, they said that “only little people take dogs for walks, and they get away” (Children’s Interviews: Mar.6/99). My interpretation of this scenario is that the children see the adults as not taking responsibility for their animals, and possibly their children. As such, their sense of trust in those with power may be in doubt, as well as their sense of justice. The safety of children, the needs of pets and the laws based in mutual respect are clearly not highly regarded by the adults described in these reports made by the children. Since these events were dominant in the children’s thoughts, their observations seem to be common occurrences, rather than rare events. As such, the dominant values that are being transmitted (or demonstrated consistently) to the children lack the essential elements for self-actualization, and show an apathy toward others.

I also examined the amount of beauty in the children’s lives, through their descriptions of their neighbourhood. The parks cluttered with garbage and hazards, mentioned earlier, furthers the sense that these children live in an environment that is not respected or conducive to health and safety. These conditions may suggest to these children that a different set of moral values are attached to their lives - as opposed to their middle class peers. This in turn can raise issues of justice and self worth, where these practices of environmental neglect are the norm in their lives. Furthermore, where the children do not generally see adults demonstrating responsibility toward their pets, moderation in their parenting styles or exhibiting community responsibility for the

condition of their area parks - a very different value system may be presented to these young children. If the conditions in the community reflect a lack of interest, energy or motivation in the adults, Lewis would suggest this is characteristic of the 'Culture of Poverty' (Lewis 1970). Using the model of Bond, Beleny and Weinstock (1996), it would be uncharacteristic of mothers, typically in a 'Culture of Poverty', to even consider appealing to community members to take pro-active action toward the physical conditions of their neighbourhood. Thus the children are also unlikely to gain access to physical surroundings designed to satisfy their beauty needs.

Paralleling Lewis's views (1970), if the children do not participate in interdependent systems where respectful relationships are nurtured and valued, their eventual adult moral codes will most likely settle into what is most consistently presented to them. Based on the above accounts, and much research, this may result in intergenerational patterns that limit their own possibilities (Reitsma - Street 1993, Larochelle 1992 and Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996). Ultimately, parents and adults who have been judged as 'less', by greater society, often internalize these perceptions and live as they are viewed. A fear of this researcher is that the children of this study, unaware of the broader social forces behind their circumstances, will likely strive to meet the norms around them to satisfy their 'Safety', 'Belonging' and 'Self-esteem Needs'.

Future Goals / Truth

I asked the children about their long - range adult aspirations, and activities in which they would like to participate. Specifically, I asked them what they wanted to do when they were adults. The children seemed to perceive adulthood as a time of personal power, and a time when

they would get rid of bad people. During this discussion, they talked about using weapons to destroy, or “monster trucks to run over bad people” (Children’s Interviews: Mar. 13/99). I had encountered this perception in the past; and other workers have, as well: the children’s answer to the injustices they experience (Service Provider Interviews: Feb.2/00). I could not rule out the possibility that these approaches to solving problems may be ones that they have heard in their own homes, seen on television or noted in their previous countries. The notion that attitudes are transmitted from parent to child may indeed explain the origin of these violent ideas, at least for some of the children. However, these vicious solutions could also be derived from video games or from people in their neighbourhood. Certainly they had developed an understanding that violence was an acceptable way to deal with injustice. The fact that it was a fully agreed upon solution gives such ideas more social acceptability and a strong likelihood that the views will not be discouraged by their peers, who have a strong influence on their moral development.

On a more positive note, several of the immigrant children talked about getting what they clearly viewed as status jobs, or ones which could bring them wealth. For some of the children, these reflections may represent their understanding of a life in their homeland where their parents seemed wealthy. The goals of being a doctor, a computer technician, an accountant with a PhD seemed to reflect a belief that they can aspire to whatever they wish (Children’s Interviews: Mar.11/00). It is also clear that they aspire to have occupations that they do not readily recognize in adults in the neighbourhood. Perhaps these adult goals have been nurtured by their parent(s).

Several children who said that they wanted lots of money when they grew up may believe that in their adulthood they will have more skills or abilities than they presently encounter in many adults in the neighbourhood. Another possible explanation may be that they

have been told that their family will eventually have more financial freedom, through the cumulative efforts of all its members. This would be aligned with reports that immigrant families tend to gain average incomes within 10-12 years of their arrival in Canada. Certainly they have been nurtured to believe that they can achieve their goals (Beiser, Hou, Hyman and Tousignant 1998: 32-36).

Whatever influences may be attributed to the children's future plans, their ideas did not seem to represent a state of mind where they saw themselves as lacking power at all. However, only when they achieved adult status could they claim it. As adults, they seemed sure that they could have a job as a movie star or a renowned artist; they could have expensive trucks; they could "fix things" that seemed wrong in the world. Thus, their perception of themselves as adults of the world, or perhaps the adults presently in their lives, are perceived as having power. Clearly they saw money as obtainable in their adult lives, enough to have influence and to make the choices they wanted. In other words, they believe that they will achieve these goals (i.e. gain justice).

My concern is that although they may believe that their current situations are part of 'the process' now, how will they cope if their aspirations become unobtainable? As they grow older their perceptions of their options will likely change. The truth is, based on the findings of Bond, Beleny and Weinstock (1996), Larochelle (1992), Reitsma-Street (1993) and Offord (2000), that the children in this study are being raised in the multiple risks of poverty and will most likely encounter much narrower options for themselves than they presently foresee (unless our social institutions change). Due to the unequal opportunities they had while maturing, and the negative influences that they daily encounter in the neighbourhood, their sense of justice and beauty may

become shaped by disillusionment and bitterness. Where they have experienced abuse, intimacy and beauty may soon be seen as detriments. Or, they may see beauty or love as commodities to manipulate, in an alternate attempt to reach their aspirations. Incongruencies they encounter must be resolved, thus different meanings may become attached to what is inaccessible to them (Bandler and Grinder 1979:22). They may interpret their limited options as the result of a personal flaw and a statement of their worth. In this sense, their need to belong will have to be met outside greater society and their self-esteem needs may suffer. If they adopt some of the negative coping styles that Lewis (1970) and Bond, Beleny and Weinstock (1996) associate with intergenerational poverty, then violence, substance abuse or helplessness may eventually dominate their lives. Maslow's needs of acceptance, self-esteem and self-actualization may never be met, in view of present research (Larochelle 1992, Reitsma-Street 1993, Kazemipur and Halli 2000).

