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The Prevention of Preschool Teacher Stress:  
Using Mixed Methods to Examine the Impact of Reflective Supervision

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor in Philosophy  
in Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology

by

Caitlin Elizabeth Lepore

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September 2016

The dissertation of Caitlin Elizabeth Lepore is approved.

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August 2015

The Prevention of Preschool Teacher Stress:  
Using Mixed Methods to Examine the Impact of Reflective Supervision

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by

Caitlin E. Lepore

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the logistics of such a large collaboration, and how to write it all down. I appreciate your wisdom, leadership, support, and advice.

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- And thank you to my partner, Josh Lepore, and my family, for your encouragement, love, and support before and throughout graduate school.

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- Served clients from an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) for children ages 2-6, and a Family Assertive Community Treatment program for homeless mothers ages 18-25 with severe mental illness and children ages 0-5.
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- Administered measures of child and parent functioning and discussed results and treatment implications with caregivers and clinicians.
- Collaborated with program managers to improve early childhood services, increase communication, and evaluate early childhood services agency-wide.
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- Designed one agency-wide and two program evaluations related to homeless families with maternal and child mental health concerns.
- Administered, managed, scored, interpreted, and analyzed all data.
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## ABSTRACT

### The Prevention of Preschool Teacher Stress:

#### Using Mixed Methods to Examine the Impact of Reflective Supervision

by

Caitlin Elizabeth Lepore

Reflective supervision has been richly described within the literature, but has had little empirical, and particularly quantitative, examination. This longitudinal study used mixed methods to examine how early childhood teacher attachment and trauma histories may contribute to their stress in teacher-parent relationships, and how reflective supervision may impact this stress. Thirty-seven teachers (36 females, 1 male) were recruited from 5 early childhood sites that participated in reflective supervision: 18 were in their first year and 19 had participated in 2-5 years of reflective supervision. 73% of participants were Latino/a, and 29% held a bachelor's degree. Participants rated their own parental relationships during childhood, trauma history, and current compassion satisfaction, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and frustration in a challenging teacher-parent relationship. A subsample of 20 teachers completed a qualitative interview, and among those, 14 teachers completed both pre- and post-assessments and the interview. The results provide evidence that a teacher's childhood parental relationships relate to their current frustration in teacher-parent relationships. Furthermore, findings suggest that more time spent in reflective supervision may help protect a teacher against some of these stressors. Relating these findings to the attachment literature, reflective supervision may offer a corrective experience for teachers similar to therapy or long-term adult relationships which impact attachment styles as they relate to work interactions. Implications and future directions are considered.

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*“Life is more beautiful because of the meetings we have every [week]. I’m happily working here. I think if [my boss] ask[ed] me, “I really want you to stay here forever,” I would say yes, because it [reflective supervision] created that space in a time where I can come up and say what I’m feeling and sometimes all you want to say is talk about how you felt and feel that the other person heard you and that’s it. That’s enough.” (Natalia)*

## I: INTRODUCTION

### **Background and Rationale**

For young children, the experience of chronic stress and trauma can result in decreased cognitive scores (Enlow, Egeland, Blood, Wright, & Wright, 2012), smaller hippocampal volume (Luby et al., 2012), and early disease and death (Anda et al., 2006). Research has found that early supportive parenting can also mitigate the otherwise deleterious effects of early trauma (Luby et al., 2012). In other words, “toxic” stress can be made tolerable through a supportive adult relationship. Extending these findings to the early childhood education context, children may be able to derive similar benefit from supportive and consistent relationships with staff and teachers. Thus, early childhood programs have the potential to play a key protective and preventive role for children and families facing chronic stress, trauma, and poverty. Quality early child care has been shown to alleviate the long-term costs to society of children growing up in poverty (Heckman, Moon, Pinto, Savelyev, & Yavitz, 2010). However, early childhood educators face a variety of challenges that make the provision of such quality care challenging. For example, there is evidence that working with clients with more extensive histories of trauma may contribute to a workers’ experience of secondary traumatic stress (Baird & Kracen, 2006). Furthermore, a teacher’s own defense style may moderate the impact of stress (Adams & Riggs, 2008). Therefore, there are both environmental- and individual-level factors that may contribute to the likelihood that a teacher experiences symptoms of stress.

A teacher’s experience of stress is important because a worker’s mental health and wellbeing impacts their effectiveness in their job. For teachers working with families that face considerable adversity, the families’ experience of stress can lead to feelings of

helplessness or hopelessness that affect the wellbeing and effectiveness of workers. In a multi-state study of 597 public early childhood educators and 2,282 preschoolers, Hamre, Pianta, Downer, and Mashburn (2008) found that teachers who reported greater levels of depression and lower self-efficacy reported more student-teacher conflict. In other words, the teachers' mental health impacted the environment and interactions in their classroom.

Children living in poverty bring a variety of additional stressors into the classroom (Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, 2002). These additional stressors can be overwhelming and can lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety, hopelessness and incompetence for teachers (Strain & Joseph, 2004). The majority of early childhood teachers have limited post-secondary education (Herzenberg, Price, & Bradley, 2005) and are not trained to understand or address the challenging feelings that arise when working with multi-stressed clients. The experience of stress and burnout may increase staff turnover (Spence Laschinger, Leiter, Day, & Gilin, 2009). High staff turnover leads to relationship instability for children, while burnout can have more insidious effects such as less sensitive and flexible interventions and lower levels of engagement. These consequences may have ripple effects for the child, family, daycare center, and community.

In recent years, national and statewide political agendas have begun to recognize the critical importance of early childhood in the long-term trajectory of individuals. With this recognition have come increased efforts to introduce public transitional kindergarten programs and increased funding for Head Start programs (Head Start, 2014). These are important steps forward in increasing the accessibility of early education programs for all children. With the expansion of early childhood programs, it becomes especially important to ensure their success for all children as well. Higher rates of teacher turnover occur in the

communities with low-income and minority students, though this has been understood as a consequence of the challenges presented by students and as well as a consequence of organizational characteristics (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). Developing a better understanding of the elements that contribute to a successful program and teachers' success is imperative to ensure student success. In order to consider prevention efforts, we must better understand the dynamics that contribute to teacher stress and turnover.

One promising prevention effort for preschool programs is Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC; Cohen & Kaufmann, 2005) (ECMHC and other key terms will be defined in the "definition of terms" section). This "umbrella" model incorporates a variety of potential intervention components, which are selected according to program need. Reflective Supervision (RS), also called Reflective Practice, is both a free-standing intervention and one of the potential interventions that is often included under the umbrella of ECMHC services. While the impacts of ECMHC have been quantitatively investigated (e.g. Duran et al., 2009), RS still has had little empirical investigation. Further empirical study of factors relating to teacher stress and teachers' experiences of RS are needed. This mixed methods research study will help to address this gap in the literature.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to use mixed methods and a bioecological systems framework to: (1) understand the individual- and organizational-level factors that may contribute to teachers' relationships and experience of stress, and (2) to investigate how engagement in RS may impact early childhood educators' teacher-parent relationships and work stress.



## **Research Goals and Questions**

### **Goal 1: To Provide Descriptive Information about the Teachers, including their Childhood Experiences and Relationships, and Frustration Working with Parents**

Relational stability is a critical aspect of early childhood, and this is especially important for disadvantaged populations who often experience more disruption and instability in their relationships with teachers (Whitebrook, Kipnis, & Bellm, 2007). Parents may bring their childhood experiences into their parenting (Van Ijzendoorn, 1995), and this is also true for teachers: teachers' attachment history can impact their perceptions of their relationships with children (Kesner, 2000). Better communication in the parent-teacher relationship has been associated with greater attunement and child well-being (Van Ijzendoorn, Tavecchio, Stams, Verhoeven, & Reiling, 1998) and the parent-teacher relationship was found to be the strongest predictor of teacher-child relationships (Chung, Marvin, & Churchill, 2005). Thus, in this aim, this study seeks to examine how teachers' own relational and trauma histories relate to their teacher-parent relationships.

**Research question 1a.** What are the childhood relational and trauma experiences of teachers in this sample?

**Research question 1b.** Does a teacher's own parental relationships relate to their relationships with students' families?

**Research question 1c.** Does a teacher's childhood trauma history relate to their relationships with families?

### **Goal 2: To Examine Teachers' Work Stress and Satisfaction and their Relation to Teachers' Relationships with Families, Insight, and Relationships with Families over Time**

For staff, reflective supervision supports the development of self-knowledge, emotional awareness, and the use of self; for supervisors, reflective supervision can enhance their ability to build staff capacity and manage conflict (Gilkerson & Ritzler, 2005). Thus, reflective supervision is conceptualized to have multiple “ripple” effects in a child care agency. One concept that has been found to be important in eliciting these changes has been the process of developing insightfulness (Oppenheim, Goldsmith, & Koren-Karie, 2004; Oppenheim & Koren-Karie, 2002). Insightfulness has been adapted to be used with preschool teachers and has been shown to be positively associated with participation in reflective supervision and training (Virmani & Ontai, 2010). This goal aims to investigate teachers’ work stress, satisfaction, and insight, and examine whether they relate to their perceptions of their relationships with the families, and whether insightfulness may contribute additional understanding about these relationships.

**Research question 2a.** What are the descriptive statistics of teacher work stress and insightfulness?

**Research question 2b.** Does teachers’ report of compassion satisfaction relate to their perceptions of their teacher-parent relationships and insightfulness?

**Research question 2c.** Does teachers’ report of burnout relate to their perceptions of their teacher-parent relationships and insightfulness?

**Research question 2d.** Does teachers’ report of secondary traumatic stress relate to their teacher-parent relationships and insightfulness?

**Goal 3: To Examine Differences between Teachers with One or Two or More Years in Reflective Supervision**

To date, there have been few studies that have quantitatively examined the impact of reflective supervision over time (Virmani & Ontai, 2010; Watson, Gatti, Cox, Harrison, & Hennes, 2014). This goal aims to compare teachers in their first year of reflective supervision to teachers who have engaged in reflective supervision for multiple years.

**Research question 3a.** How does the experience of reflective supervision relate to parenting and frustration?

**Research question 3b.** Are there differences in frustration with parents and insightfulness between groups in their first year and groups with two or more years of reflective supervision?

### **Significance of the Study**

There are a number of ways in which this study contributes to the literature. Broadly, answering these questions enhances our ability to understand how teacher history may affect their work stress and relationships, and how one intervention may impact teachers who work with young children facing chronic stress and poverty. Teachers who are better supported may be able to intervene more effectively, experience less job stress, and increase their job stability, thus improving the care for the children who derive the greatest benefit from high-quality early care (Helburn, 1995). This study may offer information about the causes and consequences of teacher stress and relational challenges, as well as how RS may or may not be helping. Therefore, the findings have the potential to have “ripple” effects in other systems for teachers, administrators, children, and families, as well as agencies and communities. Finally, these findings will contribute to the scarce literature by informing future research studies attempting to understand and evaluate the efficacy of RS.

This study design has a number of strengths. First, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there have only been a few published studies (Virmani & Ontai, 2010; Watson & Gatti, 2012; Watson et al., 2014) that have attempted to use quantitative measures to assess changes associated with receiving reflective supervision. This study extends the Virmani and Ontai (2010) study by including more sites, and by separating them into separate strata according to their length of time receiving the intervention. This may enable the results of this study to make more complex developmental observations about the impact of reflective supervision over time. Further, through the use of mixed methods, the results may be triangulated between quantitative and qualitative strands of data. This will allow any findings to be further corroborated with an additional confirmatory source of information, increasing the validity of the findings.

Another strength of the design is that by using Bronfenbrenner's Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model, this study incorporates multiple bio-ecological aspects of a participant's experience. Studies that adequately address all four domains are rare (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009), so this is a considerable methodological and theoretical strength by considering the multiple influences on preschool teachers. Finally, the use of a community-based sample allows for the results to be more generalizable to other communities. While the potential variability and reliability of the intervention and the sample characteristics may limit the ability to isolate specific variables, this study will also expand the knowledge about the potential for effective dissemination at the community level.

Further, in policy, reflective supervision may apply to systems beyond education. Cultivating reflective qualities in workers who are not trained in a mental health framework has wide-ranging implications for systems such as child welfare, substance and alcohol

treatment, courts, or medical systems. The workers in these public systems are stressed and stretched, and their ability to perform their job well has important and long-lasting societal and economic implications. Thus, through the use of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, the PPCT framework, and mixed methods, the implications of this intervention can be conceptualized and measured.

## **Definition of Terms**

### **Stress Terminology**

The terms burnout, vicarious traumatization (VT), secondary traumatic stress (STS), and compassion fatigue (CF) have been described as various responses workers have to working with clients who may have experienced trauma or significant stress. Researchers have attempted to differentiate these constructs in the literature (Baird & Kracen, 2006), though because they are so closely related, there are mixed opinions about whether they can or should be used interchangeably (Craig & Sprang, 2010). While burnout has been used to describe a more broad response to job stress, VT, STS, and CF have been described more specifically as indirect exposure to traumatic material in work. This paper will use the word "work stress" as an umbrella term that may include common aspects of the terms, though when a research study examines a particular type of stress, the specific type will be named. Therefore, each term is defined below.

**Burnout.** Burnout has been defined as a collection of negative reactions to stress that include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of hopelessness that reflect the sense that one's efforts make no difference. Burnout may manifest in increased irritation or quick to anger, emotions "spilling over," paranoia, risk taking, substance abuse, increased inflexible thinking, cynicism, or increased hours working with fewer accomplishments (Azar,

2000). Burnout is caused by chronic challenging workplace demands, rather than exposure to specific client trauma (Jenkins & Baird, 2002), and so PTSD-like symptoms are not a feature of burnout.

**Vicarious traumatization.** VT was introduced as a way of understanding the psychological effects on therapists of working with clients who have experienced trauma (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Specifically, VT has been described more as cognitive responses therapists have to integrating their clients' traumatic material (McCann & Pearlman, 1990), which are harmful changes in their views of themselves, others, and the world (Baird & Kracen, 2006).

**Secondary traumatic stress.** STS was later defined and extended to include psychological symptoms similar to posttraumatic stress disorder (Figley & Kleber, 1995).

**Compassion fatigue.** Figley coined the term CF as an umbrella term to include cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes that a worker experiences (Figley, 1995). As a result, CF and STS are often grouped together. These terms may be useful in further understanding the high levels of complexity in the mental health and social service industry, and this section will explore some of the ways that personal experiences interact with client experiences to put a counselor at higher risk for VT, STS, or CF.

### **Worker Terminology**

**Worker.** At times, this paper will use the term “worker” when the literature referenced may refer to workers in fields other than early childhood education. Generally, worker refers to any direct-care staff. Other terms that would fall under the umbrella of “worker” include early childhood educator, practitioner, counselor, provider, home visitor, caregiver, or therapist.

**Teacher.** This paper used the word “teacher” when referring to any early childhood caregiver/worker. This includes child care providers and early childhood educators who may work with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

### **Teacher Relationships**

In this study, both teachers’ relationships with their own parents when growing up, and their relationships with the parents and families with whom they work are studied. To avoid confusion of terms, the following terms are used.

**Teacher early relationships/teacher parental relationships.** *Teacher early relationship*, or *teacher parental/maternal/paternal relationship*, refers to a teacher’s relationships with their own parents or attachment figure(s).

**Parent-teacher relationships.** *Parent-teacher* or *teacher-parent relationship* refers to a teacher’s current relationships with the parents or family members of the children with whom they work.

### **Interventions**

**Clinical Supervision.** Clinical supervision has been described as the “signature pedagogy” of mental health professions (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014, p. 2) and is concerned with *engagement* in the learning process, *uncertainty* of direction in a particular teaching moment, and *formation* as the supervisee’s thoughts are articulated and clarified (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). There are three overarching categories that have been used to conceptualize clinical supervision: models that are grounded in psychotherapy theory, developmental models, and process models (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). More recently, a second generation of categories has been introduced which identifies common factors models, targeted models, or combined models. This diversity of approaches means that

approaches across models may vary significantly. For example, while case-focused, clinical supervision is not consistent about whether the exploration and reflection of the worker's emotions are encouraged (Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, 2009), and this usually depends on the theoretical grounding. Furthermore, in some settings it may also include specific administrative tasks such as reviewing casework, diagnosis, treatment planning, clinical progress review, the provision of advice or guidance, and teaching (Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, 2009).

**Early childhood mental health consultation.** ECMHC is an extension of Mental Health Consultation for young children, and is an approach for mental health professionals to work with human services staff to enhance the mental health services they provide (Duran et al., 2006). Mental Health Consultation (MHC) was pioneered by Gerard Caplan in the 1960s and was later extended to early childhood education settings as ECMHC. ECMHC states that it “works collaboratively with early childhood education staff, programs, and families to improve their ability to prevent, identify, treat, and reduce the impact of mental health problems among children from birth through age six,” (Cohen & Kaufmann, 2005). An early childhood mental health consultant may fill a variety of roles including: (1) *promotion* activities, such as assessing the strengths and challenges of a program, providing support for creating a more prosocial learning environment, and engaging staff in promoting staff wellness; (2) *prevention* activities, including modeling and/or coaching staff to use classroom management strategies, offering ideas and resources, and guiding the selection and use of screening tools; and (3) *intervention* activities, including crisis intervention services, developing and/or training staff to create and implement individualized behavior plans,



fostering relationships with community services, and developing inclusive policies (Duran et al., 2006).

**Reflective supervision.** Reflective Supervision (RS) has been defined as “the process of examining, with someone else, the thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions evoked in the course of working closely with young children and their families,” (Eggbeer, Mann, & Seibel, 2007, p. 5). This term is further defined in the literature review, but for the purposes of this study is interchangeable with the term *Reflective Practice*.

## II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

First, this discussion of the study's conceptual framework will address the theoretical underpinnings and the methodological framework of the study. Specifically, this study uses bioecological systems theory to conceptualize the dynamic nature of the setting and relationships. Bioecological systems theory is particularly well suited to understanding the multiple systems dynamics at play in a preschool setting, including family, teachers and teaching teams, administrators, as well as parent-child, teacher-child, and parent-teacher relationships. Specific attention is paid to the PPCT model within bioecological systems theory, and how it is complimented through the use of a mixed methods study design. Mixed methods research is also briefly reviewed.

Second, this chapter reviews literature that broadly examines the effects of working with clients who have experienced trauma and adversity and identify overlapping constructs of worker stress. Specifically, it explores the theoretical rationale and empirical evidence for three similar interventions: Clinical Supervision, ECMHC and RS. While the primary emphasis of this paper focuses on childcare and preschool settings, other settings are also considered.

Finally, RS and its theoretical underpinnings are examined through an attachment theory lens. Attachment theory informs the intergenerational and parallel process dynamics that may contribute to teachers' previous and current relationships, and reflective supervision is a method of examining these relationships.

### **Bioecological Systems Theory & the Process-Person-Context-Time Model**

This study uses the PPCT model as a framework (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000; Tudge et al., 2009) and employs mixed methods to investigate the developmental process of

reflective supervision as it impacts preschool teachers and their relationships with parents and children. Bronfenbrenner's PPCT bioecological model conceptualizes four dynamics that influence behavior. First, the PPCT model components and the intervention, reflective supervision, are introduced. Second, common mixed methods factors and design are discussed with particular attention to the mixed method design and rationale for the present study. Next, the methodological considerations regarding design, procedures, participants, measures, and intervention are delineated. Finally, the strengths and limitations of using this research methodology for the present study are discussed.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) designed the bioecological model to conceptualize the complex and dynamic nature of human development. In this model, development occurs within spheres of influence, or widening concentric ecological systems, where the influences of familial, community, societal, and environmental influences are acknowledged. Interaction between these spheres of influence is bidirectional; for example, a family may influence a community just as the community influences the family. These bidirectional influences are called *proximal processes*. The PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) assesses these processes, along with dynamics related to person, context, and time. The person engages in *proximal processes*, which are interactions with the environment. The individual *person* brings a genetic predisposition and inherited characteristics into their interactions. The processes occur in a *context*, and are fairly consistent and enduring, though they may change over *time* and occur within the context of a particular era. Tudge et al. (2009) assert that if a researcher is using bioecological theory to guide his or her study, they should include ways to assess each elements of the model. Therefore, Tudge et al. (2009) propose a set of criteria to

examine the PPCT dynamics in research. How each area is measured is described in the measures section.

### **Process**

Proximal processes are central to bioecological theory. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) described proximal processes as:

Throughout the life course, human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of *time*. Such enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment are referred to as *proximal processes*. (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 996)

In other words, proximal processes are regular activities that influence the gradual development of individuals, and they are influenced by the person, the environment and time (Tudge et al., 2009). Tudge et al. (2009) refer to these processes as the “engines of development” (p. 200) because individuals begin to make sense of themselves within their world through engaging in regular interactions and activities. Tudge et al. (2009) propose examining *process* through observations or interviews of activities and interactions believed to be relevant to developmental outcomes of interests. For example, interactions between two children, or between a child and their learning material, would both demonstrate proximal processes.

### **Person**

Tudge et al. (2009) propose examining *person* through the personal qualities that Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) described as influences in social situations: demand characteristics, resource characteristics and force characteristics. *Demand* characteristics are qualities of a person that are immediate stimuli to another person, such as age, gender, skin color, and physical appearance. These qualities may influence initial interactions because the other participants in the interaction may have expectations as soon as they assess the individuals' demand characteristics (Tudge et al., 2009). *Resource* characteristics, in contrast, relate to emotional and mental resources that are not immediately apparent. They include qualities such as intelligence, past experiences, skills, and social and material resource access (for example, access to caring parents, healthy food, housing, or education) (Tudge et al., 2009). Finally, *force* characteristics describe differences in temperament, motivation, or persistence. These force characteristics may influence the developmental trajectory of an individual because they capture one's ability to continue to push forward when faced with challenges circumstances or obstacles (Tudge et al., 2009).

### **Context**

The *context*, or environment, is the four interrelated systems, or concentric rings, from the bioecological model (Tudge et al., 2009). The smallest ring, the *microsystem*, is an environment such as home, work, or school, where an individual spends a good amount of their time. The interactions between different microsystems over time are considered the *mesosystem*. The next ring is the *exosystem*. The exosystem are contexts that have indirect influences on an individual's development, for example, the work environment of a parent, which has indirect influences on the child's microsystem. Other examples of the exosystem could include extended family, neighborhood factors, media, or decision-making bodies that

affect local policies. Finally, the largest system is called the *macrosystem*. This system includes aspects of the larger culture that are indirectly related to the individual, including attitudes and ideologies of the culture. For example, cultural norms, social structures, history, social conditions, laws, or the economic system all are part of the macrosystem. Further, the interactions between these systems are bidirectional, such that each system both influences and is influenced by the others. Tudge et al. (2009) propose examining *context* by looking at differences across two microsystems (e.g. home and school) or two macrosystems (middle class vs. working class).

### **Time**

The last aspect of the PPCT model is *time*. While not a visible “ring” in the model of concentric circles, time is also referred to as the *chronosystem*. The chronosystem proposes that all the systems in the model interact over time, and within a particular era. Tudge et al. (2009) propose examining *time* in research through the use of longitudinal data collection. This aspect should evaluate, for example, the influence of proximal processes (which are also influenced by person and context) on specific developmental outcomes (Tudge et al., 2009).

### **Literature Review**

Individuals who encounter social service systems often bring a variety of stressors that the professionals who work with them are not always trained to handle. For example, teachers working in early childhood education with multi-stressed families, or drug and alcohol counselors in substance abuse treatment settings may experience frustration, anxiety, or countertransference related to the mental health challenges of their clients. However, staff in these settings usually have not had extensive training or education (Herzenberg et al., 2005) or support around addressing client mental health issues or their own personal

reactions. These challenges may result in staff stress, high turnover, and lower quality of care, for example. Supervision or consultation may offer interventions to counteract these outcomes by offering staff emotional support, exploration of personal reactions, and collaborative problem solving.

### **Environmental and Organizational Factors Related to Stress**

Looking broadly across multiple fields, job demands such as risks and hazards are positively related to employee burnout and health problems, and negatively related to engagement, while a supportive environment is the most consistent resource in explaining burnout, engagement, and safety outcomes (Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hofmann, 2011). Within the health care sector, complexity (a job demand) explained the largest percent of variance in predicting burnout (96.4%), while social support (a job resource) explained 29.4% of variance in predicting employee engagement. In other words, health care employees are most likely to experience burnout when their position has a high degree of cognitive demands, task complexity, and ambiguity, and the best resource to counteract burnout is involvement and support from coworkers, teamwork, and coworker support for safety. The authors link these findings to two important practice implications: first, managers should identify the most salient job demands in their workplace and introduce targeted interventions, and second, while executives often believe training is key for safety, a supportive work environment may actually more important (Nahrgang et al., 2011).

In industries such as early childhood education, complexity may be even more relevant as the cause for child or family distress is even less concrete, and thus may be even more predictive of employee burnout. Based on the broad but powerful findings of Nahrgang et al. (2011), worker anxiety, health, depression, and work-related stress are considerable

work hazards for employees in the mental health sector, and a supportive work environment may be the most effective way to combat these inherent risks, even more than training and leadership. While this study did not specifically examine industries encountering mental health issues, the large sample size informs the influences of broad workplace factors of stress and prevention.

Within the health care sector, burnout and lack of support have been shown to predict job turnover. Specifically, in a study of 612 Canadian nurses (Spence Laschinger et al., 2009), signs of burnout (emotional exhaustion and cynicism), and supervisor incivility strongly predicted employee intent to leave. The implications of these findings underscore the findings from Nahrgang et al. (2011), which identifies burnout as highly relevant in health care industries with significant complexity, and social support as a potential buffer. These findings addressed job demands and protective factors that contribute to stress. There are also individual-level worker factors that may further contribute to the likelihood that an employee experiences stress.

Assessing differences in practice setting, workers in inpatient settings reported more CF and burnout than those in community mental health, and more CF, but not burnout, than workers in private practice settings (Craig & Sprang, 2010). Further, having a greater portion of clients with trauma histories on one's caseload may also put a worker at increased risk for experiencing PTSD-like symptoms (Baird & Kracen, 2006). Caseload consistently predicted burnout and CF such that as the percentage of clients with PTSD on worker caseload increased, worker CF and burnout also increased. These findings underscore the conclusions of Baird and Kracen (2006) who found that amount of exposure to client traumatic material increases the likelihood of cognitive and PTSD-like responses. This study also highlights



some of the similarities and differences between the two constructs. While the experience of burnout may be related to a broad range of factors (age, work setting, training, client PTSD), CF may be more acutely associated with client PTSD symptoms.

Furthermore, supervision may be particularly helpful in addressing worker cognitions to client trauma (Baird & Kracen, 2006). Worker thoughts and cognitive reactions are the typical focus in supervision. There is not yet enough evidence to determine whether supervision is effective in addressing the psychological symptoms of STS. Azar (2000) explored several of these common maladaptive cognitions that are especially common for mental health professionals working with multi-stressed families where child maltreatment has occurred. For example, thoughts such as, “family problems are always manageable and we have the tools to be helpful,” “I know exactly what my role is in relation to the families and children I serve,” and “parents and children want my help and will view my efforts positively,” (Azar, 2000, pp. 652-653) are some of the unrealistic expectations that may contribute to burnout. Azar suggests that it is a supervisor’s job to counter these expectancies using a cognitive framework that parallels the needs of trauma victims by addressing emotional dysregulation, feelings of inconsequentiality, goals, and strategies to deal with risks. In using a framework that mirrors work with trauma victims, Azar acknowledges and normalizes the depth of feelings and emotional reactions that many workers may have in their work with multi-stressed families.

### **Individual Factors Related to Stress**

There are a variety of worker factors that have been shown to impact worker experience of stress. First, a worker with a more extensive personal trauma history may be more vulnerable to cognitive distortions regarding client trauma (Baird & Kracen, 2006). A

worker's coping or defense style can also predict the likelihood that a worker experiences increased stress in working with clients, and may moderate associations between amount of experience and personal trauma history (Adams & Riggs, 2008). In order to develop a more nuanced understanding of worker variables besides personal trauma history, the symptoms of VT were examined in graduate students in relation to counselor trauma history, experience, training, and defense style. Counselor trauma symptoms were significantly related to counselor defense style. Specifically, a self-sacrificing or maladaptive/image distorting defense style was a risk factor for VT. Furthermore, defense style moderated personal trauma history, such that self-sacrificing style participants who had a personal trauma history reported higher levels of symptoms than self-sacrificing participants without personal trauma. Therefore, authors identified this group as particularly at risk for vicarious trauma symptoms and recommend closer monitoring by supervisors. These findings suggest that it may be important that employees at higher risk for VT may need extra supports in order to avoid experiencing job dissatisfaction or turnover. Furthermore, defense style appeared to moderate the association between experience and traumatic stress such that a maladaptive/image-distorting defense style and less experience was even more predictive of higher levels of dissociation. The findings of this study suggest that counselor trauma history, experience, and defense styles are important variables to consider when thinking about preventing workers from experiencing symptoms of VT.

Within mental health professionals, workers with special training in trauma may also experience lower levels of burnout, but not CF (Craig & Sprang, 2010). Trauma-specific training and the use of evidence-based practices (EBPs) are counselor variables that have also been examined as prevention strategies. However, they are also often aspects of training

and education that workers bring into their job or seek out independently from their work in a continuing education context rather than a workplace-sponsored prevention strategy.

Trauma-specific training has been found to be related to trauma symptoms independent of counselor defense style (Adams & Riggs, 2008), suggesting that trauma-specific training can be a broadly preventive intervention to protect against trauma symptoms. The authors note that one-time trainings are not enough; rather a full course or multiple intensive workshops were shown to be more effective in preventing symptoms of vicarious trauma. Furthermore, as use of evidence-based practices increases, CF and burnout decreases, and clinician CF is related to worker use of EBPs but not to their training in trauma (Craig & Sprang, 2010).

Thus, using evidence-based practices may be a protective factor for workers who work with clients exposed to trauma. It is somewhat surprising that trauma training did not impact CF but EBP did; perhaps this suggests that having a specific modality and framework provides therapists with more protection against their own psychological responses than trauma training. However, this may also be an issue of operationalization and measurement of trauma training, as the findings of Adams and Riggs (2008) indicated that one-time trainings were not as effective in protecting clinicians from STS as formal semester-long or multi-day trauma training series. Taken together, perhaps training in a well-researched intervention and extensive trauma-specific training both give therapists more confidence and competence in their decisions.

### **Prevention and Intervention Strategies to Reduce Worker Stress**

This literature review has examined some of the consequences of worker stress, including decreased worker effectiveness (Hamre et al., 2008) and increased risk for turnover (Spence Laschinger et al., 2009). Additionally, several contributing worker factors that may

contribute to the likelihood that a worker experiences stress have been elucidated, including work complexity and environmental support (Nahrgang et al., 2011), worker and client trauma history (Adams & Riggs, 2008; Baird & Kracen, 2006), and worker defenses and newness to the field (Adams & Riggs, 2008). Before exploring specific interventions, it is important to consider the broader context of stress prevention efforts and their applications.

Across disciplines, professions have been interested in how to prevent stress in their workers. In a systematic review of person-directed and combined (person- and organization-directed) intervention programs aimed at preventing burnout, Awa, Plaumann, and Walter (2010) examined intervention programs with workers from social workers to nurses to firefighters. Interventions were classified as person-directed, combined person- and organization-directed. Common person-directed intervention techniques included cognitive behavioral training, counseling or psychotherapy, and various types of skills training (communication, psychosocial, relaxation), organization-directed interventions included work process restructuring, work performance appraisals, work shift readjustments and job evaluation, and combined person- and organization-directed interventions emphasized ways that the organization could support the employee, including professional or other supervision, work schedule re-evaluation, reorganization, and communication. Interventions that combined person-directed and organization-directed interventions had longer lasting positive effects than just person-directed interventions (Awa et al., 2010). Thus, a stress prevention strategy may be more effective if it works on both the individual and the organizational level. This type of intervention is particularly relevant to social service agencies or education settings, such as childcare centers, where the organizational context is a large aspect of an employee's daily experience. Furthermore, this finding underscores the research of Nahrgang

et al. (2011) that a supportive work environment is most highly associated with reduced employee burnout.

Focusing specifically on early childhood workers that work with children who present with mental health and trauma issues, the final section of this proposal discusses the observed effects of two stress prevention efforts most closely related to Reflective Supervision: Clinical supervision and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC). All three interventions may have group or organizational components, though individual clinical supervision is less likely to incorporate organizational components as directly, ECMHC is less likely to incorporate individual intervention, and RS may not incorporate as much organizational-level intervention. The origins and definition of each intervention are briefly addressed and research available on each intervention is reviewed. Finally, each is evaluated in light of the previously presented findings about workplace demands and worker factors.

### **Related Intervention and Prevention Efforts**

**Clinical supervision and observed effects.** Some observed effects of clinical supervision include a protection against VT (Baird & Kracen, 2006) and the parallel process (Tracey, Bludworth, & Glidden-Tracey, 2012).

***Protection against stress.*** As highlighted earlier by Baird and Kracen (2006), there is some evidence for supervision as a protective factor for symptoms of VT. Similarly, Pearlman and Mac Ian (1995) examined the effects of trauma work on 179 trauma therapists and graduate students via questionnaire and found that therapists who received supervision were newer to the field and less likely to have addressed the effects of trauma work in personal therapy. Furthermore, for clinicians who consider themselves trauma survivors,

supervision was found to be a protection against psychological difficulties (Pearlman & Mac Ian, 1995).

*Parallel process.* The term parallel process originates from the psychoanalytic concepts of transference and countertransference. In the context of work with families, the parallel process is seen in the relational dynamics of the child-parent relationship, which may be re-enacted in the parent-worker relationship and the worker-supervisor relationship. Supervision is theorized to have the potential to counteract these processes through “corrective” relational experiences. Through the supervisor bringing relational dynamics into the worker’s awareness, the worker will be able to more readily recognize relational patterns and respond differently to the parent, who in turn may respond differently to their child. Thus, the concept of parallel process recognizes the bidirectional, interactional, and “nested” nature of these relationships. This theoretical process is widely accepted within the practice community, though the literature has examined the process almost entirely through case studies (Tracey et al., 2012). Unfortunately, little research has systematically examined the concept of parallel process and how supervision may affect change in worker-parent and then parent-child relationships.

An important exception to this was examined in the clinical supervision provided in a university counseling training clinic (Tracey et al., 2012). Seventeen triads were comprised of 17 clients, seven therapists, and three supervisors. Therapy sessions were recorded and then coded using the manualized Interpersonal Communication Rating Scale and rated moment-to-moment client and therapist dominance and affiliation. Then the authors examined each pair of adjacent sessions. They compared the client’s behavior in the previous session to the therapist’s behavior in the subsequent supervision session, and the therapist’s

behavior in the previous therapy session to the supervisor's behavior in the subsequent supervision session. Finally, the authors looked at the difference between the affiliation and dominance behavior scores. They found that for both affiliation and dominance, there was a clear and significant pattern whereby the therapist behaved in ways in supervision that more resembled the client's behavior in the previous session than compared with the therapists' behavior in general.

Tracey et al. (2012) also examined client outcome using a self-report measure of client distress. The researchers found that the more therapists acted like their supervisors (in their behaviors of dominance and affiliation) in the previous supervision session over time, the better the client outcome. Furthermore, the researchers also found evidence that this bidirectional process mirrored the "introduction of change" whereby the supervisor notices the challenging processes that a therapist brings into supervision and engage in alternative behaviors away from client-defined behaviors and towards behaviors more consistent with supporting client change. In altering the behaviors, the supervisor is modeling for the therapist how to act differently with the client. This study provides important evidence for the existence of the parallel process, and makes a strong case for the importance of supervision as a way for workers to learn from their supervisors and a tool to support supervisee effectiveness. While this study didn't emphasize reflection as a central component of supervision, this study did focus on the supervisor as a tool to alter the interactional patterns between the worker and the client. Finally, and perhaps most interesting, the more supervisees imitated or mirrored the behavioral dynamics of dominance or affiliation of their supervisors, the better the client outcome (Tracey et al., 2012).

**Mental health consultation and observed effects.** ECMHC supports teacher competence, self-efficacy, awareness and insight. Furthermore, it has been shown to improve the environment and decrease staff turnover.

***Improved competence, self-efficacy and environment.*** ECMHC has been shown to improve staff efficacy, increase their competence, and lead to an improved overall quality of the environment (Alkon, Ramler, & MacLennan, 2003). In this study, 109 teachers in 25 urban childcare centers participated in ECMHC for an average of two years, and were then followed for a year. The most common mental health consultant activities were observing children (100%), consulting with the director (91%), consulting with individual teachers (91%), meeting with individual families (91%), participating in staff meetings (87%), and consulting with groups or teams of staff (83%). Following the year, teachers and their supervisors rated the teachers' improvements in several areas. Improved competence may be related to the activities of engaging in training (Adams & Riggs, 2008) and using EBPs (Craig & Sprang, 2010), which are related to decreased stress. An increased sense of self-efficacy may help counteract some of the challenges, such as burnout, that result from working with especially difficult populations, while an improved quality of the environment may relate to the similar variable from Nahrgang et al. (2011) who found that a supportive environment is the most effective protection against worker burnout.

***Awareness and insight.*** In assessing changes in awareness of and insight into clients' behaviors, Alkon et al. (2003) qualitatively examined teacher change when receiving MHC. They held teacher focus groups at time 1 and 2, and compared the differences in themes of the teachers' comments. They found that, after receiving MHC for one year, teachers expressed a greater empathy and curiosity about the meaning of children's challenging



behaviors. For example, at time 1, they found it common for teachers to ascribe a deliberately malicious intent to a child's disruptive behavior and the tendency to want the student removed from the center or classroom. At time 2, however, the researchers noted that the teachers increasingly recognized that children's behavior had meaning, and stated that the difficult behaviors taught them something about the child's life experiences. In other words, after receiving MHC, teachers demonstrated increased awareness and insight into the causes of children's behaviors, as well as an increase in empathy. This finding relates strongly to Nahrgang et al.'s (2011) study that found that complexity was the primary job demand in the health care sector. At the beginning of the study, the complexity of interpreting a client's behavior caused teachers to respond using a blanket, one-size-fits-all, dismissive approach. However, after engaging in ECMHC, teachers were better able to view the complexity of the situation with a more grounded and objective lens.

*Decreased staff turnover.* Alkon et al. (2003) also found that the frequency of ECMHC activities was associated with lower staff turnover rates. Furthermore, centers with more years of ECMHC predicted more positive changes in child care quality than centers with fewer years of consultation services.

## **Reflective Supervision**

**History and theoretical underpinnings.** The term reflective supervision (RS) originated from the infant mental health field in the early 1990s. The field of infant mental health was grounded in psychoanalytic theory (Eggbeer et al., 2007; Fraiberg, Adelson, & Shapiro, 1975) and focused on understanding the experiences and inner worlds of families to better comprehend the role of relationships in a child's development. Thus, RS was grounded in a relationally focused orientation. In the 1980s, authors from a variety of fields began to

write about reflection as a key element of professionalism and effective practice, and Donald Schön (1983) described the concept of “reflection-in-action” as a problem-solving approach for professionals. In the 1990s, infant/family workers further discussed the concept of RS in a multidisciplinary task force, and explored how it could be useful in non-mental health early childhood settings. The early childhood field, spearheaded by the work and support of Zero to Three, has been instrumental in furthering RS’s operationalization as a construct.

This study employs attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973, 1980) as an underlying assumption regarding the mechanism by which RS operates. Attachment theory conceptualizes several behavioral systems that influence behavior. One of these systems is called the caregiving system, or the attachment-caregiving social bond (Bowlby, 1969/1982). This system describes the parent’s behavior, and is considered the most important factor guiding the development of the attachment relationship (George & Solomon, 2008). Bowlby understood parent behavior from both biological and ethological perspectives. Specifically, he postulated that some of parenting behaviors were innate and preprogrammed, while others were learned, and were related to attachment processes across the lifespan (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Because preschool teachers engage in constant caregiving behaviors with the children for whom they care, attachment theory is applied in this study as a way to consider how the teachers’ own attachment system may inform the behaviors they exhibit in their work relationships.

Parent internal cues (hormones, beliefs, state) and external cues (environment, child state, child behavior) play important roles in a parent’s caregiving behaviors (Cassidy, 2008). Thus, the caregiving system serves an important evolutionary function: by attending to internal and external cues, a parent increases their child’s chance of survival through

detecting and reacting to potential threats to the child's safety. Furthermore, a child's attachment system and a parent's caregiving system interact, and they may not always match up in terms of child attachment system needs (for example, proximity needs) and parent caregiving behaviors (Cassidy, 2008). For example, a parent's fear system may have a lower threshold for activation, which prompts him or her to engage in retrieval or protection behaviors, while the child may be exploring and their exploratory system wants instead to move away and interact with their environment rather than their parent (Cassidy, 2008). Applying this concept to relationships in the preschool setting, it is apparent that teacher-child mismatches are unavoidable, and may present additional challenges for both teachers and children.

Furthermore, the caregiving system is seen as deeply informed by representational models of caregiving (Bowlby, 1969/1982; George & Solomon, 2008), which has also been termed an internal working model. The internal working model refers to how a person translates interactional patterns into representations of relationships (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973, 1980, 1988). An individual has internal working models of self and other in attachment relationships, and these models help members of an attachment relationship understand, predict or guide interactions with partners. Further, mental model building is a continuous process whereby models are used and revised (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Bowlby asserts that children begin to construct internal working models in concert with the development of language. As a child learns about the world, he creates working models about behavior as well as attachment relationships (Bowlby, 1969/1982).

Internal working models are relationship-specific and mutually confirming (Bretherton & Munholland, 2008). In other words, an affectionate and available relationship

with one attachment figure will not translate automatically into similar feelings towards another caregiver. Furthermore, when two attachment figures offer very different relationship-specific working models of attachment, this introduces additional complexity for children. Finally, over time, “the pattern becomes increasingly a property of the child himself, which means that he tends to impose it, or some derivative of it, upon new relationships such as with a teacher, a foster-mother, or a therapist,” (Bowlby, 1988, p. 127). Thus, while it is relationally-specific in its development, over time an internal working model is re-enacted in other relationships. This is relevant to teacher behavior because teacher relationships with children, parents, and colleagues are informed by their own models.

Another relevant issue is how to understand the intergenerational transmission of attachment working models (Bretherton & Munholland, 2008). Specifically, Bowlby proposed that internal working models of attachment relations are communicated from parent to child through the quality of interactions and the open discussion of emotion and relationships (Bowlby, 1973, 1988). Through these two ways of communicating, intergenerational transmission occurs, because a parent draws on their own experiences of communication within their family of origin and replicates this style with their child. This aspect of working models is applied in this study to thinking about how childhood experiences of relationships may inform teachers’ caregiving and relational behavior in their work.