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATIONS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE CHILDREN'S LIVES

Culture of Poverty

Most of the children with whom I have worked are too young to partake in debates about the reasons of poverty, society's reactions to it - or how theories about 'having less' and 'being less' might influence their 'healthy development'. Initially I questioned whether or not many of them were too young to reflect on the concept of poverty meaning 'having less' and 'being less', although I believed they were experiencing these conditions. In fact, I had developed a view which saw the children as victims of poverty where their parents were stressed or overwhelmed with economic, physical or emotional obstacles. Their compounded stressors and reduced opportunities seemed to be predetermining failure in their full healthy development and future possibilities.

Transitional Poverty

What I have learned , from the ten interviewees, is that most of them seemed to be relatively content individuals who saw themselves as having a secure place in their family. This was a comfort to me, although I must stress that the informants are a very small sample of the neighbourhood and perhaps too young to recognize the institutional barriers they will likely encounter in their adulthood. I believe there may be children in the program who are nurtured by 'Silent' or 'Received Knowers', or experiencing dysfunctions common to the 'Culture of Poverty'. However, since the majority of children in the neighbourhood presently are immigrant children, the responses do reflect a strong possibility that the majority of the children in the target area are a very different population than described by Lewis' model a 'Culture of Poverty'

(Lewis 1970 62-69). Nor do they demonstrate the worldview that is described as 'Silent' (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-470). At least, for the children who participated in the interviews, their perceptions represent growth toward the higher levels of 'Ways of Knowing' the world (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996) . This points to a transient process where there is hope, and through appropriate supports their future aspirations may be reached.

Having resolved where the participants 'fit' in the presented models of poverty, the specific needs of the children became more identifiable. Still, I needed to explore the children's perceptions a little deeper to further clarify their developmental barriers. Through the questions that the children answered on paper, I learned that none of them identified themselves as 'being poor'. However when I attempted to determine what their definition of poverty was - what 'being poor' means, a striking pattern appeared. Some of the children defined poverty as "not having a lot of money to spend on clothes and food". The views of Larochelle (1992) and Lewis (1970) suggest that the children's responses mirror a view where poverty is solely viewed as a material condition ('having less'). Other responses were more aligned with a view that understands poverty as a condition with material and social problems. Not having formed an analysis of poverty's institutional components, they still placed some responsibility for a person's economic deprivation upon the individual. For example, one child said: "poor means you probably dropped out of school and now you have no money and no where to go." This response could be seen as a reflection of the view that people who are poor 'are less'. Within the children's incomplete understandings, this is a blaming perspective that often gets internalized in the individual because it is commonly encountered in the public spheres of one's life (Larochelle 1992), as well as in some municipal and provincial debates concerned with poverty. This particular child may

have adopted this blaming viewpoint held by significant adults in her life, who used this particular remark as a motivator to strive hard at school!! Thus the negative depictions of individuals in poverty are often unintentionally portrayed, reinforced and transmitted (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996).

Another interesting component of this discussion with the children was their answers to my question- “ Do you know anyone who is poor?” All the children answered “No”! I hope this response reflects satisfaction of their lower level needs and that they feel that they are well provided for, and not in a seriously disadvantaged state. Perhaps they do recognize discrepancies between their ‘ideal’ and their ‘real’ life. If they are aware of their families’ lack of economic wealth, it may have motivated them to answer as they did due to embarrassment, although they certainly did not appear to be embarrassed. Poverty may not be recognized because their peers in the neighbourhood are economically on a relatively equal footing, although they are less privileged than some of their school mates. However, they do not demonstrate an awareness that they, or the other participants, live in sharp contrast to the economic and social circumstances of their school mates. Only where the children have been insulted with these social stereotypes, as in the example of the child who is not allowed to play with anyone from the target neighbourhood, has this awareness been raised. They may be struggling with the ‘blaming ideology’ and their own self-esteem. However, overall the children in this study did not present themselves as helpless, and they have strong aspirations to gain the education needed to achieve their adult goals.

The children did seem to have a stronger awareness than I did at their age, of the more negative elements in our society. I tried to determine whether this might be negatively

influencing the children's views of their life- circumstances as a reduction in opportunities, a problem their middle - class peers did not have. I did not ask them directly if they felt this way; I attempted to examine their views through the messages that arose during their conversations. It is likely that more time was needed to answer this question, one worthy of a later study.

Justice / Discrimination

Perhaps the most devastating difficulty for the children who are 'visibly different' is the racism that still is encountered in their daily lives. As I stated earlier, the children reported that they had not being initially welcomed into the neighbourhood. They also spoke of incidents with their peers at school and closer to home. For example, at a recent children's program in the local community centre a seven year old stated "there are too many 'black' kids here". The child was taken aside and told that the realities of skin colour do not impact on a person's character, and that his remark was hurtful and should not be expressed ever again. However, shortly thereafter, the boy stated that "the 'black' kids shouldn't be allowed, they should go back where they came from".

A worker who immigrated to Canada seven years ago stated that in a group setting the children would not want to be the first to admit to such difficulties. Furthermore she told me that she was twenty-one before she was able to tell anyone outside her family about her experiences with discrimination (Service Provider Interview: Feb.24/00). However, one brave neighbourhood fifteen year old, who provides support to the music teachers in exchange for guitar lessons, affirmed that the social climate of her neighbourhood has many teenage clusters based on ethnic identity. "I like how multicultural the community is, what I don't like is that there are people who stick to their own cultural friends and are not willing to make new friends. Sometimes they

will even form their own gangs”. She claimed that many of her peers adhered to this pattern, which she considered unfortunate and sometimes frightening (Music Participants’ Survey: Mar.18/00). Attitudes like these may stem from parental views or those of other peers. No matter where they are initiated, they are sadly prevalent in this community and affect the child’s sense of security in his/her environment (Service Providers Interviews: Feb.24/00).