**Essential features of reflective supervision.** One of the first seminal works attempting to define the concept of RS was articulated by (Fenichel, 1992) and the Zero To Three National Center for Clinical Infant Programs’ Work Group on Supervision and Mentorship. This multidisciplinary group identified three essential features of effective

supervision and mentorship in work with infants, toddlers, and their families: (a) Reflection, (b) Collaboration, and (c) Regularity.

**Reflection.** Reflection is the “continuing conceptualization of what one is observing and doing,” (Fenichel, 1992, p. 13). This may be facilitated through the supervisee providing process notes, or audio or video recordings that can be considered with the supervisor. In reflection, a supervisee steps back from the immediate work and considers the principles underlying one’s own practice. Through the process of reflection, supervisors and supervisees acknowledge areas to enhance knowledge, skills, and sensitivity. In reflecting, a supervisee learns to attend to their own emotional responses to learn more about the child and family, which may translate to more sensitive interventions. Finally, a supervisee examines their values to better understand their own personal identity (Fenichel, 1992).

**Collaboration.** Collaboration is built upon a foundation of shared power, clear mutual expectations, and communication (Fenichel, 1992). Power is held mutually with the supervisee’s own experience recognized. Expectations are made clear through a supervisory contract that “clarifies the boundaries and responsibilities of each participant” (Fenichel, 1992, p. 15). Honesty and trust are foundational elements underlying this interactional process in which ideas, observations, emotions, connections, questions, and themes are mutually shared. Supervisor-supervisee communication is thought of as a parallel process: open and respectful, it should be a model for the same communication that would occur between professionals and parents, and parents and their children.

**Regularity.** Regularity recognizes the under-resourced nature and competing demands of infant-family work environments. Despite these challenges and pressures, the importance of allocating regular time for reflection is important. Just as professionals see the

importance of investing in young children and families, RS recognizes the importance of investing in the professional development of staff.

As with the definitions discussed in the previous section, these key components highlight reflection and collaboration. However, while perhaps assumed in the first two definitions, this workgroup explicitly identified regularity as a key component of RS.

**Dimensions of reflective supervision.** Sets of relevant dimensions of RS have also been articulated (Emde, 2009). These dimensions were theorized by drawing from Emde's 30 years of clinical experience engaging in RS. Specifically, he identified three dimensions he believed to be necessary to foster a successful reflective process in early intervention and childcare settings: (a) sharing and learning, (b) emotional support and vulnerability, and (c) systems sensitivity. Thus, Emde furthered the understanding of the RS process by highlighting these aspects as psychological and interactional processes.

***Sharing and learning.*** The sharing and learning dimension includes instances of mutual observations and experiences with young children, families, and staff across contexts and time. These shared observations may occur in dyadic or group RS and facilitate communal learning and planning.

***Emotional support and vulnerability.*** Emotional support and vulnerability recognizes that RS occurs within the context of relationships, and provides a worker with emotional support by reinforcing a worker's strengths and successes and partnering with them around areas of vulnerability. More specifically, this dimension recognizes the inherent challenges in working with young children and families, and acknowledges the common affective responses such anxiety and sadness. Scholars may describe RS as a "holding environment" where these painful responses may be explored safely and supported. Furthermore, this

dimension includes understanding the use of self in relationship-based work. In other words, RS allows workers to gain insight and self-knowledge as a way to better serve the children and families with whom they work.

***Systems sensitivity.*** Systems sensitivity acknowledges the parallel processes that occur within agencies whereby relationship dynamics and experiences reverberate on multiple levels of an organization. This dimension includes an examination of relationship conflicts as opportunities to better understand and support the larger system. Systems sensitivity also includes identifying, preventing, and addressing boundary issues as a way to promote professionalism and safety in the workplace.

Emde's first two dimensions could be seen as further articulating what Fenichel's first two components, reflection and collaboration, will result in when successful: sharing and learning and emotional support and vulnerability. Emde's third dimension, systems sensitivity, introduces a new component, which acknowledges the critical importance of administrative support and the parallel processes that occur within systems of relationships.

**Best practice guidelines and endorsement process.** The endorsement process for reflective supervisors may represent the most comprehensive operationalization of the skills and experience required to be a reflective supervisor. This section will describe the competency guidelines and endorsement process for reflective practitioners from the MI-AIMH. The MI-AIMH is regarded as a leading reflective practice endorsement model in the field and has been adopted by other several states.

The MI-AIMH details several objectives of RS/reflective practice/consultation. They include: forming a trusting relationship between the supervisor and practitioner, consistent and predictable meetings and times, asking questions that encourage details about the parent-

child emerging relationship, listening, remaining emotionally present, teaching/guiding, nurturing/supporting, applying the integration of emotion and reason, fostering the reflective process to be internalized by the supervisee, exploring the parallel process, allowing time for personal reflection, and attending to how reactions to the content affect the process (Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, 2009). These objectives, along with the guidelines (see p. 3-4 for more information) provide important goals and behaviors for the practice of RS.

More recently, an extensive three-phase study incorporating expert perspectives on RS defined its critical components (Tomlin, Weatherston, & Pavkov, 2014). Six consensus themes were identified: (1) mutual behaviors and qualities necessary for reflective supervision (mutual respect, a safe confidential relationship, mutual professionalism), (2) behaviors a supervisor demonstrates in each RS session (attentive, self-aware, skillful observations), (3) qualities a supervisor demonstrates in each RS session (tolerant/nonjudgmental, reliable and predictable, safe and confidential resource), (4) behaviors a supervisee demonstrated in RS sessions (nondefensive stance, realistic expectations, ability to ask for help), (5) structure of RS sessions (private, quiet setting, regular and consistent), and (6) process of RS sessions (supervisor encourages continuous learning and improvement) (Tomlin et al., 2014). This study suggested that, from the perspective of the expert participants, the supervisor's personal qualities and behaviors, relational safety, and regularity and consistency may be most important of the critical components.

Finally, another recent collaborative group has attempted to define the “essential elements” and to identify measureable behavioral “indicators” illustrating each element



(Watson et al., 2014). The 16 initial elements identified in this group were: parallel process, feelings and emotions, within session structure, acknowledge professional competence, relationship building, between session structure, baby/child experience, professional use of self, problem solving, family experience, reflection, verbal communication, exploring, listening and nonverbal communication (Watson et al., 2014). These elements were then reduced to five indicators: understanding the story, parallel process, keeping the baby in mind, professional use of self, and working alliance (Watson et al., 2014). The indicators became the framework for a multi-level assessment tool, the Reflective Interaction Observation Scale (RIOS). The RIOS has just begun to be used in the assessment of RS.

**Theorized effects.** Clinicians and researchers have posited several potential effects that RS may have on supervisees and their work. The theorized effects generally fall in five categories: Increased knowledge and competence, improved worker wellbeing, enhanced awareness and insight into own and others' thoughts and actions, improved relationships with children and families, and systems changes. Unfortunately, there exists limited research and systemic evaluation of RS (Heffron & Murch, 2010) and the majority of existing scholarship describes theoretical effects and case observations. Therefore, this section only presents effects that have been empirically investigated.

**Observed effects.** In previous studies, RS has been found to improve teachers' awareness and insight, and facilitate staff effectiveness and systems change.

***Awareness and insight.*** Awareness and insight includes workers' self-perceptions and their perceptions of others, and has been demonstrated in qualitative and quantitative studies to be an outcome of participation in RS. In a qualitative study that examined themes within RS sessions, RS was piloted with service coordinators who worked as gatekeepers to

Early Intervention services. To learn the content themes of the RS sessions, 382 supervision log entries were reviewed from 185 supervision sessions (Gilkerson & Ritzler, 2005). The dominant theme within this area included discussion of self-knowledge, emotional awareness, and use of self. Specifically, the service coordinators sought to understand the most helpful ways to work with the families by reflecting on the complex aspects of their relationships. They also explored their own feelings that arose in working with families. Service coordinators described how RS helped them learn “how to work past and with those feelings,” and to “learn to work appropriately in spite of affect,” (Gilkerson & Ritzler, 2005, p. 441). While this qualitative study did not examine whether self-awareness and insight increased over time spent in RS, the themes that emerged within the sessions demonstrated how workers and supervisors sought increased awareness and insight within RS.

In assessing changes in self-awareness and insight quantitatively, Virmani and Ontai (2010) compared the effects of traditional and RS in a sample of childcare workers.

Traditional supervision consisted of an initial 4-hour orientation followed by biweekly 2-hour training meetings. RS consisted of an initial 3-hour orientation followed by daily end-of-the-day 15-minute discussions and weekly 1.5-hour seminars during which workers were encouraged to reflect on their experiences. Participants were student childcare workers who were new to the child care site and followed across one academic quarter. Participants completed the *Insightfulness Assessment* (Koren-Karie, Oppenheim, Dolev, Sher, & Etzion-Carasso, 2002) before receiving supervision, and again two and a half months later. The Insightfulness Assessment is a 5-minute videotaped play sequence between the worker and the child that includes three distinct play segments. Following the taping, workers are asked about their thoughts and feelings about the interaction and more generally about their

feelings about child. Workers who experienced RS as compared to traditional supervision demonstrated increased complexity, insight, openness, acceptance, richness, and coherence. These results should be interpreted with caution as there existed some differences between the groups, such as prior training, experience, and mean hours worked per week.

Unfortunately, the sample size ( $n = 20$ ) also limited the possible statistical analyses. Despite these limitations, this study offers an important contribution to the literature because it is one of the first to attempt to quantitatively examine the changes a worker experiences when they are encouraged to reflect on their work and relationships with the children and families with whom they work. Furthermore, the results suggest that RS may lead to increased self-awareness and insight, which is one of its aims. Future research should also examine whether increased insight corresponds with more sensitive interventions and increased effectiveness.

***Staff effectiveness and systems change.*** RS has also been shown to improve staff effectiveness and systems change. Howes, James, and Ritchie (2003) found that education, mentorship, a commitment to the community, and reflective supervision contributed to teacher effectiveness in their responsive involvement, language play, and language arts. Gilkerson and Ritzler (2005) assessed the perceived benefits of RS by having service coordinators identify five areas in which they found RS to be most helpful. The participants identified the following areas: (a) helps the manager and service coordinator understand each other, (b) feels safe – one can express feelings without worry, (c) structured time is conducive to reflection, (d) feel they have a support system, and (e) helps with the emotions that come as a result of the work with families. These five areas all center on ways to foster support for staff through emotional safety, communication and relationships, and reflection. This relates back to Nahrgang et al.'s (2011) research that found a supportive work

environment to be the biggest protection against worker burnout. While ECMHC has more of a stated emphasis on “doing” through modeling, coaching, or training, RS emphasizes improving relationships through communication and safety. ECMHC states that RS may be included as a supplementary component of its broader intervention, but it is not a key feature. In trying to understand the differences between clinical supervision, ECMHC, and RS, it is clear that there is certainly overlap across the interventions, just as there are overlap among burnout, VT, STS and CF, and the interventions can vary depending on the setting or role demands.

### **Research Gaps**

The existing literature provides support for the notion that burnout, VT, STS, and CF contribute negatively to worker wellbeing, and clinical supervision, ECMHC, and RS may be useful stress prevention strategies. However, there are still several areas that would benefit from further empirical investigation and this study will contribute to our understanding of some of these research gaps.

First, this study will contribute to the field’s understanding of the definitions and scope(s) of RS and ECMHC by more specifically defining the activities taking place at each site. This will contribute to the field by attempting to enable each intervention to be measured more consistently. The terms ECMHC and RS are often used interchangeably, and at times their activities overlap significantly. However, within the literature their stated objectives are different and activities vary (Duran et al., 2009; Heffron, 2005). Having a unified definition is important for practitioners, but probably more important when conducting research studies because both the dosage (amount of intervention) and the activities (nature of intervention) can vary significantly. For example, one preschool may hire a reflective practitioner to run

RS groups with their full staff 45 minutes per week, while another preschool may hire a reflective practitioner to run four small 90-minute groups per week, two hours of administrator RS, and 10 hours a week in the classrooms. Both programs will say they are using RS, but the dosage and the activities are quite different, making comparisons of intervention efficacy and effectiveness difficult. Therefore, while specific definitions may not be as important to practitioners who recognize that consultants provide flexible and individualized services according to a program's needs, more specific definitions would help researchers investigate the impacts of the interventions within and across settings. A more specific definition and well-researched intervention, in turn, will further inform practitioners' use of evidence-based interventions.

This study will also contribute to the literature by examining individual worker variables such as personal trauma history, history of parental attachment relationships, and the relationship between parental attachment relationships and current stress and work relationships. These findings may contribute to the understanding of the likelihood a teacher is to experience stress, which could be used to screen and target prevention strategies. For example, if a screening assessment can reliably identify workers who may be at particular risk for developing symptoms of burnout, STS, or VT because of their defense style or trauma history, then targeting interventions may provide the extra support they need. Because we know that workers who are newer to the field, not using EBPs (Craig & Sprang, 2010) or who don't have specific training in trauma (Adams & Riggs, 2008) tend to experience more stress, it may be helpful to measure the effectiveness of interventions that attempt to identify these workers and then target them for an intervention. While we know some information

about the type of worker who may be more vulnerable to experiencing burnout or stress, more research is needed in identifying individual-level variables.

Finally, this study also examines worker experience, level of education, and length of employment at their site in order to better understand how prevention efforts may have impacted staff. Research on the effectiveness of prevention and intervention efforts is important; for example, efforts such as extra supervision for professionals newer to the field, providing training to staff in EBPs, and providing ongoing trauma training have been researched. Examining the impact of these efforts through organizational changes over time should also be studied. For example, a workplace can provide or support ongoing training and supervision, and track their employees' engagement in these activities or potential indicators of stress such as employee sick days, length of employment (and turnover rates), worker self-reported stress, or client satisfaction.

### III: METHOD

#### Research Approach

##### Research Paradigm

This study uses the paradigm *pragmatism* to guide the research inquiry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Pragmatism focuses on using multiple methods to answer the question of what works in practice. Pragmatism is the predominant worldview for mixed methods research, because it places the research question as primary importance over method or paradigm and offers a compromise between postpositivism and constructivism, and it is practical and applied.

##### Rationale for Using Mixed Methods in this Study

While multiple rationales for using a mixed methods approach might be relevant to a particular study, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) recommend having at least one clearly articulated reason for performing mixed methods research. Mixed methods are used in this study for a few primary reasons. First, to *triangulate* findings, whereby quantitative and qualitative research is combined to mutually corroborate findings, which leads to greater validity. Second, the methods associated with quantitative and qualitative research have their own strengths and weaknesses, so combining the two methods enables the researcher to *offset* the weaknesses and draw on both methods' strengths. Third, studying this phenomenon using mixed methods will yield a more *complete*, or comprehensive understanding of the topic (Bryman, 2006).

##### Research Design Decisions

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) assert that there are three main phases of mixed methods research: (1) *conceptualization*, (2) *method/design*, and (3) *inference*. A brief

overview of *conceptualization* and follows, while *method/design* is partially discussed in the procedure section and integrated into the data analysis section, along with *inference*.

### **Conceptualization**

This research study uses a *fixed design*, where the methods are planned from the beginning of the research process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This design choice was made because, in conducting a study fulfilling the requirements of a PPCT framework, it is important to determine the measurement of each sphere of influence before starting data collection. Furthermore, this study uses a *typology-based approach*, whereby an existing design is selected and adapted to the study's purpose and questions. This decision was made because an existing design (embedded mixed methods) made sense in light of the present research study, and because of the recommendation made by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) that researchers who are new to mixed methods select a typology-based approach.

### **Participants**

Thirty-seven teachers participated in the study: 18 teachers were in their first year of RS and 19 teachers had experienced at least two years of RS (range was 2-5 years). Teachers worked with children birth to five years old in early childhood care centers. A subsample of 20 teachers was interviewed for the qualitative portion of the study.



Table 1 provides basic demographic information of the participants. The sample was comprised predominantly of Latina women, though not all participants completed assessments at both time points. One *Experienced* group program discontinued RS in the middle of the year, and as a result, researchers decided not to pursue follow up measure collection for that school. Further, in responding to the needs of the community organizations, some questions were cut from some surveys. Therefore, the *n* varies depending on the variables examined. When a respondent skipped a particular item, the researcher followed the guidelines of the measure for how to address missing data.

Thirty-four of the 37 participants completed the quantitative intake assessment. The three teachers who did not complete the assessment had completed an interview but did not return the quantitative assessment packet. Twenty teachers completed the interview, yielding both quantitative and qualitative data on 17 teachers. Eighteen teachers had completed two months of RS at the time that quantitative data was collected and eight of these teachers were later interviewed after nine months of RS. Nineteen teachers had experienced at least two years of RS at the time quantitative data was collected, and 12 were interviewed after at least two years of RS.

The majority of the teachers were bilingual Latina and Caucasian women with an Associate's or Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or similar field, and eight of the 34 (23.5%) surveys were completed in Spanish. Teachers' age ( $n = 33$ ) ranged from 22-67 years ( $M = 39.76$ ;  $S.D. = 13.61$ ). Pseudonyms were also selected for each participant who was interviewed, and are listed in

Table 2. Because there was only one male in the sample, three participants were assigned gender-neutral names and have gender-neutral pronouns when quoted in order to protect the male participant's confidentiality.

Table 1

*Teacher Demographics (n = 37)*

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	Percent
Female	36	97.3
In first year of RS	18	48.6
Race		
Asian	1	2.7
Latina	27	73.0
White	9	24.3
Parent <sup>1</sup>	19	63.3
Marital Status <sup>1</sup>		
Married	17	56.7
Divorced	4	13.3
Never Married	9	30.0
Education <sup>2</sup>		
No HS diploma	2	5.9
HS diploma or GED	6	17.6

Table 1 Continued

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	Percent
Some college or 2 year degree	16	47.1
B.A.	10	29.4

*Note.* <sup>1</sup> *n* = 30; <sup>2</sup> *n* = 34

Table 2

*Interviewed Teachers' Pseudonyms (n = 20)*

Teacher Pseudonym	Years RS	Ethnicity
Alex	2+	Caucasian
Erika	2+	Latina
Cecilia	2+	Latina
Natalia	2+	Latina
Jasmin	2+	Latina
Guadalupe	2+	Latina
Catalina	2+	Latina
Morgan	2+	Caucasian

Table 2 Continued

Teacher Pseudonym	Years RS	Ethnicity
Rosa	2+	Latina
Taylor	2+	Latino/a
Lisa	2+	Caucasian
Sofia	2+	Latina
Alma	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Latina
Emily	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Caucasian
Nicole	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Caucasian
Sarah	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Latina
Amy	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Caucasian
Elisa	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Latina
Victoria	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Latina
Julia	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Latina

### **Years in Reflective Supervision**

Teachers in the *New* group were all experiencing RS for the first time. The majority of teachers in the *Experienced* group had experienced RS since it was introduced to their agency (4 years or 5 years, depending on the year longitudinal data was collected). However, a few teachers in the *Experienced* group started working at the agency after the intervention had begun and had therefore participated for less time. The average amount of time participating in RS for the *Experienced* group was 4.09 years (*S.D.* = .831) and the range was 2-5 years.

### **Ethnic Differences on PBI**

Ethnic differences on the PBI were explored because of the concern that ethnicity may relate to parental relationships.

Table 3 displays these differences. Latina participants had lower mean maternal care scores than White participants, though this difference was not significant but had a medium effect size,  $t(25) = -1.964, p = .061, r = .353$ . Latina participants also had significantly higher mean maternal overprotection scores, and this difference had a medium to large effect,  $t(25) = -2.065, p = .049, r = .415$ . Latina and White participants had almost identical mean father care and overprotection scores.

Table 3

*Ethnic Differences between White and Latina Participants on the PBI*

Characteristic	Mean (S.D.) PBI Scale Score		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Latina <sup>1</sup>	White <sup>2</sup>		
Mother Care	23.37 (5.469)	28.63 (8.193)	-1.964	.061
Mother Overprotection	16.16 (8.228)	9.38 (6.545)	2.065	.045
Father Care	24.40 (6.390)	24.13 (14.207)	.052	.949
Father Overprotection	14.80 (7.720)	14.38 (8.123)	.122	.903

*Note.* <sup>1</sup> *n* = 19 for Latina mother ratings; *n* = 15 for Latina father ratings; <sup>2</sup> *n* = 8 for both mother and father ratings

### Measures

In addition to using a mixed methods approach, this study also aimed to fulfill the criteria of Bronfenbrenner's Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) bioecological model. This section will introduce the measures that address each aspect. Quantitative measures and the qualitative interview guide are provided in Appendix A and B, respectively.

### Process

In this study, the teacher *processes* are assessed using: (a) teacher frustration in working with parents, which is a function of interactions over time; (b) teacher work stress and satisfaction; and (c) the qualitative interview, specifically focusing on comments related to the teachers' interactions with children, parents, and the reflective supervisor.



**Index of Teaching Stress.** (ITS; Greene, Abidin, & Kmetz, 1997). The full ITS measure is comprised of 90 self-report items, but only the six items that load onto the Frustration with Parents (FWP) scale are used for this study. The items used ask a teacher to identify their most stressful student and consider their level of stress in relation to their frustration working with the student's parents. The ITS was normed on 1,488 teachers and demonstrated high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .75 - .93$ ) for all subscales except disruption to the teaching process, which had relatively low internal consistency ( $\alpha = .46$ ). Further, the ITS had highly significant discriminant validity on all subscales when comparing behaviorally challenging students to a comparison group (Greene et al., 1997). This measure was administered at two time-points: once at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the school year.

**Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue, Version 5.** (ProQOL; Stamm, 2010). The ProQOL is a 30-item questionnaire designed to measure professional helpers' quality of life. Professionals rate how much they experienced an item in the past month on a 5-point Likert scale (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, and Very Often). Responses yield scores on three scales: Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout, and Secondary Traumatic Stress. The ProQOL has demonstrated good reliability and validity; Compassion Satisfaction ( $\alpha = .88$ ), Burnout ( $\alpha = .75$ ), and Secondary Traumatic Stress ( $\alpha = .81$ ). The ProQOL has been studied among diverse income, age, gender, and ethnic groups. No significant differences have been shown across income groups, age groups, or gender groups. Significant differences were found for the Secondary Traumatic Stress and Burnout scale among Whites and Non-Whites, with Whites reporting less burnout than Non-Whites

(Stamm, 2010). This measure was administered at two time-points: once at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the school year.

**Qualitative interview.** Each qualitative interview took about 45-60 minutes. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed.

### **Person**

To assess *person* characteristics of the teachers, this study uses demographic questions to assess *demand* characteristics. To assess *resource* characteristics, this study asks participants about their histories of potentially traumatic experiences, and their relationship(s) with their own parents as a child (*teacher parental relationships*). This study does not directly assess *force* characteristics, though these may be captured indirectly in the qualitative interviews (for example, teacher optimism, motivations, or persistence in their work).

**Demographic questions.** Participants reported demographic information such as age, sex, racial/ethnic identity, marital status, education, and years of employment.

**Adverse Childhood Experiences.** (ACE; Felitti et al., 1998). The ACE questionnaire is a 10-item, self-report inventory that asks adults whether any of the experiences listed were a part of their childhood. Respondents endorse whether they have experienced an event in their childhood as described by a behaviorally-defined, one-sentence prompt. Prompts describe experiences of childhood physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, emotional and physical neglect, divorce, substance abuse, mental illness, intimate partner violence, and a family in jail or prison. ACE summary scores can range between 0 and 10, with an ACE score of 0 given when a respondent reports no exposure to any type of potentially traumatic event and an ACE score of 10 reflecting client endorsement of exposure to all of the

categories of trauma. In a retrospective study of patients in primary care, the number of childhood traumatic events an individual experienced (their ACE score) is associated with greater risk for depression and adult substance abuse (Anda et al., 2002), and problems in affective, somatic, substance abuse, memory, sexual, and aggression-related domains (Anda et al., 2006). Endorsement of these childhood experiences has been shown to have a graded relationship with many adult health risk behaviors (Anda et al., 2006), and has been found to be associated with many of the leading causes of death in adults (Felitti et al., 1998). Further, compared with people with an ACE score of 0, individuals with an ACE score of 5 or greater were 7-10 times more likely to report illicit drug use problems and addiction to illicit drugs (Dube et al., 2003). The ACE has been shown to have good to excellent test-retest reliability (Dube, Williamson, Thompson, Felitti, & Anda, 2004).

**Parental Bonding Instrument.** (PBI; Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979). The PBI assesses teacher's early relationships with their own attachment figures. It consists of two 25-item questionnaires: one to be completed about the teacher's mother figure and one about their father figure. Respondents rate the degree to which a statement is true of each parent on a four-point likert scale with response options being *very like*, *moderately like*, *moderately unlike*, and *very unlike*. Responses are grouped into the scales *care* and *overprotection/control*, and they are designed to capture fundamental parental styles as perceived by the adult child. The cutoff scores for the care scale for mothers is 27 and fathers is 24, and the cutoff scores for the overprotection scale for mothers is 13.5 and fathers is 12.5. The two scales allow for respondents to fall in one of four quadrants: *Affectionate constraint* (high care and high overprotection), *Affectionless control* (high overprotection and low care), *optimal parenting* (high care and low overprotection), and *neglectful parenting*

(low care and low overprotection). The PBI has been found to show good reliability and validity, good internal consistency and test-retest reliability, and satisfactory construct and convergent validity (Parker, 1990; Parker et al., 1979). The PBI has been studied in relation to adult mental health concerns. Adult participants who reported lower care and/or higher overprotection in childhood were more likely to be self-critical (Brewin, Firth-Cozens, Furnham, & McManus, 1992) and depressed (Parker, 1979), for example (for reviews, see Parker, 1990, 1998).

### **Context**

This study assessed participants within different macrosystems, because each preschool has specific cultural factors related to climate (public and private) and primary population served (homeless and low-income). Further, this study's sample of teachers are mainly from Latino/a and White backgrounds, so influences related to ethnic/cultural differences are also considered.

### **Time**

This study captured the influence of time by using longitudinal data collection to assess changes in teachers' ratings of their frustration working with parents (ITS-FWP). This study also assessed time through the qualitative interview, where responses will be coded specifically for comments about changes that teachers have observed over time. Finally, because some preschool settings have experienced the intervention for different amounts of time, time will also be captured through qualitative comparisons between teachers' perceived experiences across schools.

## **Procedure**

### **Context for Intervention**

The intervention under investigation came about through a collaboration started in 2008 between a local community mental health agency that specializes serving high risk children and families, and a preschool that serves families who are currently or formerly homeless (site A). Both agencies noticed an increasing number of referrals for mental health services from the preschool, and wondered whether the teachers could benefit from additional support and training. Preliminary activities initially consisted of: the creation of a preschool taskforce, the development of a timeline and procedure for referrals and collaboration, workshops for teachers on vicarious trauma and best practices, and the consideration of how the preschool might shift towards providing more therapeutic services. Next, focus groups assessed the teachers' perspectives on their strengths and needs regarding work satisfaction, child behavior, support, and relationships with families. Finally, four reflective supervision groups were created based upon classroom teaching teams. The first supervision groups occurred in fall 2009.

As teachers responded favorably to the intervention, other early childcare settings became interested in services. In 2011, services were expanded to an additional site (site B) that works with low income families, and in 2013, three more sites began receiving services: two public preschools (sites C and D) with two classrooms each, and one transitional housing child care site (site E) with two classrooms. Sites C, D, and E each had two RS teaching teams.

### **Intervention**

In each site, a reflective supervisor worked with the same teaching teams throughout the school year. Teaching teams were comprised of the teachers from the same classroom or age group. The sizes of the teams range from 2-5 teachers. Teachers from each site

participate in RS, though the number of additional hours of ECMHC activities that are provided varied by site. The facilitators of RS in this study were informed by the manual *Reflective supervision and leadership in infant and early childhood programs* (Heffron & Murch, 2010). This book is considered to be the preeminent text for reflective practitioners and includes discussion of supervisor roles, skills, tips, and vignettes. RS occurred on a weekly or biweekly basis for between 45 and 90 minutes, depending on the site. Common content areas include: current approaches to child development; how culture and context shape development and guide intervention; family development, family systems and community resources; the importance of caregiver-child relationship and interactions; professional use of self; and standards of best practices for developmental assessment, intervention planning, and service delivery (Heffron & Murch, 2010). Participants in four of the five sites also received other ECMHC services, including in-classroom behavior support and coaching, parent support, and administrative RS. One site, site E, only received staff and administrative RS.

### **Participant Recruitment**

Teachers from classrooms of all ages (infant to preschool classrooms) who received reflective supervision were recruited through the regular RS meetings. Teachers were informed that their decision to participate in the research study in no way impacted their employment and was confidential from their RS supervisor and program administrators.

### **Sampling Procedures**

This mixed methods study employed a stratified purposive sampling technique as described by Teddlie and Yu (2007). In this sampling technique, probability and purposive sampling techniques are combined. Groups are divided into strata, and then a small number

of cases are selected within each stratum using purposive sampling (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). In this study, the groups were the length of time that teachers have received reflective supervision. Specifically, teachers with more than two years receiving RS were in one group, and teachers in their first year of RS comprised the other group. An advantage to using this sampling technique is that it allows the researcher to articulate characteristics that may be unique or different between groups (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). This may allow the researcher to further capture the developmental aspects of the intervention.

### **Data Collection**

This study followed teachers longitudinally over the school year. Data was collected through an existing collaboration with a local mental health agency and five local preschools. Two preschool sites serve mainly homeless and formerly homeless children and families, while three sites serve mainly low-income children and families. Directors from all programs were supportive of the research study. Both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data were collected. The procedure for collecting each type of data is described below, and presented in

Table 4. Because the study was expanded to include additional sites midway through, the qualitative interviews for the *Experienced* group occurred in fall, while the interviews for the *New* group occurred in spring.



Table 4

*Measures Administration Timeline*

Group	Fall	Spring
New Group (no prior RS) <i>n</i> = 18	PBI	ITS (FWP)
	ACE	ProQOL
	ITS (FWP)	Qualitative Interview
	ProQOL	
Experienced Group (2+ years RS) <i>n</i> = 19	PBI	ITS (FWP)
	ACE	ProQOL
	ITS (FWP)	
	ProQOL	
	Qualitative Interview	

**Quantitative data collection procedure.** The quantitative measures included a subset of measures (ProQOL, ITS) that teachers already completed as part of an internal agency evaluation. Teachers were asked to consent to have this information shared with researchers in addition to completing in an additional part of the study, which included the ACE and PBI. In total, the initial questionnaires took about forty minutes to complete, and follow up questionnaires took about twenty or thirty minutes to complete. Teachers were compensated with a \$10 grocery store gift card for their completion of the quantitative questionnaires. Quantitative surveys were conducted at two time points: in November or December (fall/time 1) and May or June (spring/time 2). The first time point was chosen to

give teachers two or three months to get to know parents and children. The follow up time point was chosen to allow for maximum impact of the intervention before measuring outcomes.

In the quantitative strand of this study, because of the small sample size, statistical conclusion validity is a concern in this study. To adjust for this concern, the qualitative data is given a primary emphasis and triangulation will enable corroboration of findings. Further risks associated with statistical conclusion validity include potential issues with the reliability of treatment implementation and heterogeneity of units. Because each school varied slightly in the amount of intervention they receive, there are potential concerns about whether schools that receive more of the intervention may experience different outcomes than schools who receive less. This concern was guarded through the use of triangulation with qualitative observations and the use of a common treatment manual to standardize the intervention. Further, reflective supervisors met regularly to talk as a group about the experiences using the intervention, which allows them to develop consensus and solicit group feedback about carrying out the intervention.

**Qualitative interview procedure.** Teachers were asked if they would like to consent to participate in an audio-recorded qualitative interview. Interviews took about one hour, and the interviews occurred on an individual basis in a private office depending on the teacher's preference. Program administrators offered that teachers may complete their interview on site during work time. Teachers were reimbursed with a \$10 grocery store gift card for their participation in the interview. Qualitative interviews with teachers occurred after the teacher experienced at least one school year of the intervention. Because the teachers in the study have experienced different amounts of the intervention based upon the year that their school

implemented it, at the time of interview teachers in the *Experienced* group had about four years of RS, while teachers in the *New* group had about nine months of RS. There are strengths and limitations to this procedure. An advantage of this approach is that by collecting the perspectives of teachers who have experienced varying lengths of the intervention, responses may be placed longitudinally and conceptualized as different stages along a developmental process. Thus, interviews may be grouped by time receiving the intervention, and compared across time points. However, a limitation of this approach is that because the length of time receiving the intervention also varies by school, teachers from different schools come from varying contexts. Specifically, they have different reflective supervisors, amounts of time dedicated to the intervention, school climate, and management or environmental dynamics. On the one hand, the heterogeneity of the group makes the data more generalizable; on the other, it also makes it more difficult to attribute differences in outcomes to the intervention versus environmental factors. Further, because of the addition of new sites midway through the study, the interviews with the “longer” group occurred in the fall while interviews with the “shorter” group occurred in the spring. This is a potential threat to validity because across the school year the teachers may experience different types of stress; for example, when paperwork is due or looking forward to the end of the school year. While this cannot be fully guarded against, this threat will be minimized by noting this potential concern in the methods and interpretations. Further, this may not make too much difference because the interview asks questions that shouldn’t vary much over the school year. A teacher being interviewed at the end of the year (the *New* group) may have more experiences in that year to draw on as examples, but that may be balanced out by teachers in the *Experienced* group having several years of stories to draw on, even if only a few months

of the current school year.

**Threats to validity in data collection.** In terms of data collection issues, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) delineate four potential threats to validity and strategies to minimize their influence. The first threat is selecting inappropriate individuals for qualitative and quantitative data collection. To minimize this threat, quantitative and qualitative samples are drawn from the same population. The second threat to validity is obtaining unequal sample sizes for the qualitative and quantitative data collection; Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) recommend using large qualitative samples or small quantitative samples so that the same number of cases can be selected, which researchers will attempt to do. The third threat is introducing potential bias through one data collection on the other data collection; to minimize this threat the qualitative and quantitative data will be collected separately. Finally, the fourth threat related to data collection is collecting two types of data that do not address the same issues. To guard against this threat, the researcher will address the same question in both quantitative and qualitative data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

## **Design**

Because an embedded model was selected, the level of interaction for the present study is *interactive*, whereby there is a mixing of the quantitative and qualitative data at some point before interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In terms of priority, this study conceptually embeds the quantitative data strand within the qualitative strand, thus giving priority to the qualitative data strand. This decision was made for a few reasons. First, because of the exploratory nature of this research study, the qualitative data may yield more rich information about the experiences of the teachers. Furthermore, due to the variability in the length of time that teachers have received the interventions, as well as the cultures of the

agencies, it is expected that the qualitative data will provide a more meaningful context from which to view the data. Finally, because of the limited sample size (see participants section below), the qualitative data is more likely to have transferability than the quantitative data.

In terms of the temporal relationship between the quantitative and qualitative in data collection and interpretation, this study used *concurrent* data collection and interpretation, where quantitative and qualitative strands are collected in a single phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). One rationale for this method in the data collection phase is to enable the participants to experience both qualitative and quantitative data collection at the same time. A qualitative interview can enable a participant to feel heard and respected (Campbell, Adams, Wasco, Ahrens, & Sefl, 2010), so this was especially important because, per the collaborative agencies, many participants in the study already feel overwhelmed with paperwork. By establishing rapport with participants through allowing time for them to express themselves and feel listened to, they may have had a more positive experience with the quantitative data completion.

In mixing the quantitative and qualitative strands, data in this study was mixed during research design phase, through *merging* the two strands and *embedding* the data within a larger design. Finally, this study used an embedded mixed methods design because it is an appropriate method for studies that attempt to develop a more complete understanding of a process or outcome.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Integrative Mixed Methods Data Analysis**

For the qualitative data, each interview was audio recorded, and transcribed. Analyses are situated in a grounded theory framework (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin,

1990). This position sees data collection and analysis as an ongoing interactive process in which each inform and refine the other with the goal of improving the fit with the data (Thornberg, 2012). Quantitative and qualitative data are merged concurrently. Concurrent, integrative, and unified analyses of qualitative and quantitative data have also been described using a compatible and related design, *integrative mixed methods* (Castro, Kellison, Boyd, & Kopak, 2010). This design approach is characterized by parallelism in the study design. Because this design describes the analytic strategies for integrating quantitative and qualitative in depth, this study will also draw on integrative mixed methods as a resource to inform analyses. Integrative mixed method design occurs in six stages: (a) parallelism in study development, (b) evidence gathering, (c) processing/conversion, (d) data analyses, (e) interpretation, and (f) integration (Castro et al., 2010). While the first steps of data analysis happen concurrently but separately, the last steps, interpretation and integration, work with the qualitative and quantitative data together.

**Phase one: Identifying response codes.** Interviews were coded by two graduate student researchers using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Castro et al., 2010). Thematic analysis enables a researcher to identify and describe patterns, or themes, within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analytic method was chosen to stay close to the data and minimize the potential influence of bias. Castro et al. (2010) describe the ways in which thematic analyses may be integrated into mixed methods research. First, verbal responses are coded into response codes. The two graduate students first coded independently, then argued to consensus to determine an agreed-upon set of thematic codes. Next, they revised the coding scheme with a faculty advisor. Finally, they coded each transcript separately using the finalized coding scheme, and then again argued to consensus

to determine the final codes. Each transcript was coded in the software program MAXQDA (MAXQDA software for qualitative data analysis, 1989-2015).

**Phase two: Creating thematic categories.** Second, informed by grounded theory, response codes were assigned into higher order thematic categories. The goal of this step is to have the “smallest number of ‘strong’ thematic categories,” (Castro et al., 2010). The thematic categories, or “families,” were created to most closely reflect similar assessed quantitative constructs. The final categories, codes, and definitions are listed in Appendix C.

**Phase three: Scale coding/dimensionalization.** In the last step, dimensionalization, or scale coding, occurs, and entails the quantizing of qualitative data into dichotomous, ordinal or interval variables. Quantizing has been defined by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) as the process of transforming qualitative data into numerical data that can be statistically analyzed, and provides information about a theme’s strength or frequency. The simplest forms of quantized qualitative data are frequency scale coding and intensity scale coding. In this project, codes were dimensionalized in two ways. First, for all the thematic codes, frequencies were determined using MAXQDA software. While more rudimentary than intensity scale coding, frequency scale coding yields higher interrater agreement (Castro et al., 2010). Additionally, intensity scale coding was used specifically for coding the Insightfulness Assessment. After coding a transcript, coders rated the interviewee on each of the ten categories on three-point scale (low, medium, and high). Then, ratings were compared and agreement on ratings were calculated. Finally, coders argued to consensus regarding a final rating for each category. The ten scales were then summed across scales to yield a summary score (abbreviated as *IA Sum* in text).

**Threats to validity.** In data analysis issues, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) name four potential threats to validity specific to this design and strategies to minimize them. First, the threat of using inadequate approaches to converge the data is minimized by developing a joint display of qualitative and quantitative data. Second, the threat of making illogical comparisons of the two results of the analysis is minimized by using quotes that match the statistical results. Third, the threat of using inadequate data transformation approaches is minimized through keeping the transformation straightforward and using techniques to enhance the reliability and validity of transformed scores. Fourth, the threat of using inappropriate statistics to analyze quantitized results will be minimized by examining the distribution of scores and considering the use of nonparametric statistics if necessary (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Inference quality is assessed by examining the internal validity and statistical conclusion validity of quantitative data, and the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative data. Internal validity and credibility is examined by comparing data across and between sites to minimize the threats of history, selection, and maturation. Statistical conclusion validity and trustworthiness are examined by comparing the quantitative and qualitative results to look for inconsistencies and confirmability. Inference transferability, or external validity, is enhanced through providing descriptions of context and including multiple sites in the analyses.

Regarding sample size, typically in mixed methods research, a small qualitative sample is carefully selected and embedded within a large probability quantitative sample. When using thematic analysis with qualitative data, it is recommended to conduct at least 12



interviews in order to attain saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). This minimum cutoff is met within this study.

The qualitative data and quantitative strands are gathered concurrently and are merged at stages of data analysis and interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell & Zhang, 2009). The analyses for research goals and questions are described.

**Goal 1: To Provide Descriptive Information about the Teachers, including their Childhood Experiences and Relationships, and Frustration Working with Parents**

**Research question 1a.** What are the childhood experiences of the teachers? Focus will be on teacher personal backgrounds, including childhood potentially traumatic experiences (ACE) and childhood relationships (PBI).

This question provides descriptive statistics about the sample being studied, and is addressed through quantitative measures. Teachers' perceptions of their parental relationships is captured using composite scores for the PBI (Parker et al., 1979). The PBI yields two continuous scores from the scales *care* and *overprotection*. Based on the cutoff score, each scale was reduced to the categorical variables *low* and *high*. The ACE yields a score from 0 to 10 and is a count of the number of potentially traumatic events in childhood a teacher endorses having experienced. This question also examined the relationship between the two measures.

**Research question 1b.** Does a teacher's own parental relationships (PBI, *HISTORY*) relate to their relationships with students' families (ITS-FWP, *TP+FRUSTRATION*)?

Teachers' perceptions of their relationships with families was captured quantitatively using the ITS-FWP scale (Greene et al., 1997). The ITS-FWP scale yields a T score and which can be reduced into three categories (average, elevated, and clinical levels). The

relationship between the PBI and the ITS-FWP measures is examined quantitatively, both cross-sectionally and longitudinally.

The qualitative interview did not explicitly ask teachers about their own parental relationships or how they relate to relationships with families. Teachers were asked about how they perceived their own culture as related to their relationships, though they did not need to define their culture in terms of their parental relationships. Thus, the mention of relationships with their own parent figures was spontaneous rather than elicited by a structured question. Because spontaneously mentioning one's own parental relationships specifically was so rare, the code *HISTORY* was used and was expanded to include teachers' discussion of personal relationships including current relationships and experiences growing up, and these responses tended to focus more on cultural and family values and points of similarity and differences with students' families.

Teachers' interviews were also coded each time they discussed their relationships with the children (*TC*) and parents (*TP*) with whom they work. Using MAXQDA's query function, these two codes were combined into a new *FAMILY* code that reflected the discussion of a teachers' relationship with a child and/or their parent(s). Intersections between *HISTORY* and *FAMILY* were identified using MAXQDA's query function, to examine teacher's use of self in considering their work with families. Next, intersections between *TP* and *FRUSTRATION* were also identified in order to examine teacher's frustrations in their relationships with the parents of the children with whom they work. Thus, the intersections between *TP*, *FRUSTRATION*, and *HISTORY* identified statements that teachers made regarding how their own history relates to their frustrations with parents of the children with whom they work.

Finally, to get a sense of the types of frustration with parents that teachers identify, the intersections between *TP* and *FRUSTRATION* were also sorted into themes and are presented qualitatively in text and as a count.

The QUAL and QUANT research strands were mixed in this research question by presenting and comparing the QUAL results side-by-side with the responses on the ITS-FWP and PBI. First, participants' frustration with parents as reported on the ITS-FWP was matched to the same time point as their interview. To do this, the fall ITS-FWP scores were used for teachers who were interviewed in fall (from the *Experienced* group), while the spring ITS-FWP scores were used for teachers interviewed in spring (from the *New* group). While this could potentially skew the data towards over representing the frustration of the teachers who were interviewed in spring, when looking at the numbers, there were two teachers who fell in the borderline or clinical categories from the 2+ years RS group and three from the 1 year RS group, so this appeared not to be the case. Comparisons were made in two ways: (1) by quantitatively comparing counts of instances of frustration and teacher-parent relationship intersections in the interview to self-report on the ITS-FWP, and (2) examining quotations about teachers' relationships from the interview and comparing them to their report on the ITS-FWP. Because teachers' own parental relationships were not addressed directly in the interview and the code *HISTORY* captured so few instances of discussion of parental relationships, the concept of parental relationships was only included in this section through discussing participants' PBI scores.

**Research question 1c.** Does a teacher's childhood trauma history (ACE and *HISTORY*) relate to their relationships with families (ITS-FWP, *FAMILY*, and *TP*)?

This question was assessed using composite scores for the ACE (Felitti et al., 1998) and the ITS-FWP scale (Greene et al., 1997). The overlap between the codes *HISTORY* and *FAMILY* were examined for teachers relating early experiences and their current relationships with families. Qualitative data was examined for references to a teacher's own trauma history (*HISTORY*) and their perceptions of relationships with families (*TP* and *FAMILY*) and then compared to teachers' responses on the ACE.

**Goal 2: To Investigate Whether Teachers' Reported Stress is related to their Relationships with Families and Insight into those Relationships**

**Research question 2a.** What are the descriptive statistics of teacher work stress (ProQOL) and insightfulness (IA Sum, *INSIGHT*)?

Composite scores for the ProQOL (Stamm, 2010) were calculated. Insightfulness was assessed in two ways: (1) the codes *REFLECTION* and *PERSPECTIVE*, and (2) the Insightfulness Assessment (IA Sum). First, statements coded as either *REFLECTION* or *PERSPECTIVE* were grouped into an *INSIGHT* code using the MAXQDA query function.

Teachers' insightfulness was operationalized using the dimensions of the Insightfulness Assessment (IA Sum) by Koren-Karie et al. (2002), as applied by Virmani and Ontai (2010). The insightfulness assessment procedure was modified from its original design. Due to several practical limitations, videotaping interactions and reviewing them with teachers was not realistic for the scope of this dissertation study. Therefore, while the same ten dimensions of insightfulness were maintained, some dimensions were more present and easy to evaluate within the interviews than others. For example, while *coherence* was easy to rate, it was more difficult to rate *focus on child* because the interview did not explicitly ask the teacher to focus on one child, and sought to elicit the teacher's perspective, thoughts, and

feelings, more often than those of their children. As a result, the coders adapted the definition of *focus on child* to be considered only at times when the interview specifically addressed child needs or teacher-child relationships. Further, the coders shortened the likert scale to a 3-point scale. In previous studies, the ratings have used a 7-point (Koren-Karie et al., 2002) and a 9-point (Virmani & Ontai, 2010) rating scale. The scale was reduced to increase the ease of use, the inter-rater reliability, and because some areas were harder to assess than others due to the different interview content being rated. In fact, in analyzing their results, Virmani and Ontai (2010) collapsed their 9-point scale into three categories: low, medium and high. After finishing reading and coding the transcripts, coders independently rated each teacher on the areas of: complexity, focus, insight, acceptance/warmth, openness/flexibility, richness, coherence, anger/hostility, concern, and separateness. After sharing codes, interrater agreement was calculated (.92) and final codes were argued to consensus.

**Research question 2b.** Does teachers' report of compassion satisfaction (ProQOL-CS, *SATISFACTION*) relate to their perceptions of their teacher-parent relationships (ITS-FWP, *TP*) and insightfulness (IA Sum, *INSIGHT*)?

**Research question 2c.** Does teachers' report of burnout (ProQOL-B, *WORK STRESS*) relate to their perceptions of their teacher-parent relationships (ITS-FWP, *TP*) and insightfulness (IA Sum, *INSIGHT*)?

**Research question 2d.** Does teachers' report of secondary traumatic stress (ProQOL-ST, *SECONDARY STRESS*) relate to their teacher-parent relationships (ITS-FWP, *TP*) and insightfulness (IA Sum, *INSIGHT*)?

Questions 2b, 2c, and 2d used the same analyses with different ways of assessing each of the dimensions of work stress. Therefore, analyses are described together.

To assess the relationship between work stress and frustration with parents, composite scores for the ProQOL (Stamm, 2010) scales Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout, and Secondary Traumatic Stress were correlated with ITS-FWP scores and compared by level (low, average, high) at both time points. Thematic categories were created using MAXQDA queries:

The *SATISFACTION* code was used by itself. After overlaps with *TP* were identified, responses were coded as positive, negative, and mixed (positive and negative). Statements coded as negative (dissatisfaction or loss of satisfaction) were excluded.

*WORK STRESS* was created using the query function in MAXQDA. First, several codes were identified as potential sources of, or protective factors against burnout, including *CONFLICT*, *COMMUNICATION*, *ROLE*, *SUPPORT*, *COMPETENCE*, and *WORKPLACE CULTURE*. These codes were combined into a larger code, called *JOB FACTORS*. Then, intersections between *FRUSTRATION* and *JOB FACTORS* were identified and recoded as *WORK STRESS*.

*SECONDARY STRESS* was created by first creating the thematic category code *FEELINGS*. *FEELINGS*, an emotional response by the teacher, was created by recoding any statements coded as *WORRY*, *EMOTION*, or *STRESS RESPONSE*. Then, intersections between *FEELINGS* and *ADVERSITY* were identified and called *SECONDARY STRESS*.

### **Goal 3: To Examine Differences between Teachers with One or Two or More Years in Reflective Supervision**

**Research question 3a.** How does the experience of reflective supervision relate to parenting and frustration?

**Research question 3b.** Are there differences in frustration with parents and insightfulness between groups in their first year and groups with two or more years of reflective supervision?

Trends for each group (*New* and *Experienced*) over time are examined between the ITS-FWP and PBI. Differences in frustration (ITS-FWP) between groups over time are also examined using a Mixed ANOVA. Finally, differences between groups are examined by identifying participant quotes coded as *GAIN* and *TP* for each group that also are coded as *INSIGHT*. Statements are reviewed and will be categorized by themes for each group.

### **Inference**

In examining inferences, the process of making inferences as well as the ability to judge the quality of inferences should be considered. In examining the process of inference, as defined earlier, it is necessary to examine potential threats to validity. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 239) define validity in mixed methods research as, “employing strategies that address potential issues in data collection, data analysis, and the interpretations that might compromise the merging or connecting of the quantitative or qualitative strands of the study and the conclusions drawn from the combination.” In the qualitative strand of this study, credibility and trustworthiness are enhanced through: (1) *triangulation* with quantitative data, (2) *peer debriefing* as a way to clarify interpretations and identify possible sources of bias, and (3) *member checks*, by asking other group members to check accuracy of the themes, interpretations, and conclusions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Transferability is enhanced through providing thick descriptions of the contexts so that comparisons may be made with other settings (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

**Judging the quality of research inferences.** Part of the inference phase involves assessing the quality of the research inferences. A mixed methods study interpretation involves examining the qualitative and quantitative results and making an interpretation about how the information addresses the mixed methods questions in the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Inferences are drawn from the interpretations of both strands as well as across the strands. Overall, mixed methods are seen to improve the quality of inferences because mixed methods studies use the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data to corroborating findings, minimizing threats to validity (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

In interpretation issues, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) identify six potential threats to validity when merging data and ways to minimize them. First, not resolving divergent findings can be minimized through gathering more data, reanalyzing the current data, or evaluating the procedures. Second, not discussing the mixed methods research questions can be minimized by addressing each mixed methods question. Third, giving more weight to one form of data than the other is minimized by presenting both sets of results in an equal way or providing the rationale for prioritizing one form of data over the other. Fourth, not interpreting the mixed methods results in light of the advocacy or social science lens is minimized by returning to the initial rationale for the study and advancing recommendations based upon the results. Fifth, not relating the stages or projects in a multiphase study to each other can be minimized through considering how an overarching theory or lens might connect the results. Finally, sixth, irreconcilable differences among different researchers on a team is guarded against through having researchers evaluate the overall project objectives and negotiating differences. Each of these threats to validity when interpreting the data will be examined.



## IV: RESULTS

### **Data Checking**

Prior to data analysis, data was examined for missing data and the identification of data entry errors. Teachers were given the option to participate in the survey, interview, or both. However, when a respondent did not complete any of the measure, the researcher chose to leave missing data as missing rather than use a substitution strategy.

Quantitative variables were checked for appropriate ranges, boxplots were used to identify univariate outliers, and histograms and the Shapiro-Wilk test were used to examine normality of score distribution. The FWP scale data had significant positive skew at both time points. The researcher decided to keep outliers in the analyses because they conformed to expected population parameters: that a few teachers would experience clinical levels of stress while most teachers would report stress in the nonclinical range. Further, it was expected that there would be a floor effect, and this was observed. On the Shapiro-Wilk's test, FWP T scores were significant at time 1 ( $p = .013$ ) but not time 2. Assumptions for examining FWP T scores by group (length of time in RS) are examined in research question 3.

All scales on the ProQOL were normal according to the Shapiro-Wilks test. The only PBI PBI scale that was non-normal according to the Shapiro-Wilks test was the Father Care scale, and upon further examination this appeared to be because of two very low rated cases. These scores were also kept in because they appear to be accurate representations of the sample's experiences. Finally, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess internal consistency of items for the PBI, ITS-FWP, and ProQOL (see

Table 5). Alpha coefficients on the mother and father care and overprotection scales of the PBI ranged from .824 to .949, indicating good to excellent internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha on the ITS-FWP was .857 in the fall and .838 (for the longitudinal group only) in the spring, indicating good internal consistency. Cronbach's alphas on the ProQOL scales in the fall were .611 (Burnout), .718 (Secondary Traumatic Stress), and .780 (Compassion Satisfaction). In the spring, alphas were .695 (Burnout), .721 (Secondary Traumatic Stress) and .844 (Compassion Satisfaction). While the internal consistency for the latter two scales is adequate, the internal consistency for the burnout scale is questionable. Upon further review of the items, while removing items may have improved Cronbach's alpha marginally, none of the items individually affected the internal consistency enough that their removal would bring the alpha to the acceptable range (above  $\alpha = .70$ ) for the fall time period. There were two items that, if removed, brought alpha within an acceptable range in the spring (discussed below). Burnout also had the lowest internal consistency in the manual ( $\alpha = .75$ ), which suggests that the items in the burnout scale may not be unidimensional.

There are a few possible factors regarding burnout's internal consistency to consider within this sample. First, teachers may have been hesitant to acknowledge certain forms of burnout. While they were assured that their responses would not be communicated to their superiors, this concern was still expressed verbally by the participants. Thus, it may have been the case that teachers did not feel completely comfortable being honest on some items, therefore reducing the consistency of the scale. Another possibility is that the sample size is too small and alpha would be improved with a greater number of participants. Finally, the item in the fall time point that would improve alpha the most if removed was item 15 ("I have beliefs that sustain me"), but it was still only improved to .679. It's possible that within

this sample, participants interpreted this in terms of religiosity, and the range may have reflected religious affiliation rather than the sense of foundational or guiding beliefs. However, in the spring, if item 4 (“I feel connected to others,”) or item 29 (“I am a very caring person,”) were deleted it would bring alpha within an acceptable range (.744 if item 4 is deleted, and .708 if item 29 is deleted). However, because this was not consistent across time points and didn’t have a theoretical rationale, the decision to keep all items was made. Finally, another noteworthy possibility for the low internal consistency is the fact that all three of these items which would improve alpha were reverse coded. In fact, all five items that were reverse-coded were on the burnout scale. While these items were not worded in a negative way, something about the reverse coding may have compromised the internal consistency of the scale. In fact, research has shown that incorrect responses to reverse-coded items can significantly impact scale means, internal consistency, and analyses (Hughes, 2009). Because this study is exploratory in nature, analyses using the burnout scale will still be conducted, but any inferences will be made with caution.

Table 5

*Measure internal consistencies at both time points*

Scale	Fall Alpha	Spring Alpha
Parental Bonding Instrument		
Maternal Care	.824	--
Maternal Overprotection	.865	--
Paternal Care	.949	--
Paternal Overprotection	.825	--
Index of Teaching Stress: Frustration with Parents	.857	.838
ProQOL		
Compassion Satisfaction	.780	.844
Burnout	.611	.695
Secondary Traumatic Stress	.718	.721

**Goal 1: To Provide Descriptive Information about the Teachers, including their Childhood Experiences and Relationships, and Frustration Working with Parents**

**Research Question 1a. What are the Childhood Relational and Trauma Experiences of Teachers in this Sample?**

**Childhood trauma.** Twenty-six teachers reported on their histories of potentially traumatic experiences (PTEs) on the Adverse Childhood Experiences Scale (ACE). Three teachers skipped at least one item on the ACE questionnaire; specifically, three skipped one item and one skipped two items. Therefore, the total ACE score may be a slight underestimate of four teachers' total childhood PTEs. Nonetheless, teachers reported experiencing between zero and seven PTEs, with an average of 1.81 experiences (*S.D.* = 2.173). Just under half of participants ( $n = 12$ ; 46.2%) reported no PTEs on the ACE. The most commonly reported experiences included emotional abuse ( $n = 8$ ), physical abuse ( $n = 8$ ), parental separation or divorce ( $n = 7$ ), and living with someone with problems with substance abuse ( $n = 9$ ).

**Childhood relationships with parents.** In terms of their own parental relationships (as assessed by the Parental Bonding Instrument [PBI]), 28 teachers reported on their relationship with a maternal figure (Table 6) and 23 reported on their relationship with a paternal figure (

Table 7). Teachers perceived a wide range of relationship classifications with their parents. Nineteen (67.1%) teachers reported their relationship with their mother as falling in the low care category, and 14 (50.0%) fell in the low overprotection category. In terms of classification, this led to seven maternal relationships falling into the “Neglectful” classification (low care and low overprotection), 12 maternal relationships falling into the “Affectionless Control” classification (low care and high overprotection), seven maternal relationships falling into the “Optimal Parenting” classification, and two maternal relationships falling into the “Affectionate Constraint” classification.

Table 6

*Maternal Parenting Classification (n = 28)*

		Overprotection		Sum
		Low	High	
Care	Low	<i>n</i> = 7 (25.0%)	<i>n</i> = 12 (42.9%)	<i>n</i> = 19 (67.9%)
		Neglectful	Affectionless Control	
	High	<i>n</i> = 7 (25.0%)	<i>n</i> = 2 (7.1%)	<i>n</i> = 9 (32.1%)
		Optimal Parenting	Affectionate Constraint	
	Sum	<i>n</i> = 14 (50.0%)	<i>n</i> = 14 (50.0%)	

Among paternal relationships, nine teachers (39.1%) reported their relationship with their father as falling in the low care category, and 11 (47.8%) fell in the low overprotection

category. In terms of classification, this led to one paternal relationships falling into the “Neglectful” classification (low care and low overprotection), eight paternal relationships falling into the “Affectionless Control” classification (low care and high overprotection), ten paternal relationships falling into the “Optimal Parenting” classification, and four paternal relationships falling into the “Affectionate Constraint” classification (

Table 7).



Table 7

*Paternal Parenting Classification (n = 23)*

		Overprotection		Sum
		Low	High	
Care	Low	<i>n</i> = 1 (4.3%)	<i>n</i> = 8 (34.8%)	<i>n</i> = 9 (39.1%)
		Neglectful	Affectionless Control	
	High	<i>n</i> = 10 (43.5%)	<i>n</i> = 4 (17.4%)	<i>n</i> = 14 (60.9%)
		Optimal Parenting	Affectionate Constraint	
	Sum	<i>n</i> = 11 (47.8%)	<i>n</i> = 12 (52.2%)	

On the PBI, relationships between care and overprotection were examined using bivariate correlations. Inverse relationships were observed between the scales such that parents who rated high in care rated lower in overprotection [mother  $r(26) = -.439, p = .016$ ; father  $r(21) = -.708, p < .001$ ]. This is a medium to large effect size for mothers and a large effect size for fathers.

**Trauma and relationships with parents.** Finally, teachers' relationships with their own parents and their trauma histories were examined to see whether there was a relationship between the two variables. This was examined through bivariate correlations and independent *t* tests. First, maternal and paternal care and overprotection raw scores were correlated with ACE total score. Maternal and paternal care both observed inverse

relationships with ACE total score such that the more caring a teacher rated their parent, the lower their ACE score [mother  $r(24) = -.461, p = .018$ ; father  $r(19) = -.697, p < .001$ ]. This is a medium to large effect size for mothers and a large effect size for fathers. While maternal overprotection was not related to ACE total, father overprotection was related, such that teachers who rated their fathers higher in overprotection also reported experiencing more ACEs [ $r(19) = .442, p = .045$ ]. This is a medium to large effect size.

Second, this relationship was also examined through independent  $t$  tests, shown in

Table 8. In all categories, teachers with less optimal parenting styles (low care and high overprotection) had higher ACE scores, though these differences were only significant in father relationships, and both comparisons yielded large effect sizes.

Table 8

*Parental Care and Overprotection Styles and Mean ACEs*

	Category	<i>n</i>	ACE <i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Mother				
Care	Low	17	2.18	2.404
	High	9	1.11	1.537
Overprotection	Low	13	1.62	2.256
	High	13	2.00	2.160
Father				
Care <sup>1</sup>	Low	8	3.88	2.357
	High	13	1.00	1.472
Overprotection <sup>2</sup>	Low	11	0.73	1.421
	High	10	3.60	2.171

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>  $t(19) = 3.462, p = .003, r = .591$ ; <sup>2</sup>  $t(19) = -3.623, p = .002, r = .616$ .

**Research Question 1b. Does a Teacher's own Parental Relationships Relate to their Relationships with Students' Families?**

**Teacher frustration with parents.** Teachers also reported on their frustration with their most challenging student's parents using the Index of Teaching Stress, Frustration with

Parents subscale (ITS-FWP). Frustration with parents is reported longitudinally as matched pairs when looking at differences over time (Table 9).

Looking cross-sectionally, 30 teachers completed the ITS-FWP at time 1 ( $M = 50.40$ ;  $S.D. = 9.719$ ) and 25 teachers completed the ITS-FWP at time 2 ( $M = 52.68$ ;  $S.D. = 9.814$ ). In fall (time 1), 10.0% of teachers ( $n = 3$ ) reported borderline levels of frustration and 13.3% reported clinical levels ( $n = 4$ ). In spring (time 2), 12.0% of teachers ( $n = 3$ ) reported borderline levels of frustration and 12.0% reported clinical levels ( $n = 3$ ). Thus, within the cross-sectional group about one quarter of the teachers in both fall and spring reported borderline or clinical levels of frustration.

Looking longitudinally at the teachers who completed the measure at both time points ( $n = 21$ ), differences were not significant. Over the year, teachers reporting borderline or clinical levels of stress decreased by one teacher, or 4.8% (Table 9).

Table 9

*Teacher Frustration with Parents, Longitudinal Categories (n = 21)*

	Non Clinical ( $T < 56$ )	Borderline ( $56 \geq T < 64$ )	Clinical ( $T \geq 65+$ )
T1 Frustration Working with Parents	76.2% ( $n = 16$ )	9.5% ( $n = 2$ )	14.3% ( $n = 3$ )
T2 Frustration Working with Parents	81.0% ( $n = 17$ )	9.5% ( $n = 2$ )	9.5% ( $n = 2$ )

**Parental relationship and relationships with families.** In order to quantitatively examine the relationship between a teacher's own parental relationships and their frustration working with their most challenging parents, teachers are grouped by their PBI in examining their ITS-FWP scores. In line with the PBI's classification system of optimal parenting being high care and low overprotection, teachers who report experiencing high care and low overprotection are compared to teachers reporting low care or high overprotection. Only teachers who had PBI data and FWP data for both time points are examined, which reduced sample to  $n = 15$ . First, general trends between childhood parenting relationships and frustration with parents are examined. Second, differences in frustration over time by parenting style are explored.

*Parental care and relationships with families.*

Table **10** reports the mean scores of frustration at both time points by maternal care and Table 11 shows this relationship by paternal care. Figure 1 examines both parents' relationship between care and frustration at time 1, and Figure 2 examines this relationship at time 2. At time 1 and time 2, teachers' parental relationships and current frustration show similar trends, whereby teachers who experienced low care from their parent report slightly lower levels of frustration at the beginning of the year and higher levels of frustration at the end of the year than teachers with high care parent relationships. However, the difference at time 2 is more pronounced for fathers than it is for mothers, and approached significance with a medium to large effect size [ $t(13) = -1.920, p = .077, r = .438$ ], such that teachers who reported low paternal care were more likely to experience frustration at time 2 than teachers who report high care.