The area Community Centre director confirmed that “cultural clusters” do exist in the neighbourhood. The children do tend to interact mainly with their ethnic identity group, in small numbers. This tendency to form into ethnically distinct clusters has an unfortunate influence in the participation in sports programs, especially. Certain sports seem to be dominated by certain ethnic identities where only limited numbers can participate due to the nature of the sport and time constraints for programming. This is seen largely in the age group of pre-teens and adolescents. The director also revealed that the staff in the community centre must deal with ‘behaviour’ frequently (Service Provider’s Interview: Feb.2/00). Reflecting on Mr. Abdul’s depiction of this community, he claimed that this is where the police receive the most calls for violent disruption; the children’s aggression is culturally believable (Abdul 1999). These clusters likely develop to satisfy the children’s initial ‘Safety’ and ‘Belonging Needs’. If more resources were available, this tendency could gradually be eased to more inclusive activities and environments. This would likely reduce attacks based on ‘difference’ and present greater opportunities to have their ‘Belonging’ and ‘Self-esteem Needs’ fulfilled.

These realities can cause a child to conform to the neighbourhood patterns, in order to have these needs met. Furthermore, such choices frequently extend beyond the neighbourhood to their schools where increased conflict has occurred. These encounters have negative

consequences for their social and academic achievements since detentions and expulsions are not conducive to success in either domain. In short, permitting these initial clusters is helpful to the transplanted child, but apparently these groups tend to develop hostile priorities over time. These developments hinder the children's fulfilment of their 'Belonging Needs' in the larger population. Those suffering from isolation or weak self-esteem may be motivated to join these groups where conflict and intolerance perhaps initiated their formation and are promoted.

Influence of Parental Beliefs

As previously noted, Bond, Beleny, Weinstock (1996), Larochelle (1992) and Offord (1989 and 1995) all assert that the parents' biases are most often adopted by the child. The discriminatory remarks that the young boy made during an activity in the community centre may be an example of this transmission. As with the children's views of poverty, young children are more likely to mirror the perceptions of their parents. For example, the child who informed us during 'snacktime' that "Black people don't like yogurt" is a child who demonstrates animosity toward non-whites. Thus his remark is likely something he has heard, rather than reporting an unbiased observation. His remark may not appear to be racist, but it certainly demonstrates a cognitive tendency to generalize to include all members of an ethnic group.

The above discussion indicates that the children could benefit from more positive adult models and from supervision in the neighbourhood. If the admittedly biased report of one parent is true, that many parents in the area show a lack of interest in their children's lives, television may have become one substitute for family engagement time. (Although, I believe that many of the parents are very stressed and preoccupied, rather than disinterested). The children from the music program certainly reported watching at least four hours of T.V. every day, some watch

much more. All, but one, watches T.V. for a minimum of twenty-eight hours a week (Music Participants' Survey: Mar. 18/00). This is a great deal of time that could be committed to non-academic skill-building and recreational programs. This time, if redirected, could be used to consistently and regularly counter the violent and intolerant ideas depicted on T.V. and encountered in the neighbourhood. As well, more supervised programs that introduce new possibilities and nurture positive social relations can reinforce the modelled conflict resolution skills and cooperation associated with resilience in children. Similar to the music program, more children in the neighbourhood could be supported toward developmental successes at the higher needs levels through these positive measures.

Family

The children whose families seem to have extended family support, seem to rely on and enjoy the structure and security of these relationships. They seem to have a value system which places high importance on the family unit. Their protective stance and loyalty towards their siblings supports this interpretation, as well. Perhaps their earlier traumas have given them a deep sense of appreciation for the family members still with them. According to theories of Maslow (1969), Rutter (1985), Bond and her associates (1996), as well as the dominant negative views of people living in poverty, this supportive environment appears to be the largest contributing factor to the healthy maintenance of the 'Belonging' and 'Self-esteem Needs' of these immigrant children.

Clearly, the family support that each immigrant family experiences varies. One of the families on whom I focussed (the newest 'migrants') are experiencing very intense familial problems. There are no members of this particular family's culture group in this neighbourhood.

The mother is socially isolated. The father, perhaps due to discriminatory attitudes, has been unsuccessful in obtaining a skilled job that requires someone of his training. Overall, whatever the circumstances of these children's families, re-location has been a challenge of re-training for the adults, re-socialization and emotional disruption for each member of the family.

Since the social service 'cuts', there has also been an increase in calls to security concerning neglected children. Children who are playing in the halls of the apartment building, children who are alone in the park, children who are not dressed appropriately for the weather, or children left alone in their apartment are seen more frequently. As well, one worker for Ottawa Housing's Security office stated that "family disputes are really, really common". Their community liaison worker attempts to collaborate with a police officer to resolve many of these minor disputes between neighbours or within families, in a informal format (Service Providers Interviews: Feb.24/00).

In conclusion, the themes that arose from the children's discussion groups included descriptions of violence and anger from their peers. Clearly they also witness parents exhibiting harsh treatment of their children. Their acceptance of aggression was apparent when they described what they believed they could do in their adult lives. The majority of them spoke about having guns, or bazookas or 'monster trucks' ... "to get rid of the bad people". Whether these ideas stem from their environment, or the media, they are strongly desired goals for these eight to ten year olds. The fast and quick response to my question seemed to authenticate the sincerity of these expressed desires. The children spoke about frequent incidents of bullying, parent aggression and conflict in their daily experiences. These attitudes and perceptions support the environment hypothesis that poverty often restricts a child's full development. As well, some of

the children in the group experience violence in their homes; their fantasized violence may relate to how they perceive and witness power. Their projected adult actions may also be a reflection of a common belief of Ontario residents, that their society is increasingly violent and unsafe. In fact the majority of Ontario residents see their communities as much more violent than they were twenty or thirty years ago (Offord 1995:16).

However, most of the children I interviewed view their futures as holding unlimited possibilities. Thus, they are not steeped in Lewis's 'Culture of Poverty' or detained through narrow visions of their world, as Bond, Beleny and Weinstock described. Although they are in impoverished environments, the children see a bright future and appear to be working through Maslow's levels of developmental needs. In order for them to have success in mastering skills at each developmental level, their future possibilities rest with those who can insure that resources are available for the children to attain satisfaction that moral justice exists in their world.

The children's views about what characteristics are most important to nurture in children reflect a lack of rudeness or name-calling, respecting people and their property and being "good", "nice", "helping out at home" and "sharing" (Children's Interview: Mar.6/00). Yet they do not experience such nurturing from their peers. This factor may mean they are reflecting on their experiences of what it feels like to be at the receiving end of disrespectful behaviour, or what they reportedly witnessed. As well, the expectations at home seem to be understood as ideals which they may simply have repeated to an uninvolved bystander (me). Whether they consistently participate in this fashion would require more in depth research.