Table 10

*Relation between PBI and ITS-FWP (n = 15)*

	PBI Mother Care Category	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
FWP T1	Low Care	11	49.91	6.818
	High Care	4	52.72	20.189
FWP T2	Low Care	11	52.82	7.222
	High Care	4	50.00	8.485

Table 11

*Relation between PBI and ITS-FWP (n = 15)*

	PBI Father Care Category	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
FWP T1	Low Care	6	49.00	5.621
	High Care	9	51.78	13.809
FWP T2 <sup>^</sup>	Low Care	6	56.17	8.110
	High Care	9	49.33	5.745

<sup>^</sup>  $t(13) = -1.920, p = .077, r = .438.$



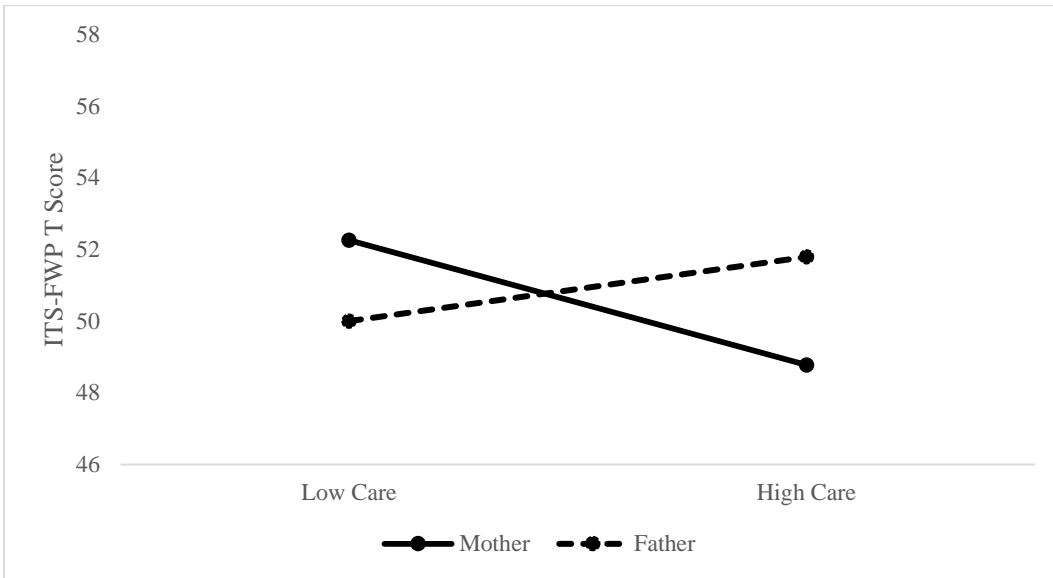


Figure 1. Teacher ITS-FWP at time 1 by parental care level ( $n = 15$ )

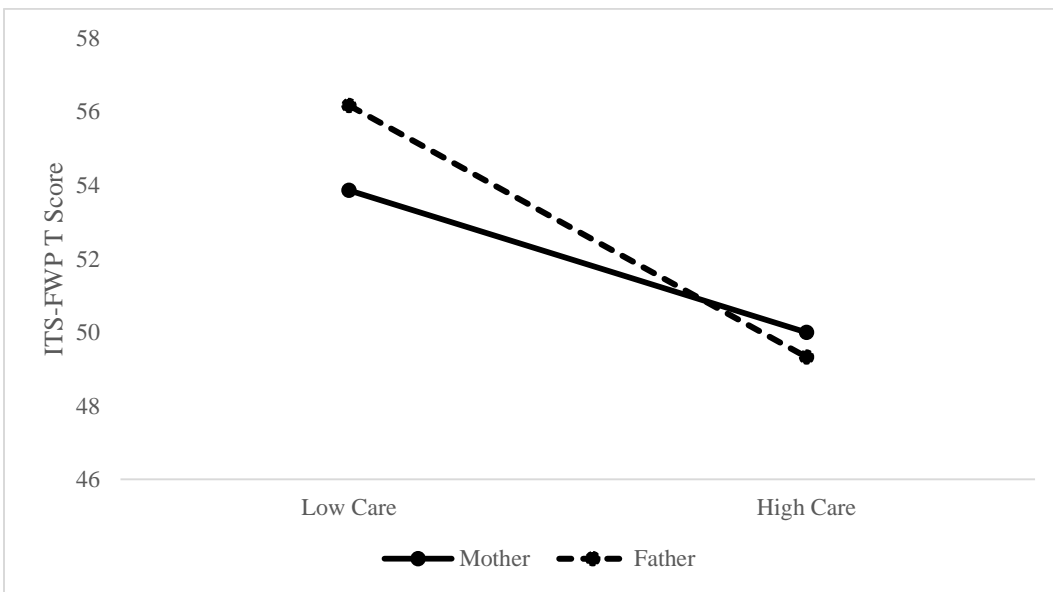


Figure 2. Teacher ITS-FWP at time 2 by parental care level ( $n = 15$ )

***Parental overprotection and relationships with families.*** Table 12 examines frustration scores by maternal overprotection and Table 13 shows frustration scores by paternal overprotection. Figure 3 shows this relationship for both parents at time 1, and

Figure 4 shows this relationship at time 2. Frustration levels were similar across mothers and fathers at each time point for overprotection. In other words, overprotection levels from mothers and fathers showed similar trends in teacher frustration.

As displayed in Figure 3, at time 1, teachers who report less optimal (high) overprotection levels report lower levels of frustration at time 1 than teachers with low overprotection mothers and fathers. At time 2, the directionality reverses and teachers with more optimal parenting related to overprotection (i.e. low overprotection) reported less frustration in their relationships with parents than teachers who reported high overprotection (Figure 4). This was similar to the trend observed for parental care, and in father but not mother relationships these differences between overprotection styles were significant and had a large effect size [ $t(13) = -3.057, p = .009, r = .628$ ].

Table 12

*Relation between PBI and ITS-FWP (n = 15)*

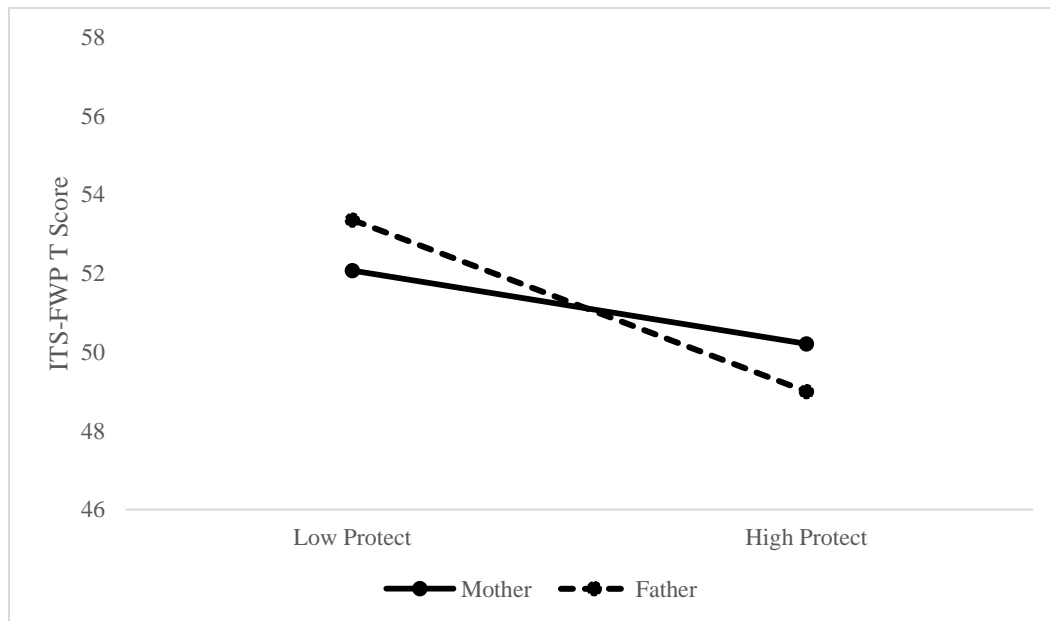
	PBI Mother Overprotection Category	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
FWP T1	Low Overprotection	7	53.43	15.142
	High Overprotection	8	48.25	5.800
FWP T2	Low Overprotection	7	50.57	6.803
	High Overprotection	8	53.38	8.052

Table 13

*Relation between PBI and ITS-FWP (n = 15)*

	PBI Father Overprotection Category	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
FWP T1	Low Overprotection	7	53.71	14.952
	High Overprotection	8	48.00	5.952
FWP T2**	Low Overprotection	7	47.14	3.976
	High Overprotection	8	56.38	7.050

\*\*  $t(13) = -3.057, p = .009, r = .628$ .



*Figure 3. Teacher ITS-FWP at time 1 by parental overprotection level (n = 15)*

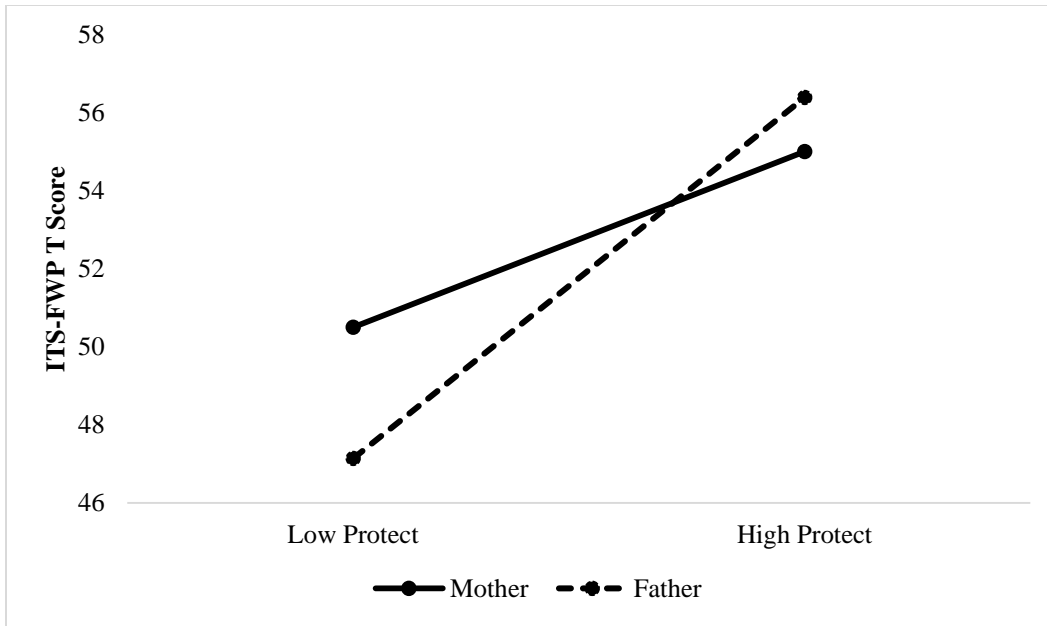


Figure 4. Teacher ITS-FWP at time 2 by parental overprotection level ( $n = 15$ )

**Change in frustration over time by parental relationship.** To examine the interaction between parent care and overprotection and time, FWP scores were first examined for normality, and transformed using the inverse due to one outlier at time 1 ( $T = 83$ ). Mixed ANOVAs were run comparing the transformed dependent variable, inverse FWP T scores, over time (within-subjects factor) by parent level of care or overprotection (between-subjects factor). After running the mixed ANOVA, assumptions of normality were again examined. All studentized residuals were less than 3 standard deviations from the mean, suggesting by this method that there were no outliers. There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ( $p > .05$ ). There was also homogeneity of covariances, as assessed by Box's test of equality of covariance matrices ( $p > .001$ ). Three analyses were not significant but did have small to medium effect sizes, and one was significant and had a large effect size. Maternal care (Figure 5) had a small effect [ $F(1, 16) = .129, p = .724, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .008$ ] and father care (Figure 6) had a medium effect [ $F(1, 13) =$

1.688,  $p = .216$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .115$ ]. Maternal overprotection (Figure 7) also had a medium effect [ $F(1, 16) = 1.592$ ;  $p = .225$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .091$ ]. There was also a significant interaction and large effect size between father overprotection and time in frustration working with parents,  $F(1, 13) = 7.639$ ,  $p = .016$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .370$  (Figure 8). In these figures, optimal parenting styles are denoted by solid lines and non-optimal are dashed lines.

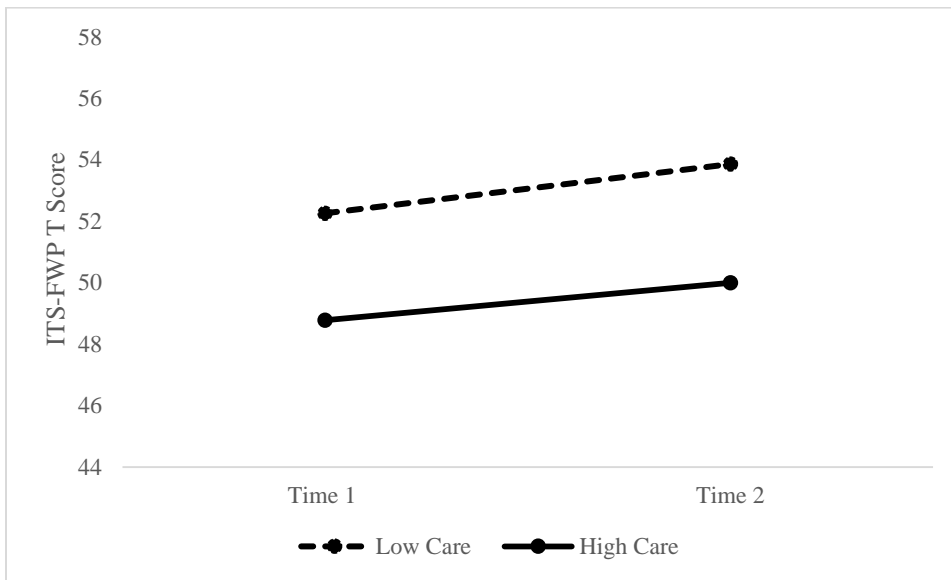


Figure 5. Mother care and FWP over time.

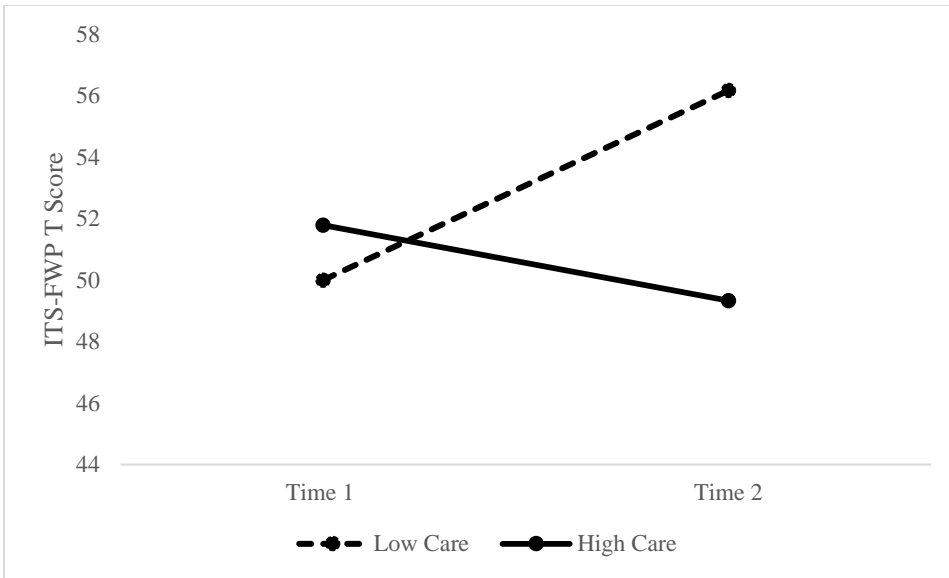


Figure 6. Father care and FWP over time.

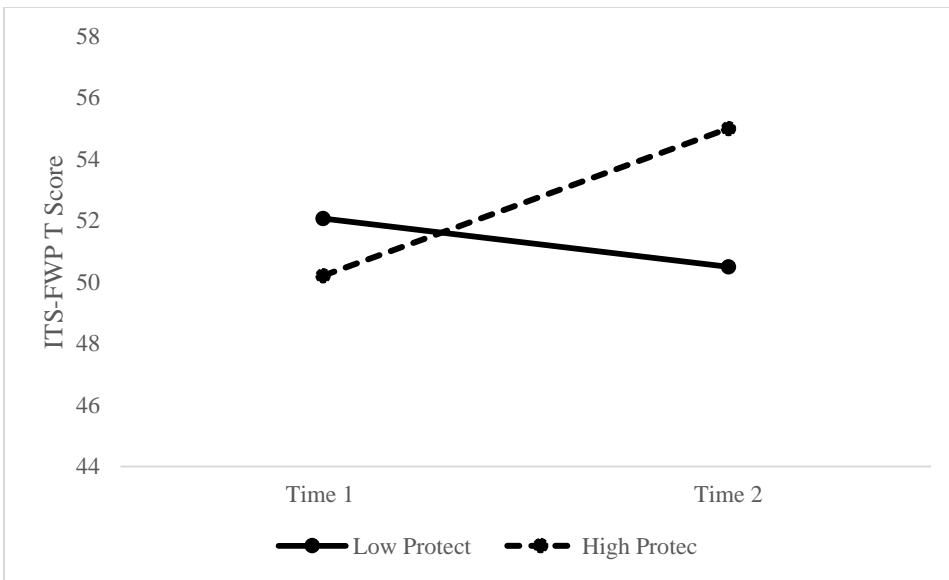


Figure 7. Mother overprotection and FWP over time.

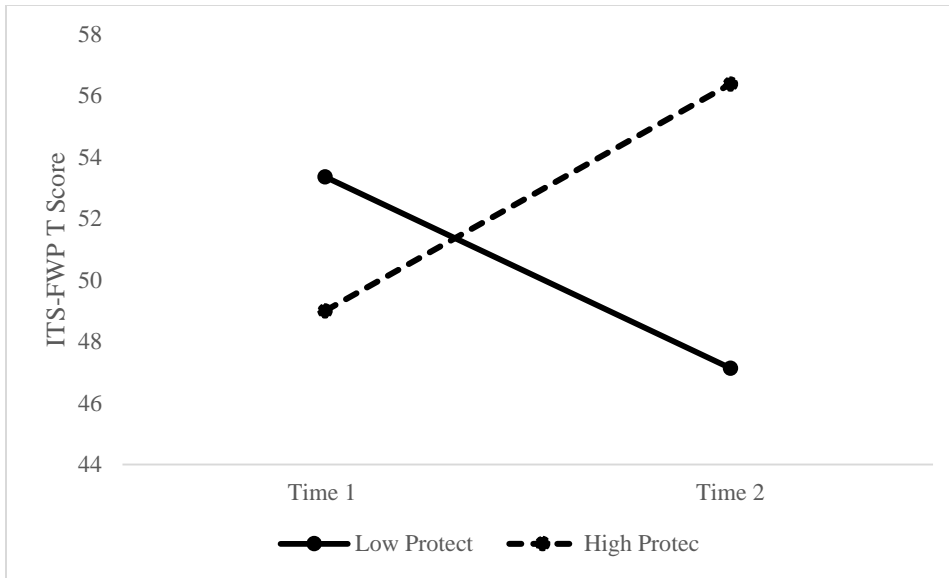


Figure 8. Father overprotection and FWP over time.

*More optimal parenting styles.* In looking at the more optimal parenting styles and frustration of teachers over time, there is minimal change in frustration levels over time. Specifically, teachers reporting high care parenting (mothers in Figure 5 and fathers in Figure 6) reported similarly low levels of frustration over time, with all T scores falling less than two points from  $T = 50$ . Teachers with low levels of parental overprotection (Figure 7 and Figure 8) reported some decrease in frustration over time, a trend that was similar for mothers and fathers, though the change was minimal for mother relationships but more pronounced in father relationships ( $M = 53.36$  at time 1 and  $M = 47.14$  at time 2).

*Less optimal parenting styles.* Looking at less optimal parenting styles (low care and high overprotection, pictured as dotted lines in Figures 5-8), across mother and father relationships, teachers with lower care levels appear to experience an increase in their frustration over time (Figure 5 and Figure 6). This difference appears more pronounced in father relationships than mother relationships. Further, in teachers reporting high levels of overprotection, frustration appeared to increase over time (Figure 7 and Figure 8). These

differences were again similar across mother and father relationships, with father changes again appearing to have a greater change over time. Because the sample sizes were too small to examine each group separately, the interaction for father overprotection was examined statistically using a mixed ANOVA.

*Qualitative report of parental relationship and teacher-parent relationships.* While it was rare for teachers to recall their own parental relationships when discussing their relationships with children and families, instances of overlap of the two codes (*HISTORY*) and (*FAMILY*) occurred in 15 of the 20 interviews. However, most of the *HISTORY* codes did not directly discuss parental relationships, because that code also encompassed discussion of current personal relationships and past and current personal experiences. Julia discussed the messages she received growing up about the importance of communication:

An example, well from my personal background, I was brought up always, whenever there is an issue to always talk it through, versus staying quiet. That way my family and I could just sit down and say, “Oh, this is going on, what do you suggest?” So I kinda use that in my teaching, just sitting down with a student if they are having a hard day and just saying, “Oh, did something happen at home? Are you okay? Did you get enough sleep? Are you tired?” Kinda just helping them open up as well.

(Julia)

Julia related her family’s open style of communication to her inquisitive and observant approach asking children about their experiences. By discussing the importance of open communication, while she does not say it directly, it is likely that Julia remembers these experiences of being asked about her mood as a child in a positive way, and wants her



students to experience the same concern and interest in their experience. Julia did not complete the PBI, so her parents' relational styles are not known.