CONCLUSION

This study has focussed on understanding the children's view of their own low income urban world to identify what every day factors diminish their healthy development and what elements most effectively nurture them to a full and productive adulthood. As this study evolved, it became clear that the children's family context could be better understood by examining their lives through the two basic forms of poverty that Lewis defined (p.p. 14-16). Maslow's child development framework (p.p. 17-21) helped define the common processes of child development, thus identifying the specific deprivations that exist for the children. Bond, Beleny and Weinstock's research (p.p.21-27) also aided in assessing the children's lives by identifying the predominant values that the children are receiving through the significant adults in their lives who they identified as most significant. Through this process, a predominant group of children emerged and it became clear that their presence in the neighbourhood is positive, offering some helpful perspectives to the smaller percentage of children whose conditions can be associated with long-term poverty. The majority of the children in this study are in a transitional form of poverty, which has its struggles, but does not center on as narrow a vision of themselves and their future possibilities, as is the case for the children living in the intergenerational conditions of Lewis's 'Culture of Poverty' (Maslow 1969, Lewis 1970: 65-79 and Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-469).

In the predominant category, the significant adults in the children's lives believe that improvement in one's life-conditions is a matter of determined effort through the use of adequate resources. Their parenting styles and priorities are also shaped by these attitudes. However, some common deterrents do exist for all the children in this study, including this advantaged group, in

terms of their healthy development. For example, the densely populated neighbourhood where they live harbours and perpetuates conditions of helplessness and negative coping behaviours (Lewis 1970, Larochelle 1992 and Reitsma-Street 1993). Furthering this, most live in single parent households experiencing poverty - all substantial high risks to child development (Offord 1995 and 2000). Other stressors are more common to the particular form of poverty to which their family is more predominantly associated. Thus for clarity, I will first highlight the needs that each group of children are focussed upon and then present the needs which I have concluded are common to all the children in this study.

The Children Experiencing Conditions Associated with a 'Culture of Poverty'

This debilitating form of poverty, where some of the children in this study are situated, is what Lewis associated with intergenerational poverty. He deduced that traumatizing coping strategies (such as family violence, child abuse, mental disassociations and substance abuse) are commonly present in families struggling in this form of poverty. They may be experiencing sexual or emotional abuse. Most of the children in the study (who can be considered members of this category of poverty) have severely stressed home environments, or a depressed and despondent parent. Such a parent's limiting or destructive worldview too commonly results in inconsistent parent engagement, as well as the obviously limited material resources involved with nurturing full child development. Another persistent characteristic for these families is that the parent(s) commonly feel that their circumstances are unchanging, and unlikely to get better. Thus there is a lack of long-range planning or optimism and a conformity to the systems that oppress them (Lewis 1970:68-79, Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-470, Reitsma-Street 1993, Offord 1995, Larochelle 1992 and Service Providers Interviews: Feb. 24, 26/00).

Of Bond, Beleny and Weinstock's (1996) five frameworks of 'Knowing', the 'Silent Knower' is the most common worldview held by mothers from a background of intergenerational poverty, and is passed on to their children through daily interactions, parenting priorities and parenting styles. Commonly, there is one way of being right, one version of truth, and the child is nurtured in discovering what that is and adhering to it. Bond, Beleny and Weinstock asserted that this worldview is a common response of the parent's own history based in family / social dysfunction and violence. In this view, the world is a hostile place where the parent and child feel that their feelings or perspectives are not validated (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-470). The traits associated with Lewis' 'Culture of Poverty' can also be transmitted by perception since the child is exposed to certain views and behaviours repeatedly in their "ghetto neighbourhood"(Kazemipur and Halli 2000: 35).

Predominant negative consequences to the healthy development of children who live in extended poverty are low birth-weight, poor nutrition, ill-health, emotional or behavioural difficulties and poor school performance (Larochelle 1992:108-109, McCain and Mustard 1999 and Schorr 1991: 437. These problems reflect a lack of fulfilment of the children's lower needs levels ('Physiological', 'Safety' and 'Belonging'), and demonstrate the resultant responses common for the children in this study.

Furthering the above difficulties, many of the school-aged children are unsupervised for substantial periods of time through the week. Some are frequently shouldered with babysitting younger siblings. In many homes where abuse, or other dysfunctions tend to reduce family members' involvement in community programs, some children are not permitted to participate. Others feel obligated to stay home and insure that a younger sibling is kept safe, or to deter a

parent from drinking. Many of these perceived responsibilities are what Lewis (1970) referred to as a loss of childhood and quite often fail in the child's intended purpose (Service Providers Interviews 2000: Feb 2 and Feb. 24). Thus, these children are not free to focus on their own developmental needs for acceptance, love and strong self-esteem. Without these needs being gratified, the children develop a version of truth and justice that stems from their struggles to have their 'Safety' and 'Belongingness' Needs' met.

Some of the children respond to this lack of fulfilment of their basic needs through extreme fearfulness in new situations. Aggression, uncooperativeness and severe withdrawn dispositions are common. Others react to their fear and insecurity by clinging strongly to a parent, even where he/she has demonstrated abusive or neglectful parenting, apparently offering some security to the child as this is most familiar and predictable. Others show such uncontrollable exuberance when taken to a new setting that they appear incapable of 'managing their emotions appropriately'. For many, raised in cramped apartments, their behaviour is simply a response to the unfamiliarity and excitement of the new adventure.

'Difficult' behaviours are often expressions of the children's frustration or efforts to resolve incongruencies, often leading to more anti-social behaviours which in turn may result in poor school attendance or performance. In such cases, children are sometimes 'expelled' for a brief period, and where this does not alter the children's ability to function 'acceptably', they are transferred from one school to another in search of an environment that will best meet their needs. This is a common 'solution' for many of the 'difficult children' that I have known. In fact, being expelled from kindergarten is not unheard of within populations like the one highlighted here. Rejections like these frequently add further stress to the parent-child relationship. Where

the parent has weak parenting skills, or insufficient resources to guide and help the child, the responses to the 'difficulties' can be inappropriate or, worse, abusive (Mustard and McCain 1999:64). These children, too often seen as behaviour problems, continually face deterrents to having their 'Belonging' and 'Self-esteem Needs' met since their behaviour is often misunderstood by the significant adults in their lives (Larochelle 1992:108-109, McCain and Mustard 1999 and Schorr 1991: 437).

It also appears that some of the children in this study have too readily been diagnosed as having an ADHD, due to the behavioural and emotional responses they have demonstrated. Many of the indicators of an ADHD are commonly found in children facing or evading traumatic events, as well as those with a biological imbalance (Sehkar 1999:1-8). Most commonly, the children are given drugs to subdue the behaviour but rarely guided toward identifying the root of their 'misbehaviour' or taught positive coping strategies. Diagnoses have led, at least in some instances, to a negation of the social factors in the children's lives and alternate interventions. Thus, a child who draws the attention of teachers and doctors as a 'difficult behavioural problem' is most often assessed through a more individualistic attribution of the child's behaviour, rather than acknowledging the impact of social dysfunctions on his/her development. In most cases, these professional responses reflect a resignation to the limited resources available. If you can't change the structure, then, try to change the child.

The children I interviewed reported that there is only one Black teacher in their school and that their ethnicity, and country of origin are never discussed. In their own words, they also reported that most books and teaching resources are aimed toward the experiences of their middle class classmates (Children's Interviews 2000:Mar. 18). Where a child's ethnic identity,

social and economic realities are not included in the curriculum, the omission sends a message to the child that his/her identity is undervalued (Coelho 1994:309). In this way, teachers and teaching material strongly influence the fulfilment of the child's 'Safety', 'Belonging' and 'Self-esteem Needs'. The children must discover evidence that they are worthy contributions to the intellectual and social dimensions of their school (Esling 1995:25). Incongruencies in a child's understanding, with their daily realities, result in emotional distress when these inconsistencies occur regularly. Children will 'normalize' these omissions or adapt the dominant view of the world. These mental processes may lead to emotional or psychological problems that will be expressed through behaviours commonly attributed to 'traumatized' or 'hyperactive' children (Bandler and Grinder 1979:47-55).

Reference Points

The narrow worldviews common in parent's struggling in long-term poverty are often demonstrated through authoritarian parenting and lifestyles that rarely take the children beyond the neighbourhood (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 467-469). For example, one parent who came on an outing with our preschool program had been raised in one of the Ottawa Housing neighbourhoods in Ottawa; she had never seen the Parliament buildings. Another, informed of other subsidized housing possibilities through housing cooperatives, did not want to leave what she was familiar with and felt some mastery about. She feared a lack of acceptance and isolation if she was to move her children to a less densely populated - less hostile - neighbourhood. This decision was made despite the confrontations and troubles that her sons regularly experienced. She felt that her family belonged where they were and were most competent in their present low-income housing neighbourhood.

The children reported that they watch a great deal of T.V. Of the twenty music participants, many watch four hours of T.V. a day, more on the weekend. The school age children do not have many activities available to them, outside of school hours. A limited number participate in the gym or after - four activities that exist, but these programs can accommodate a very limited number of these youngsters. A handful of the school age population receive music lessons, dance or art programs when the occasional summer grant provides such resources. Consequently, the children have a limited taste of the many dimensions of life and themselves. This is both a result of the lack of available opportunities and the complications in their lives stemming from problems of their parents, and angry residents in the neighbourhood that result in reduced life opportunities and repertoires of positive coping skills (Offord 1989: 2-19, Schorr 1991:437, Monroe - Blum 1989:517-518).

Outside of 'safe environments', the children will not persist in attempts to participate in activities where they feel inept, awkward and consistently encounter feelings of 'being outside' the group. Where their 'Safety Needs' often feel unfulfilled, these children tend to restrict their involvement to activities where they feel most comfortable and feel some familiarity and mastery, in an attempt to have their 'Belonging Needs' met. Children often adopt the social strategies that they predominantly encounter. This explains the reported transmission of common social strategies and attitudes intergenerationally, and within neighbourhoods like the one highlighted here.

Needs Specific to Children in a 'Culture of Poverty':

The children identified in this study as living in conditions associated with Lewis' 'Culture of Poverty' require sufficient and accessible supports to counter the negative realities of

their environment. They need healthy nourishment and consistency of caring adults to meet their 'Physiological and Safety Needs'. They also need direction to resolve the incongruencies in their world, such as other's negative reactions to their socio/economic circumstances or the colour of their skin. Much of this can be achieved in group settings, if they are consistently available and offered on a frequent basis. For as I have learned through the preschool and music programs, a consistent exposure to positive influences is required to counter the outside influences that the children encounter in the neighbourhood - or in their homes. Furthermore, these positive interactions and activities give the children a safe place where they are less victimized by the negative elements in their home environment and neighbourhood. Programs that are reliable long- term elements in the children's lives will allow them opportunities to explore and develop social skills and non-academic skills to aid in the fulfilment of their 'Belonging Needs' in greater society. Through these acquired skills, strong self-esteem and broadened awareness - these children can more likely make constructive priorities for their eventual adulthood. Thus, high staff ratios and long term funding offer the children wider social networks, and ongoing safe strategies where they can participate and move away from the very damaging influences in which they currently struggle.

Transient Poverty

The ten immigrant children who participated in the interviews are not living in families that are plagued with the characteristics associated with Lewis' 'Culture of Poverty' and they have been in Canada for at least two years. Their poverty is a more recent result of family breakdown, job loss, health problems, or immigration. In fact the higher proportion of children that I have worked with over the years are not living in classic cases of a 'Culture of Poverty'.

They are struggling more with the characteristics associated with high stress and extremely restricted resources. The immigrant children I interviewed all have suffered some forms of severe trauma. Many have lost contact with loved ones, struggled with starvation or know of family members or friends who were tortured or murdered. Many of the children have seen incredible violence (Service Providers Interviews: Feb.24/00). Thus the children have to heal from severe emotional traumas as well as struggle with the large initial adjustments before them. Like most newcomers, they initially focussed on the safety and nurturance needs that Maslow described (Nguyen 1987: 50).