In contrast, Jasmin reflected on the "don't say nothing" message she received from her parents and how it relates to her approach to working with her students' families:

I try, I don't know, I just try not to like have a lot of umm like a rel-... more like a relationship with them. It's more like, "Okay, you brought me your child, thank you and see you later." But I see like, other like other coworkers, they...they become more like friends with the parents, you know? And I think it depends on, it depends on how open you were brought up, you know? Like me, I was brought up more like, "don't say nothing, just look but don't say," you know? So I'm like more... (pause) I don't know, I'm not that open to, to expressing...mostly expressing how I feel, I just listen, I like to listen. You know? And try to see if I can like help them, but like reading their body language, it's like oh they just wanna talk but they don't want me to say what I think I should say. So I try not to be like too close to the parents.

(Jasmin)

Jasmin states that her upbringing caused her to approach relationships through silence rather than expression, and she recognizes that her approach is different than some of her coworkers. In fact, she states that she tries to avoid becoming close with the parents of the children with whom she works, and attributes this avoidance to the message she received growing up: "Don't say nothing, just look but don't say." As a consequence, Jasmin may be replicating the relationship she had with her parents in her relationships with students' families. These comments are similar to Julia's observations about how her own parents used

open communication, which lead her to communicate more openly with the families with whom she works.

**Types of frustration with parents.** Several teachers voiced sentiments in their interviews regarding their frustrations working with parents. The number of intersections between *FRUSTRATION* and *TP* (teacher-parent relationship) ranged from 0-6. There were non-significant differences between the means of the groups (Table 14), whereby teachers who reported borderline and clinical levels of frustration on the ITS-FWP also talked about frustration and teacher-parent relationships more than teachers who reported nonclinical frustration levels.

Table 14

*Mean Number of Overlaps between FRUSTRATION and TP by ITS-FWP Category*

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Nonclinical ( $T < 56$ )	12	1.83	1.749
Borderline or Clinical ( $T \geq 56$ )	5	3.20	2.588

Across the 20 interviews there were 43 instances of overlap between *FRUSTRATION* and *TP*. Each instance was reviewed and statements were categorized based upon the type of frustration the teacher reported. The categories that emerged from the data were frustration related to: (1) dealing with parent barriers, culture, and communication with parents ( $n = 25$ ); (2) confidentiality between the reflective supervisor and parents ( $n = 2$ ); (3) structural issues that impact relationships with families (job demands, structuring time/topics in RS, too busy)

( $n = 9$ ); and (4) teacher-teacher relationships and communication/collaboration about families ( $n = 7$ ). The comments that most directly addressed the research question fall into the first category, so these quotations are further examined.

The 25 instances of frustration in teacher-parent relationships that were related to parent barriers and communication came from eleven teachers representing four of the five schools. Challenges in this area fell in two categories: frustration related to parent barriers (such as being late, forgetting or not meeting the school's expectations of parents), and challenges with communication, holding different perspectives, and culture.

***Parent barriers.*** Eleven of the 20 teachers discussed experiencing frustration regarding working with parents who faced significant barriers, which impacted their engagement in their child's education. One teacher, Guadalupe, discussed challenges she faced when parents, especially single mothers, do not spend more time at the site or communicating with teachers during pick up and drop off time:

Sometimes it's hard, especially with the single moms because they don't really have time to talk to you and they are always in a rush or have their other kids they have to go take. And sometimes they do try to be like, "Okay, yeah, yeah, we'll talk tomorrow!" They kind of just run off. It's – you try to do as much as you can, but sometimes they don't really want to open up to you or a lot of the parents are pretty private. I try to like ask questions and, you know, invite them, "Oh you guys are welcome to come play activities," things like that. And we haven't had anybody come in. (Guadalupe)

While Guadalupe acknowledges the validity of a parents' reasons for not checking in, it sounds like she would like to deepen her relationship with some of the parents and feels

disappointed by the lack of reciprocation on their side. Guadalupe's parental relationships as she reported on the PBI were both characterized by low care and high overprotection (affectionless control), and her frustration at time 2 fell into the borderline range on the ITS-FWP. These scores are consistent with the overall trend that teachers whose parental relationships had low care and high overprotection experienced higher levels of frustration working with parents at the end of the school year.

Alex, who reported nonclinical levels of frustration, discussed challenges regarding working with parents who don't always follow through:

Sometimes when I feel we can help them, and I know what they need, you can't – you know the [expression]: “You can lead a horse to water but you can't make them drink?” They don't always follow through. And so you can do what you can. You can offer them things, tell them how lucky they are to have these things. But then you just have to accept what they are willing to do... I tell them, you know, the parents of the other children that I had [in a high income preschool], nothing was free. If they wanted to find out why their child was having trouble, they'd have to go to a psychologist. They would have to pay for it, they'd have to have testing done. And then they would have to get help themselves. It's not free. There is nothing free ... So for these parents to have so much help free, you know – they really are lucky. But they, they don't always understand that. (Alex)

While Alex does not directly state frustration with the families, they do mention how “lucky” the parents are (families are homeless and formerly homeless) in comparison to the high income families with whom they have worked in the past. While it's not clear from the statement whether this particular situation interferes in their relationships, it is common for

helping professionals to experience feelings of judgment towards clients when they don't follow through on or "accept" the help that they are offering. This perceived rejection can get in the way of relationships, and helpers may feel that clients are ungrateful for services. Alex reported low care and high overprotection from their mother (affectionless control) and high care and low overprotection from their father (optimal parenting). Their optimal parenting styles from their father is consistent with lower levels of frustration, while their mother's parenting style is more consistent with experiencing higher levels of frustration.

*Communication, holding different perspectives, and culture.* Teachers also communicated frustration related to communication with parents, holding different perspectives, and challenges related to navigating cultural differences. Guadalupe discusses the barrier she feels regarding communicating with parents about developmental concerns with their child:

I think it's difficult because sometimes I feel parents – they don't – since we've gone to school and we've read books, we kind of you know, kind of know where they should be developmentally. And I feel like parents sometimes don't understand that and even though you try to tell them in the more simple words, they kind of feel like you might be picking on their child because of the way they act or whatever it is. And it's... I think that's hard to communicate to parents. (Guadalupe)

In this statement and the one prior from Guadalupe, she communicates a sense of disappointment with her relationships with parents and a lack of agency regarding changing the patterns of communication with the parents with whom she works. Based on her concerns, it makes sense that she reported elevated levels of frustration on the ITS-FWP, because it doesn't seem like she feels she has the tools to address these issues.

While Guadalupe expressed wariness about communicating regarding developmental concerns, Catalina, who reported non clinical levels of stress, discussed challenges related to holding different perspectives about appropriate child behavior:

It does get difficult at times... you hear a lot of things and sometimes you don't know how to deal with it yourself. Because I mean, I sometimes I find myself saying "I don't see how somebody can do this to a child." But then at the same time you also need to know how to respect sometimes their ideas or their culture, 'cause sometimes you know they come with these beliefs and you have to respect them even though you don't agree with them... An example... a mother came in and we had a lot of dress up, like we have skirts, dresses, hats for the kids and one of the kids,... and [the male child] enjoys putting on dresses a lot and shoes, like high heels, shoes and the mom came in one time and she was really mad that he had a skirt on and she picked him up and we tried to explain to her, you know, that it's normal, that it's nothing bad, that every kid enjoys it. And she was just like, "No, I don't, please don't let him do this, don't ever..." and we even took a picture of him one time because we were taking pictures of them dressing up and we put a picture on the classroom and she said, "Take it down." She didn't want any pictures like that, and I mean, you as a teacher know that it's normal, you know, it's nothing bad that they're experiencing. But at the same time you have to respect that that's what the parent doesn't like and I'm not going to argue with her... Yeah a lot of things happen like that, one time we had an activity with nail polish and some kids wanted to put nail polish on, and ... one of the boys we put some on and the mom said that the dad got mad when he got home, so I mean you have to respect their culture and what they believe. (Catalina)

Catalina discussed a conflict between her own values and developmental knowledge and that of some of the parents with whom she worked. She ultimately agrees that you must respect the parents' values, but finds it difficult to comply when she believes the parents aren't acting in a way that is fully accepting of their child. In articulating her frustration, Catalina is able to make sense of this issue in a way that externalizes the problem. Specifically, rather than take the parent's comments personally or let them jeopardize their relationship, she recognizes the importance of culture as a factor in both her and the parents' perspectives. Catalina reported that both her parents exhibited relationships characterized by low care and high overprotection (affectionless control). While she reports experiencing low care and high overprotection, in this situation she exhibits a high care/low overprotection response towards the child by accepting the child's choices. Towards the parent, she responds in a way to preserve the relationship even though she disagrees with her values.

Finally, Rosa, who did not complete the ITS-FWP or PBI, discussed the challenges communicating about particularly sensitive topics such as suspected child abuse or neglect:

I felt like they were kind of neglect. Because just the way they came like it was like dirty clothes, or the clothes from the day before, or their hair. And there was one parent it was a big, big issue. Like this child always didn't smell good, her hair was so nasty. Like I would try to talk to the mom, like don't make it sound bad. Like, "Oh, she has a rash, I think she needs a bath." And the mom wouldn't get it, and... I feel like they don't attend to them. Like I see the parallel like I see clean, nice clothes and it is like, "How come your child is not like that?" And there's like no really like positive way to tell them, like, "Your child smells,"... (laughs) And so, 'cause I have asked the director, like ummm..."How can you say, not to sound so negative, about a

child when like we raise some stuff?” and I think it really helped... I would even tell like the mom, “Oh, we did water play so, she might need a bath today because we had sandals...so...” And then she was like “Okay, okay.” And then still the same. So it was like, “How do you do it like...?” Until somebody when the child moved to the next classroom, the person came up to me and told me if I noticed all of this. And I said yes, and they’re like, “What’d you do?” And I told them and they went through it... I think like the teacher just like doing the same thing constantly. She ended up making a report, which it was meant to tell that the parent do something. (Rosa)

Similar to Guadalupe, Rosa doesn’t seem to feel a sense of agency around how to communicate about difficult situations with parents. She discusses her attempts to resolve this issue indirectly by telling the parent other reasons that the child needs a bath, but is unable to address her concerns directly. While she does discuss getting help about communication from the director, it still seems as though she feels alone in how to address this situation with the parent. When the child moves classrooms, the same concerns of cleanliness arise, and in the end, it appears that the communication was done indirectly through making a child welfare report.

When considering the values that are communicated by one’s parents and how they intersect with their current relationships, it is important to also recognize the impact of culture. Nicole, a Caucasian woman, reflected on her perceptions of the differences between her values of rule-following and punctuality, which she attributes to learning from parents, and the behaviors of many of the families, who are predominantly Latino/a:

Both my parents are teachers, and we are rule-followers, and I was raised to have a lot of respect for education, and rules and teachers, and schools. I mean I definitely feel



like the Hispanic culture has a lot of respect for teachers, but education I feel like sometimes there's a little disconnect. If you ask them to bring food for a potluck you will get so much food you don't know what to do with. But when, like, if you ask like, "Come in and teach the guitar," – but anyhow I'm totally digressing. ...So anyhow, I have a real huge respect for punctuality, and you know, reading the paperwork that gets sent home, and that's how my mom was, and how I am as a parent, and that has been very frustrating for me to say the least. At my daughter's preschool they would put like one little note up out by the side, and I'm like, "Nobody's gonna read that or listen to it," and of course everybody shows up. And it's like, here, you put one note out and it's like, in one ear, out the other. And so it's like I really struggle with like, am I being racist? But I just think it's a cultural difference, that is not true 100% of the time, I have some families from Hispanic cultures that are on time, and do their reading, and know everything and do everything that you ask them to, but I think in general it's a little bit more prevalent than, at least my family. I don't know. (Nicole)

In identifying differences between her own behaviors and values related to punctuality and the behaviors of the families with whom she works, Nicole is able to identify a potential source of countertransference and externalize it. Specifically, she articulates a values conflict that is a potential source of stress or frustration in her relationships with families, and by acknowledging that her own expectations are a function of her own culture, this may allow her to de-personalize some of her frustration. In fact, on the PBI, Nicole reports experiencing affectionate constraint relationships with her parents, which are characterized by high care and high

overprotection. The high overprotection is consistent with her report of the value placed on the importance of following the rules. Further, in reporting her frustration levels with her most challenging parents, Nicole reports nonclinical levels of frustration at the beginning of the year, and borderline levels of frustration at the end of the year. These experiences are consistent with the data shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

**Research Question 1c. Does a Teacher’s Childhood Trauma History Relate to their Relationships with Families?**

**Differences in child trauma histories by frustration with parents.** To assess this question quantitatively, composite scores for the ACE and ITS-FWP are used. Between group differences were examined by grouping teachers by their ITS-FWP category (Nonclinical and Borderline/Clinical;

Table 15) and by their ACE score (0 ACEs and 1 or more ACEs; Table 16), and their means on the other measure were examined. The mean ACE scores presented in

Table **15** indicate that teachers reporting borderline and clinical levels of stress at the end of the year also reported more childhood PTEs; specifically, 1.77 more ACEs than teachers with nonclinical levels of stress. Table 16 groups teachers by whether they have experienced any PTEs, and for the teachers who reported at least one ACE, they also reported higher mean levels of frustration with parents.

Table 15

*Mean Number of ACEs Reported by Teacher ITS-FWP Category at Time 2*

	<i>n</i>	ACE score ( <i>M</i> )	<i>S.D.</i>
Nonclinical ( $T < 56$ )	13	1.23	1.691
Borderline or Clinical ( $T \geq 56$ )	5	3.00	3.674

Table 16

*Mean ITS-FWP T Score at Time 2 by ACEs*

	<i>n</i>	ITS-FWP T score ( <i>M</i> )	<i>S.D.</i>
0 ACEs	10	49.60	5.641
1 or more ACEs	8	57.25	12.815

Because there was not enough power to use parametric tests to examine the relationship between the experience of at least one ACE in childhood and teacher frustration with parents at the end of the school year, nonparametric analyses (chi-square test of independence) were considered. Teachers were grouped by their ITS-FWP score category at the end of the year (nonclinical and borderline/clinical), and their ACE score (0 and 1+). Cell counts are presented in Table 17, though because there were fewer than five expected

frequencies in each cell, analyses are not presented. In looking at the cell counts, two-thirds of participants who reported nonclinical levels of stress reported no ACEs, while one-third reported at least one ACE. Looking at the group with borderline and clinical levels of frustration working with parents, half reported no ACEs and half had one or more ACEs.

Table 17

*Observed Cell Counts of ITS-FWP Time 2 Groups and ACE Groups (n = 18)*

	Nonclinical ( $T < 56$ )	Borderline/Clinical ( $T \geq 56$ )	Total
0 ACEs	8 (61.5%)	2 (40.0%)	10
1 or more ACEs	5 (38.5%)	3 (60.0%)	8
Total	13	5	18

Because of the low number of specific references within the *HISTORY* code to child trauma, and the low number of overlaps between *HISTORY* and *TP* (27 intersections), the relationship between child trauma and parent-teacher relationships could not be examined across the whole sample through integrating qualitative and quantitative data. However, there were a few teachers who did discuss their own experiences growing up, and their perspectives are included.

The two teachers who identified experiencing the most ACEs, Emily and Elisa (ACEs = 7), also mentioned their personal relationships most often in their interviews (*HISTORY* is coded seven times for one teacher and nine for the other). Similarly, the mean count of *HISTORY* codes for the eight teachers with at least one ACE was 4.13 (*S.D.* = 2.588). Conversely, the six teachers who reported no ACEs had a mean *HISTORY* code count of 2.00 (*S.D.* = 1.095). While a small *n*, this difference approached significance and had a medium to large effect size,  $t(12) = -1.874$ ,  $p = .085$ ,  $r = .472$ .

This trend was also observed in the overlap between *HISTORY* and *FAMILY* codes. While not a significant difference, teachers with at least one ACE related their personal relationships to their relationships with children and/or their parents more often, and this comparison yielded a large effect size (0 ACEs  $M = 0.67$ ,  $S.D. = 0.816$ ; 1+ ACEs  $M = 2.13$ ,  $S.D. = 1.553$ ),  $t(12) = -2.081$ ,  $p = .060$ ,  $r = .507$ . Taken together, these data suggest that teachers who have more traumatic childhoods discuss their personal history and relationships more often than teachers with less trauma in their history, and relate these experiences to their relationships with children and families more often.

In the interviews, most of teachers' discussion of their pasts primarily related to relationships and patterns of interaction. Thus, discussion of trauma is alluded to but not specifically discussed. One teacher, Elisa, who endured a particularly difficult childhood (ACE score = 7, PBI for mother and father fell into "Affectionless Control") referred back to her early experiences several times when discussing her work with challenging families:

I have learned that there is a part of me, I think – 'cause I did have the childhood that I had – I'm very compassionate, so I do not expect children all to be on the same level or whatever, and I do get, sometimes, children who require a lot of help, but I just

figure if I could just, sometimes it's just, keeping them for a year, without having them kicked out of the program, where the circumstances might get worse instead of better. So if I could just somehow give that child something that he could take, during the time that I have him. (Elisa)

Elisa identified her difficult childhood as a source of her compassion and patience for working with the most challenging families. Later on, she states, "I mean, we have mothers here that are like, maybe they're here by themselves in this country. What kind of feeling would that be, you don't know the language, you don't know the culture, school system, I mean that, any of us doing that, in our imagination ... I mean I've been through it, but most people, you can see how it would overtake just about anybody." Again, Elisa describes her own experiences as contributing to her understanding of the families' circumstances; in this instance she refers to the challenges of immigration and feelings of isolation.

Another teacher, Erika, who reported an ACE score of 3 and parent relationships affectionless control and affectionate constraint, alluded to her own personal experiences bringing more awareness about the families' experience:

I went through to a lot of miscommunication, uh, also to the body language, or the tone of my voice or how I was asking if they were late or what happened. So, again, all the behaviors from the parents, the families, is a result of different kinds of things that are behind, there is a story behind it. And a personal experience in my life brings more awareness for me, even, instead of, it was hard because uh, I have my daughter and my grandson...and all the experience and all the situations that my daughter lives in that moment, bring me a lot of awareness." (Erika)



In this statement, Erika reflects on her own experiences in the past and the things she observes her family going through currently. She also reflects on the things she considers when interacting with families (body language, tone, phrasing), and how it has resulted at times in miscommunication.

**Goal 2: To Examine Teachers' Work Stress and Satisfaction and their Relation to Teachers' Relationships with Families, Insight, and Relationships with Families over Time.**

**Research Question 2a. What are the Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Work Stress and Insightfulness?**

**Descriptive statistics of work stress.** Teachers reported on their experience of work stress, as assessed by the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL). Descriptive statistics are presented before assessing their relationship with other variables. All ProQOL scores reported are raw scores, which group a respondent into categories of low (22 or less), average (23-41), and high (42 or greater). Teacher cross-sectional categories for time 1 and 2 are reported in

Table **18**. Overall, teachers at both time points reported low levels of work stress (as assessed by the burnout and secondary traumatic stress scales) and high levels of fulfillment (as assessed by the compassion satisfaction scale, and descriptive statistics were similar across time points. Two teachers skipped too many items on the Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) scale at time 1 to calculate a subscale score, and one teacher skipped too many items on the Compassion Satisfaction (CS) and Burnout (B) to calculate a subscale score.

Table 18

*ProQOL Descriptive Statistics, Cross-Sectionally*

	<i>n</i>	Descriptive Statistics		% Teachers by Level		
		<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Low	Average	High
Time 1						
Compassion Satisfaction	31	43.97	4.408	0	32.3	67.7
Burnout	31	19.61	4.492	71.0	29.0	0
Secondary Traumatic Stress	29	20.62	4.499	72.4	27.6	0
Time 2						
Compassion Satisfaction	24	45.25	3.615	0	12.5	87.5
Burnout	24	19.63	4.567	79.2	20.8	0
Secondary Traumatic Stress	25	19.64	5.171	72.0	28.0	0

Teachers' scores are also compared longitudinally. Eight teachers who completed time 1 data did not complete time 2 data, and three teachers who did not complete time 1 data completed time 2. This yielded a total of 21 teachers with both data points. Only participants with both data points are compared over time (Table 19). Descriptive statistics of this subgroup of participants are similar to the larger cross sectional groups. The biggest

difference between groups is that 8.5% more participants (2 participants) fell into the high CS group in the longitudinal subsample.

Table 19

*ProQOL Raw Score Descriptive Statistics and Percent of Teachers in Clinical Levels, Longitudinally (n = 21)*

	Descriptive Statistics		% Teachers by Level		
	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Low	Average	High
Time 1					
Compassion Satisfaction	44.86	3.568	0	23.8	76.2
Burnout	20.10	3.767	66.7	33.3	0
Secondary Traumatic Stress <sup>1</sup>	21.05	4.651	70.0	30.0	0
Time 2					
Compassion Satisfaction	45.29	3.621	0	14.3	85.7
Burnout	20.05	4.727	76.2	23.8	0
Secondary Traumatic Stress	20.71	4.713	66.7	33.3	0

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>*n* = 20

**Descriptive statistics of insightfulness.** Descriptive statistics are presented in

Table **20** and Figure 9. On the whole, the majority of teachers fell into the “medium” or “high” categories, reflecting greater degrees of insightfulness. The means reflect the scores of low = 1, medium = 2, and high = 3. The IA Sum median and mode were both 26, and the distribution was negatively skewed with a slight bimodal distribution. As seen in Figure 9, teachers’ scores can be divided into thirds: the lowest scoring third scored between 17 and 25, the middle third scored 26, and the upper third scored between 27 and 30.