Presently, I believe that part of the immigrant children's advantage, compared to their peers in intergenerational poverty, can be attributed to their family's transitional state of poverty and their parent's belief that their efforts will eventually improve their circumstances. In most cases, their parent has a broader view of the world, and his/her place in it. So, although many of the children in this study seem to view the world as full of horrid surprises that one cannot always avoid (such as a parent's death or being struck by a speeding car), they still aspire to their dream-jobs as accountants, doctors or artists - and life circumstances which may seem beyond their present resources (Children's Interviews 2000: Mar. 11).

Mitigating Factors and Resilience of the Transient Group

Some of the conditions that raise the success-rate of healthy child development in chronic conditions of poverty, and which seem to exist for most of the immigrant children who were interviewed, are listed below:

- the optimism of the parent(s) that their poverty is temporary
- the parent(s)' emphasis on education and literacy

- a conviction that their present living conditions are better than in their country of origin
- family motivation to succeed
- availability of supports (such as childcare) from extended family or links to their ethnic social networks

(Beiser, Hou, Hyman and Tousignant 1998:33-35)

Most of the interviewed children identified an important adult who loved and nurtured them unconditionally. In all cases, they identified their mother or their grandmother as this significant person in their lives (Children's Interview: Mar.13/00). Most often these significant adults offered a view of the world that reaches beyond their present circumstances. Their stable presence encourages them to develop a broad repertoire of skills and perspectives than what might be seen by the group of children living in Lewis' 'Culture of Poverty' milieu (Kazemipur and Halli 2000:150, Canadian Institute of Child Health 1997 and Canada Parks and Recreation 1998). As such, they have access to additional ways of having their 'Being Needs' of justice, truth and beauty met (Hoffman 1996: 73-74).

At a minimum, most of the immigrant children in this study have parents who demonstrate attitudes that Bond, Beleny and Weinstock termed a 'Received Knower'. Their seemingly powerless stance, in the face of the institutional requirements imposed on them as immigrants or social service recipients, has not developed into negative views of themselves. Although these 'Received Knowers' are somewhat forced to accept institutional policies, and their position in life, they believe that success (although a narrow version) is obtainable (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:467-476). This perspective is a gift of hope and perseverance which appears to be instilled in their children.

Thus, these immigrant families strive through adversity with an undying hope and a view of broadened possibilities, despite the barriers they encounter. Perhaps this explains why most immigrant families that I have known eventually gain relative economic security, and leave the communities where they first settled, such as the one highlighted in this study. Most immigrants do not adopt attitudes of resignation or defeatist perspectives associated with long term intergenerational poverty (Beiser, Hou, Hyman and Tousignant 1998: 34). Instead, they see their present circumstances as a stepping stone to a better way of life than they left behind in their country of origin. Thus, the children in transitional poverty have some significantly positive elements that are lacking in the lives of the children in this study whose lives are characterized by Lewis 'conditions of intergenerational poverty.

Needs of the Children in Transient Poverty

Initially, one of the most pressing needs for the immigrant children was to learn English as quickly as possible, both to manoeuvre in their new environment and to make friends. As Maslow has stressed, social competence is crucial for establishing a strong foundation of self-esteem - a strong deterrent to negative self-defeating lifestyles (Maslow 1969 and Igoa 1995: 78-81). Although the children in this study have had several years to become relatively proficient in English, their "Belonging Needs' are still an issue. Like the children in long-term forms of poverty, they struggle against discriminatory attitudes demonstrated toward their social status, as well as those directed at their ethnic identity. These children need support to resolve these encounters to establish strong self-esteem . Presently they demonstrate eagerness to become full participants in society, as adults. However, the ethnic clusters and hostilities that seem to prevail

in the adolescents of the neighbourhood appear to indicate that these aspirations may soon be replaced with more anti-social ways, in an attempt to have their 'Belonging Needs' met.

Life Conditions and Needs of the Children of this Study

All of the children of this study are faced with at least three of the four developmental risks identified in earlier chapters. Poverty, densely populated housing 'projects', single-parenting and physical or emotional abuse are the factors most frequently identified as the major high risks to children fulfilling their developmental needs and reaching their 'healthy' adult potential. Where two of these factors exist, the likelihood of damaging outcomes are four times more likely, compared to children with none of these stressors in their lives (Offord 1995 and 2000). Many of these children are also struggling with dysfunctions in their home, such as a parent with an addiction or constant derogatory or angry attitudes directed at them. Discrimination directed toward their class and ethnic identity are realities for many of the children in this study, as well. Where four risk factors exist in a child's life, their developmental risks increase ten-fold. Thus it is clear that these children need supports from greater society if they are to reach a healthy adulthood (Offord 1995 and 2000).

No matter which form of poverty in which each child's family is presently situated, all of the children share an environment that profoundly limits their chance to achieve a full participatory adult role in our society. Whether the children are in intergenerational poverty, or transitional, their middle class schoolmates and teachers often underestimate their potential or negatively label their nature, based on where they live (Teacher Interviews 1999: Oct. 26, Nov. 14; Social Service Provider Interview 2000: Feb.24 and Parent Interview 1999: Nov. 22). Much of this misunderstanding stems from the view that the majority of their parents are drains on the

public purse. This message is also being sent to the children through the attitudes that their peer's parents have passed to their children. Curriculum and program designs omit the reality of their life experiences and have consistently left these children shortchanged from adequate resources to counter these destructive daily experiences, elements known to affect children raised in densely populated low-income 'projects'.

Reference Points

Many of the children in this study do not seem to have any view outside of their immediate circumstances. They seldom go to libraries, museums or other activities that broaden their awareness of the world, which is likely due to the limited time and resources available to their parents. There is little time for family outings which don't incorporate weekly necessities like grocery shopping, laundry, doctor appointments, required administrative meetings for those who are on social assistance, seeking settlement resources, restraining orders, negotiating divorce settlements or child custody disputes. As well, the bus system and the physical needs of small children restrict a parent's availability to nurture broader awareness and personal skill development in children. An obvious restriction for many of them is the lack of resources in the home, or extended supports. Left to their own devices, with insufficient community activities available, the children are exposed to many bullies and marginalized adults.

The majority of the adults in their neighbourhood are stressed young parents struggling to meet the demands of parenthood on limited budgets and with limited outside supports. Other adults that the children regularly see are mainly unemployed, labourers, shift workers or members of other occupations that offer small economic compensation or social status. The children in this study do not meet many adult role models who have professions attained through

higher education. Struggles and feelings of helplessness prevail for many parents in this neighbourhood. Furthermore, values which would more likely direct the children to build skills for full personal fulfilment are actually unidentifiable to some of the adults, or discouraged through fearful and adopted negative coping strategies found in the 'Silent Knower' (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996:447) and which Lewis associated with the 'Culture of Poverty' (1970). Furthermore, people need reference groups to model their own ambitions or behaviour (Kazemipur and Halli 2000:150). In this environment, a narrow range of options and meaning for the children presently exists.

This densely populated neighbourhood is described by the children of this study through witnessing alcoholism, angry and hostile neighbours, congested busy streets (where their playmate was struck violently by a car) and violence. The recent stabbing of their friend's brother is another harsh example of the realities for the children of this study. If tragedies or crises do not dominate their home, they struggle with its effects in many of their friends. All the children in this study are targets or witnesses to a disproportionate amount of pain, despair and inequality. These conditions, though individually encountered, often produce similar negative emotional or behavioural coping patterns in peers and family members. Consequently many of the children in this study are burdened with these particularly damaging stressors, and struggle to have their 'Safety' and 'Belonging Needs' consistently met (Maslow 1969).

Further blocks to developing a broad base of skills and strong self-esteem exist through the lower expectations of many of the adults in their lives who classify the children from this neighbourhood as 'under-achievers' or 'behaviour problems'. This, unfortunately, sometimes includes their own parent(s), who are often unable to assess the child through the reality of their

own social and economic experiences. Unfortunately, the children's perceptions of where they 'fit' into their world informs the choices they make as they attempt to have their 'Belonging Needs' met, and influences the expectations they place on themselves.

These marginalised children do not have the recreational or Arts opportunities that most of their middle class peers experience (Offord: September, 2000). Children situated in poverty are far less exposed to these activities and consequently they are often perceived by themselves, and their peers, as less worthy or capable. The benefits of providing them with such opportunities are proven to successfully guide children to positive long lasting coping strategies, and a broader repertoire of skills (Hoffman 1996 and Offord 2000). Thus, the likelihood of their participation in society, as healthy adults, is diminished (Offord: September, 2000).

In the view of Bond and her co-researchers, experiences that widen one's points of reference, deductive reasoning and stress-management skills often lead to a more developed 'Way of Knowing' which incorporates one's own experiences and permits acceptance of multiple realities. Bond, et al, call this the 'Subjective Knower' (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 470-493). To help all the children living in this neighbourhood, in an environment where helplessness or a lack of joy dominates, the development of these mental capacities is a strong deterrent to pathologies (Hoffman 1996 : 70-75 and Offord 2000: Sept.15). Thus the programming priorities identified for the first group of children can also benefit all the children in the neighbourhood, especially because these negative characteristics do spread through neighbourhoods, as well as across generations (Larochelle 1992:108-109, McCain and Mustard 1999 and Schorr 1991: 437).

Contributions of Transitional Poverty

Hopeful and willing attitudes presently exist in the personal lives of the children living in transitional poverty. This fact can make a positive difference in their future roles and for their peers entrenched in intergenerational poverty. Through association, and if the opportunities for both groups to interact consistently exist, broader awareness and skills can result for all of them. They have much in common and much to give each other. The immigrant children who were interviewed have now survived some of their initial settlement difficulties, which were eased through the familial or community-based supports described in this study (Parent Interviews: Mar 12/99 and Dec.99 and Service Providers Interviews: Feb.24/00). Their success and optimism can nurture those who continue to struggle. Those with English and a familiarity in this neighbourhood can ease the stress associated with struggling to have their 'Belonging Needs' met. The immigrant children's broader experience and flexibility helps the children with a narrower view of their world to be open to formerly unrecognized possibilities and inner strength.

A shared recognition of each other's struggles, linked with broadened visions and strategies can offer the children of this community opportunities which strengthen their self-esteem and continual positive interactions that incorporate justice, beauty and truth. It is obvious through my observations in the music program that such inclusive philosophies ease peer acceptance and the achievement of self confidence, for both the newcomer and for the longer term resident child. There is room for negotiation, respect for differences and a place for every individual. Thus, the experiences reported here convince me that it is appropriate for those working with Canadian children to promote more opportunities for these positive interchanges to

nurture respect and “community well-being” (Offord 1995: 16-20, Offord 1989:2-16, Nakhaie 1998:121-125 and Nguyen 1987:42-43).

Children who gain these broader mental capabilities are also more capable of discerning whether or not their parent’s views are appropriate for themselves (Bond, Beleny and Weinstock 1996: 470-493, Kazemipur and Hallis 2000: 150 and Rutter 1985: 608). Furthermore, the children’s goals to be accountants, doctors or computer technicians, as they defined, will more likely become a future reality if they are able to access role models who support their goals.

Still, how can we assure that the children’s confidence and dreams do not get “snuffed out” as they grow and repeatedly encounter the social and structural barriers that poverty’s conditions present? To highlight this concern, I include a reflection made by one worker, with whom I spoke. Her family had refugee status and struggled to adjust to Canadian life eight years ago. She wonders if the suggested economic advances that seem to gradually occur for most immigrants will be the predominant results for her Somalian people, and other visible minorities. She fears that institutional barriers to accessing employment will continue to be problems for many families she knows, as well as the children in this study (Service Provider Interview: Feb. 2, Feb.24/00).

In order to succeed in our goals of meeting these children’s needs, we must recognize that blaming their parents when determining the expenditure of public funds merely increases the burdens placed on parents and their children. Presently, the children of this study view the world with suspicion and fear. They know some people don’t like them because they live where they do and they know that some people don’t like them because of their skin colour. These biases are

deeply rooted in the barriers they will encounter as they become adults. Even at this young age they sense their marginalization.

Left to the neighbourhood's own resources, the children may only be able to fulfill their 'Belonging Needs' with their peers who accept them. That is, those in long-term conditions of marginalization and frustration, the 'Culture of Poverty', and in the ethnic clusters they described. It is a matter of determining what opportunities are placed before these children. The messages that they receive about where they belong, will ultimately determine where the majority of the children will seek to have their 'Belonging Needs' met.

Clearly, the children of this study do fall into two groups where the majority are not being raised in homes that demonstrate Lewis' 'Culture of Poverty'. Those who are situated in this long-term form continue to struggle to gain fulfilment of their basic needs for physical well-being and safety. The children who are in more transitional states of poverty, however, also have factors in their lives that threaten their sense of safety. Overall, however, this predominant group appears to be developing with more skill at their 'Belonging Needs' level. Their success at this level may be stalled, however, due to their exposure to the less skilled social strategies and negative perspectives of some of their peers and neighbours who are living in conditions associated with the 'Culture of Poverty' and the lowered expectations placed upon them by some adults in their lives. Furthering these detriments, are the discriminatory attitudes about their social status and ethnic identity that they encounter. All these factors may cause the children to become stalled at this level of development. Through Maslow's perspective, where elements of justice, beauty and truth are seen to be daily requirements, the children's sense of social marginalization from the greater society may derail the healthy development of their 'Self-esteem'.

All the children in this study can benefit from plentiful programs that allow them to interact with and learn from those with less anti-social skills, than some of the behavioural problems they reported. Programs that offer positive models of coping styles and conflict resolution skills can help the children develop the higher 'Ways of Knowing' defined by Bond and her associates. In this way, the transmittance of destructive attitudes and lifestyles associated with a 'Culture of Poverty' can be effectively countered, and the children can establish skills that will enable them to fulfill their adult potential.

INTERVIEWS

Children's Group Interviews:

February 1999: 28; March 1999: 6, 13, 21

December 1999: 4; February 2000: 26; March 2000: 4,11,18

Children's Individual Interviews:

Interviewee #1: September 1999: 15, 18, 25; October 1999: 4, 7, 11, 14

Interviewee #2: March 1999: 13

Service Provider Interviews:

1. Oct. 1999	6.Oct. 27, 1999
2. Sept. 9, 1999	7. Nov. 6, 1999
3. Sept. 17, 1999	8. Nov. 14, 1999
4. Oct. 16, 1999	9. Feb. 2, 2000
5. Oct. 26, 1999	10. Feb. 24, 2000
	11 Music Teacher's Survey: Feb.22, 2000

Parents Interviews:

1. Mar. 12, 1999	5. Jan. 10, 2000
2. Nov. 6, 1999	6. Jan. 11, 2000
3. Dec 20, 1999	7. Jan. 14, 2000
4. Dec. 30, 1999	

APPENDIX A

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

- 1. What do you like about your teacher(s)?**
- 2. What don't you like about your teacher?**
- 3. What do you like about the people at your school?**
- 4. What do you not like about the people at your school?**
- 5. What places do you learn about in school?**
- 6. Do you talk about places where your family has lived at school?**
- 7. Is there a grown-up who you like to spend time with, or talk to?**
B. What do you like about this person?
- 8. What does teasing mean?**
B. Has anyone ever teased you? Why?
- 9. What does it feel like when you are sad?**
B. What things make you sad?
- 10. Does your Mom/ Dad like living here?**
B. What does she/he like about living here?
- 11. Is there anything that she/he does not like about living here?**
- 12. Does your Mom/Dad like your neighbours?**
B. What are they like?
- 13. There are lots of things to do - to take care of a family. Does your Mom/Dad have people who help them?**
B. What do they do?
- 14. Two boys were walking to the store. Something happened....What happened?**
- 15. A girl was babysitting. Something happened....What happened?**
- 16. What do you want to be when you grow up?**
- 17. If someone kicked you, what would you do?**
- 18. If someone called you a name, what would you do?.**

APPENDIX B

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

1. What are the characteristics that you consider most important to develop in your students?

- How do you rank these traits?**
- How do you attempt to achieve these attributes?**

2. Are there any unique needs in the children that you teach, who reside in the Bellevue community?

- What are they?**
- How do you attempt to meet these needs?**

3. What problems do you encounter , while striving to achieve your teaching goals?

PARENT INTERVIEWS

1. What are the characteristics that you consider most important to nurturing your child to be a "healthy adult"?

- Can you rank these traits?**

2. Is there anything in your present situation which makes these goals difficult to achieve?

3. Are you happy with your child's teachers?

- What do you like about them?**
- What, if anything, could they do to better meet your child's needs?**

4. What do you expect your child to learn, through our music program?

- Are there any problems that you have noticed in the program?**
- Can you tell me which ones are most important to correct?**

5. What do you like about the program?

APPENDIX D

January 9, 1999.

Dear Parents:

In the near future, I would like to hold several voluntary group discussions with the children who are eight or older. There will be three discussions, held every so often, following the Saturday morning music program. Each will be about one hour and I hope to do the first one before the end of January. With your permission, I would like to learn how they feel about their community, and their social life in Caldwell. I will be very careful not to influence the children's discussions. Topics will evolve from their perceptions.

As many of you know, I am completing my degree at Carleton University, and want to do a report on the needs and experiences of Caldwell children, especially issues that effect cultural "minorities". I hope that my completed research will also identify gaps in children's programs or services - for their social development. The children's insights will be useful for discovering their priorities, concerns and interests. We will then try to implement their concerns, as future program developments are made possible in the Caldwell community. We hope these inquiries will benefit all Caldwell children.

Your child's participation is completely voluntary and they're identity will not be revealed in my report. I will make the draft report available, before submission, for anyone who would like to see it. If you are willing to let your child participate, please sign below. If you have any questions about the discussion groups, please let me know as soon as you can. I want this project to be a positive experience for every child who participates.

I am allowing my child to participate in the group discussions mentioned, in this letter. My child may participate, and may quit during the discussions, if for any reason she/he feels uncomfortable.

Parent's consent signature _____

I will also be meeting with a few parents, to discuss these issues from the adult perspective. I hope that some of you will be free, for an hour or so, as your ideas would be appreciated very much. Naturally your involvement would be voluntary, and your identity will be protected, if you wish. Both the children's and the adult's discussions will be very informal. I will simply be recording what is important to the community members themselves. You will have access to the report draft, so that you can correct any misinterpretations I may have made. I want this report to reflect and represent the children's and your ideas and observations, not mine. Please sign below if you would like to participate in an adult discussion about the needs of our Caldwell children. We can find an agreeable time for all interested adults, in the near future.

Interested in the Adult group discussion _____

Thankyou for your support.... Sincerely,

Nancy Collins

(Please return this form to the teacher)

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