Table 20

*Descriptive Statistics of Insightfulness Assessment (n = 20)*

	Descriptive Statistics		% Teachers by Level		
	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Low	Medium	High
Insight	2.35	0.745	15.0	35.0	50.0
Openness	2.50	0.688	10.0	30.0	60.0
Complexity	2.40	0.681	10.0	40.0	50.0
Focus	2.25	0.786	20.0	35.0	45.0
Richness	2.35	0.671	10.0	45.0	45.0
Acceptance	2.65	0.489	0.0	35.0	65.0
Anger <sup>1</sup>	2.80	0.410	80.0	20.0	0.0
Worry <sup>1</sup>	2.45	0.686	55.0	35.0	10.0
Separateness	2.60	0.681	10.0	20.0	70.0
Coherence	2.35	0.671	10.0	45.0	45.0
Total	24.70	4.330	n/a	n/a	n/a

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>means were reverse scored

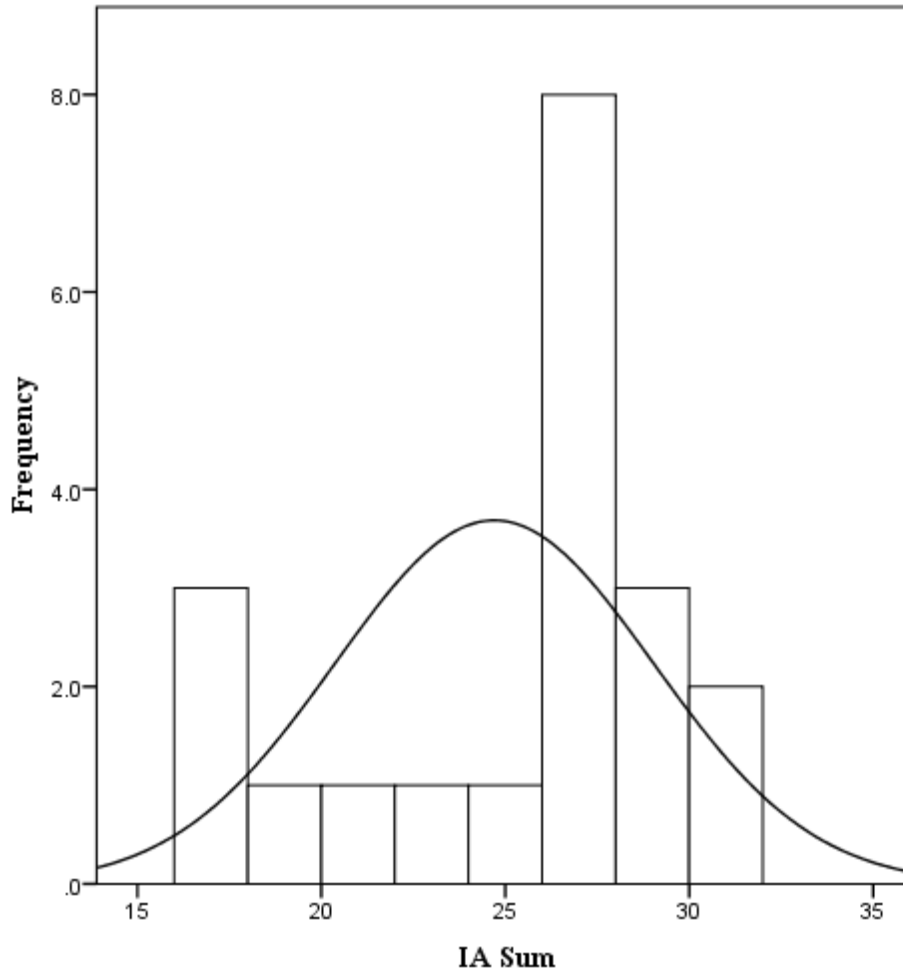


Figure 9. Distribution of Insightfulness Assessment summary scores.

In addressing research questions 2b, 2c, and 2d, first the quantitative analyses are presented for the teacher-parent relationship and insight. Then, qualitative analyses examine the relationship between the three concepts.

In examining the codes *REFLECTION* and *PERSPECTIVE*, a bivariate correlation was first run to determine whether the incidence of these codes were related, which might suggest that they capture a similar construct. The non-significant relationship had a medium effect size:  $r(18) = .397, p = .083$ . Because the non-significance was likely a sample size

problem and the effect size still suggests a linear relationship, these two codes were combined into a single code, called *INSIGHT*. Teachers had a range of between 3 and 22 *INSIGHT* codes ( $M = 12.20$ ;  $S.D. = 4.862$ ). Next, another bivariate correlation was run to determine whether teachers' ratings on the IA were related to *INSIGHT*. This relationship was significant and had a large effect size:  $r(18) = .503, p = .024$ , suggesting that the constructs are related.

**Research Question 2b. Does Teachers' Report of Compassion Satisfaction Relate to their Perceptions of their Teacher-Parent Relationships and Insightfulness?**

**Compassion satisfaction and teacher-parent relationship.** One-tailed bivariate correlations were run between the CS scale and the ITS-FWP (Table 21) for teachers who had data at both time points. Neither correlations were significant, though both had medium effect sizes. At both time points, frustration with parents was negatively related to compassion satisfaction, such that teachers who had higher compassion satisfaction were less likely to be frustrated with the parents of their most challenging student.

Table 21

*Correlations between ITS-FWP and ProQOL Longitudinally (n = 20)*

ProQOL scale	ITS-FWP Time 1		ITS-FWP Time 2	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Compassion Satisfaction	-.305	.191	-.269	.251



Within the same longitudinal subgroup, teachers' continuous T score means on the ITS-FWP were compared by level (average, high) within Compassion Satisfaction clinical levels (Table 22). The data from Table 22 is also displayed visually, and should be interpreted with caution due to the low  $n$  in the "average" group ( $n = 5$  at time 1 and  $n = 3$  at time 2). However, the figure still suggests some interesting trends. As seen in Figure 10, while having high levels of compassion satisfaction may be associated with lower levels of frustration with parents in the fall, it does not appear to protect a teacher against frustration working with parents by the end of the school year.

Table 22

*Teacher Mean ITS-FWP T scores by Compassion Satisfaction Level Longitudinally ( $n = 20$ )*

	Time 1			Time 2		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Compassion Satisfaction						
Average	5	54.20	17.094	3	53.33	7.024
High	15	49.60	7.836	17	52.59	10.112

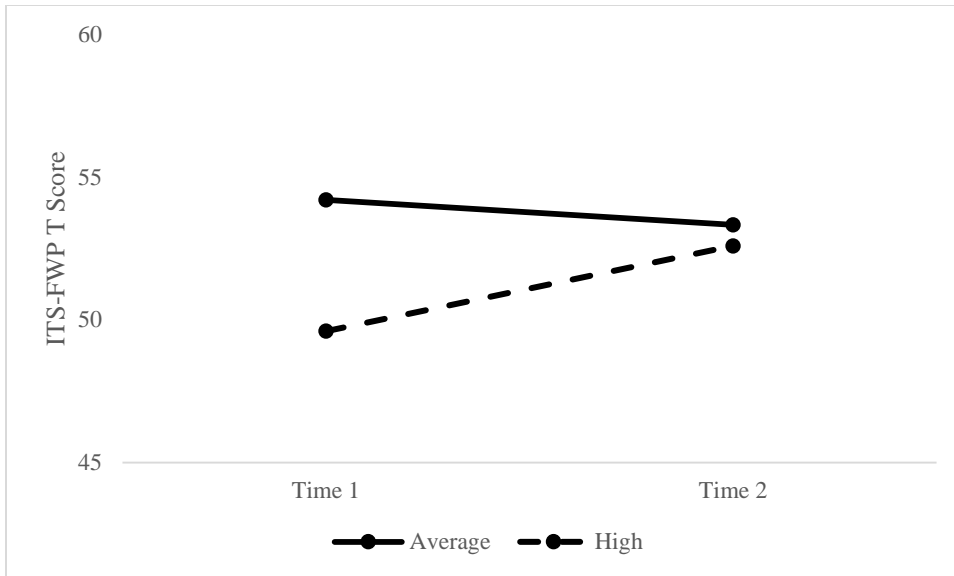


Figure 10. Compassion Satisfaction and FWP at time 1 and 2 ( $n = 20$ ).

**Compassion satisfaction and insightfulness.** Bivariate correlations were run to examine the relationships between quantitatively and qualitatively-assessed *SATISFACTION* and the two measures of insight. Both correlations with the ProQOL Compassion Satisfaction scale were negative and non-significant, though the IA Sum had a medium effect ( $r(12) = -.373, p = .189$ ) and the *INSIGHT* code had a small effect ( $r(12) = -.139, p = .636$ ). In the qualitatively assessed *SATISFACTION*, there was a negative, negligible effect, non-significant correlation with IA Sum [ $r(18) = -.062, p = .794$ ], and a medium effect, non-significant correlation with *INSIGHT* [ $r(18) = .424, p = .062$ ]. The ProQOL correlations suggests that the higher teachers rated their compassion satisfaction at time 2, the less insight they demonstrated in their interviews, while the qualitative data correlations suggest provide inconsistent and conflicting information about directionality. The different directions of the correlations may be related to how *SATISFACTION* was coded to represent both positive

emotions and the expression of a loss of satisfaction. Therefore, these two results may be measuring slightly different constructs and cannot be used to corroborate findings.

To examine this relationship in more detail, teachers were grouped by their level of compassion satisfaction (average or high) at time 2, and the means of IA Sum and *INSIGHT* for both groups were compared (Table 23). Differences were not significant [IA Sum  $t(12) = 1.699, p = .115, r = .574$ ; *INSIGHT*  $t(12) = .177, p = .862, r = .056$ ] and means were consistent with the correlation findings. Differences for the IA Sum yielded a large effect size even though they were not significant, and the mean score of the average group was close to the maximum possible score of 30.

Table 23

*Mean of INSIGHT and IA Sum by ProQOL Compassion Satisfaction Category at Time 2*

Compassion Satisfaction Category	IA Sum		<i>INSIGHT</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Average ( $n = 3$ )	29.00	1.00	12.33	4.726
High ( $n = 11$ )	24.36	4.567	11.82	4.400

**Compassion satisfaction, insight, and teacher-parent relationships.** Next, qualitative and quantitative data were mixed to further understand the relationship between compassion satisfaction, teacher-parent relationships, and insight. First, intersections between *TP* and *SATISFACTION* were identified. It should be noted that within the *SATISFACTION*

code, both satisfaction and loss of satisfaction are included in this code. Specifically, *SATISFACTION* was coded when a teacher discussed any of the following: reduced energy, general demoralization, stress related to work responsibilities, enjoyment of profession, feeling fulfilled, seeing purpose in teaching profession, recognizing the positive impact you can have on a child.

First, the number of intersections between *TP* and *SATISFACTION* were included as a count variable. In the first analysis, there were 83 segments that contained intersections of the two codes, and each teacher had between 0 and 10 intersections ( $M = 4.15, S.D. = 2.700$ ). Bivariate correlations and independent-samples *t*-tests were run to see whether there was a relationship between FWP T scores (at the same time point of their interview) and the number of times a teacher discussed *TP* and *SATISFACTION* together. With the correlations, there was a moderate, non-significant positive relationship,  $r(15) = .465, p = .060$ , such that the more times teachers discussed their satisfaction and teacher-parent relationships, the higher level of frustration they also reported with parents. Looking at these data using an independent samples *t*-test, teachers' discussion of *TP* and *SATISFACTION* were compared by clinical level on the FWP scale. Teachers who fell into the borderline or clinical level of frustration also talked about their satisfaction in teacher-parent relationships almost twice as much as parents with nonclinical levels of frustration,  $t(15) = -2.30, p = .036, r = .514$  (

Table 24). This is a large effect size.

A second analysis examined overlap between *TP*, *SATISFACTION*, and *INSIGHT*. The same analyses as those above were performed to see whether the relationship changed when insight was included. There were a total of 47 segments that contained intersections of the three codes, and each teacher had between 0 and 7 intersections ( $M = 2.35$ ,  $S.D. = 2.134$ ). Bivariate correlations and independent-samples *t*-tests were run to see whether there was a relationship between FWP T scores (at the same time point of their interview) and the number of times a teacher discussed *TP* and *SATISFACTION* with *INSIGHT*. With the correlations, there was a strong, significant positive relationship,  $r(15) = .587$ ,  $p = .013$ , such that the more times teachers discussed their satisfaction and teacher-parent relationships in a reflective, or perspective-taking way, the higher level of frustration they also reported with parents. In other words, the relationship between frustration with parents and work satisfaction strengthened as a teachers demonstrated greater insight. Looking at these data using an independent samples *t*-test, teachers' discussion of *TP*, *SATISFACTION*, and *INSIGHT* were compared by clinical level on the FWP scale. Teachers who fell into the borderline or clinical level of frustration also talked about their satisfaction in teacher-parent relationships almost twice as much as teachers with nonclinical levels of frustration,  $t(15) = -3.548$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $r = .641$  (

Table 24). This is a large effect. Taken together, these findings suggest that greater insight is associated with reporting higher frustration and discussion of work satisfaction (both satisfaction and dissatisfaction).

Table 24

*Mean Number of Overlaps between SATISFACTION, TP, and INSIGHT by ITS-FWP*

*Category (n = 17)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>SATISFACTION and TP</i>		<i>SATISFACTION, TP &amp; INSIGHT</i>	
		<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Frustration with Parents					
Nonclinical (T < 56)	12	3.50	2.468	1.50	1.446
Borderline or Clinical (T ≥ 56)	5	6.60	2.702	4.80	2.387

To explore this finding in more depth using qualitative data, the 83 segments from 18 different teachers were coded for positive, negative (or loss of/dissatisfaction), and mixed. Among the 83 quotations, 36 discussed positive teacher-parent relationship experiences, 16 discussed experiences that related to a loss of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and 31 reflected a mix of both positive and negative teacher-parent relationship experiences. Upon closer examination of the negative experiences, there was significant overlap between these sentiments and those about burnout. This makes sense because a loss of or lack of satisfaction can contribute to burnout. Therefore, these statements are discussed in research question 2c, while the positive and mixed experiences are discussed in this section. Examples of each category are briefly discussed in order to reflect on what relational experiences may contribute to or detract from a teacher's satisfaction with their relationships with parents. Further, teachers' insightfulness are also considered in understanding their statements.

*Satisfying (positive) teacher-parent experiences.* 14 of the 18 teachers mentioned positive experiences in their teacher-parent relationship satisfaction. Many teachers relayed enjoyment in working with the family system, rather than just children. This sentiment was expressed by Cecilia:

I really love working with families. What's different about other schools than [our school] is that we just don't look at the child. We look at the family and see how we support them like a whole system. I come and teach the children. I love interacting with the family. I love going to their houses and see how they live and what they need and how we can support them. We have goals for the family. This is what I like about this job...For me, when something happens, or I can help a family, I feel like I'm making a difference more than just if I work with the children. (Cecilia)

At the time of interview, Cecilia reported nonclinical levels of frustration with parents, and her satisfaction with these aspects of her job is apparent. This segment was not coded as demonstrating insight, though she did have three other *TP* and *SATISFACTION* segments that were coded as insightful. Across her interview, Cecilia scored in the middle third of teachers on the Insightfulness Assessment.

In working with the family system, several teachers acknowledged the valuable information that working with parents can provide. Rosa discusses gaining a better understanding of the child through working with families:

I felt good when they trust me enough and I'm able to help out. Sometimes it's like, crazy, because I wouldn't expect some of the stories I hear from them. And like, for me it feels good knowing I give them the right info or like even just talking to them, like that's all they needed. It feels good, you know? I feel like I did a little change. It



might not be something, like, something big I did for them, but I've been here so long, there have been many stories I've heard and I wouldn't picture it. Because I see the family and I see a perfect family. But when it comes out, usually like during conferences like when I end up finding out, sometimes we end up talking more about them instead of the child. Like, "This is what's going with me," and it's like, "Okay, now I know why this child might be acting like this... there's one parent....to me it doesn't make sense, but like I should respect her. I guess her husband has a heart problem and ... she told us that the reason why she doesn't like her daughter to cry is because she feels her heart hurts. So, like, it was hard to understand it but then I kind of get her... I know she doesn't like her child to cry for that reason, I thought maybe before 'cause her child is used to getting what she wants or she likes, seeing now, 'Okay you don't like her crying because of your belief,'." (Rosa)

Rosa acknowledges her initial assumption, or perhaps her hope, that the family she's working with is "perfect," and illustrates this point in an example about a family who has a belief with which she disagrees. She states that as she learns more about their challenges, she gains valuable information about the children's environment. In learning more about the family context, she says that she also finds a deeper of a sense of purpose. This segment was coded as demonstrating insight, though this teacher only had one instance of three segments in this category that was coded as insightful, and her IA Sum was in the lowest third. She did not complete the FWP so we don't have information about her frustration working with parents.

Helping others who face challenging circumstances was a commonly discussed area of compassion satisfaction. Says Alma:

I would say, umm, just being a safe, knowing that the kids who come into the program, and families have a safe place where I know that umm, a lot of them have gone through trauma, or are going through trauma, and I can be assured that I can do something positive and my coworkers, be a safe place, a safe haven for them. And getting to know the families and the individuals, the kids are all different, and creating attachments, and umm watching their development, and helping them, umm just learn, is great, those are some of the great [aspects]. (Alma)

For Alma, seeing their program as a “safe haven” and herself as an extension of that safety brings her joy in her work with the families. Alma rated her frustration with parents in the nonclinical range, and the insight she demonstrated in her interview was rated in the middle third of participants. She demonstrated insight in two of the five statements she made about her satisfaction in teacher-parent relationships, but not in this statement specifically. Emily extends this idea, discussing what the families may bring to their relationship, and attributing this to the challenging circumstances they face:

I love working with my kids, they are amazing. And they each have their own story so just you know coming from crisis situations and the low-income families that we get from the community. I feel like it’s more personal. I feel like our families want to get more involved with more things; like if we have family pictures or something. ‘Cause I have worked at other centers where they aren’t as involved, and it is just a better community-based place to work at and it’s pretty cool. I would have to say my kids and my families is the best. That’s why I come to work every day. (Emily)

Emily finds a sense of community and involvement in the families’ approach to their relationships. She also demonstrates insight in this statement, specifically perspective-taking,

when she puts herself in the families' shoes to try to understand their desire for involvement. Emily reported borderline levels of frustration with parents and scored in the middle range on the IA Sum. She also demonstrated insight in seven of the eight instances where she discussed her satisfaction and teacher-parent relationships.

Morgan reflects on how working with challenged families can provide opportunities to make a difference in their lives:

I had one little girl, she... had a lot of congestion in her chest and...her clothes would smell like mold... And so I was able to talk to the mother and... give her people to talk to and numbers to call and everything. Within three weeks, they were moved into a new house. All the agencies that help us here and all the different resources that we have, she was hooked up with. They helped her get another place. That child, now, is so healthy, so happy. It's unbelievable. Her health made such a huge difference for her. Now she's a healthy, happy child. ... What I love is that the momma loves her daughter so much she said okay, and she made that phone call. Because she made that phone call, now their whole situation is different and it's fantastic. (Morgan)

Morgan expressed satisfaction when helping a family with concrete assistance and was able to see the difference the help made in the child's life. Providing more tangible help was another area that several teachers identified: for example, several teachers also discussed donating their own (or their families') used clothing. This statement was not rated as insightful, though overall Morgan fell into the middle range on IA Sum. They rated their frustration with parents as nonclinical, and demonstrated insight in one of the three instances when discussing satisfaction and teacher-parent relationships.

In sum, there were several positive themes that teachers discussed regarding their satisfaction in their teacher-parent relationships. Teachers appreciated their relationships with families and the sense of community that their agencies cultivated with families, they valued the information they learned about the child's context to better understand their behavior and family system, and they felt helpful as a resource or source of safety when working with families facing particularly challenging circumstances. These verbal reports of teacher-parent relationship satisfaction were similar to their self-reported average and high levels of compassion satisfaction from the ProQOL.

*Mixed teacher-parent experiences.* Thirty-one statements were classified as mixed and came from 13 different teachers. Teachers also discussed conflicts with parents that expressed both positive and negative experiences. Natalia discusses feeling sad about a parent going straight to the director about a concern instead of coming to her first:

Yes, I had a mom come and talk to [the director] and I guess she went and talked because she wasn't happy with what was going on in the classroom. I felt very sad that she went all the way up to [the director] but she even brought... a lawyer because her son was very hyper and her son and another child had maybe three or four different incidents where her son has gotten hurt. After that meeting that they had with [the director], I found out that what that mom really wanted was just to speak up and say, "Oh, this is going on and I don't want my son to get hurt." She just wanted somebody to listen because after that nothing happened. But I was like, "Oh, she brought a lawyer, what have I done wrong?" It was very sad but at the same time it was good that she was able to speak up and come and do that. So that incident was like "Wow..." I see them once in a while – once a year, once every six months

because they live here in town and she's very friendly. She even invited me to his birthday party and I was like "Oh that's good, I wasn't as bad as a teacher" [laughs]. But at the time, it's hard. Hard when they go talk to your boss about what's going on.

(Natalia)

In this statement, Natalia demonstrates insight by reflecting on her own and the parents' feelings and behavior. Initially it appears that she personalized the mothers' actions, asking what she did wrong, but she is able to acknowledge that it was important for the parent to speak up about her feelings. Ultimately, Natalia concludes that the parent must not think she's a "bad" teacher if she is still friendly after the child has left the preschool, but it was a moment that was clearly upsetting to her. Natalia scored in the upper third of teachers on insightfulness in the IA Sum, and reported clinical levels of frustration with parents. Further, she demonstrated insight in six of the seven times she discussed her satisfaction with teacher-parent relationships. These are consistent with the qualitative analyses that suggested that teachers higher in insight also rated their frustration with parents as higher.

Nicole also talked about an instance of mismatch and repair. When she confronted a father about being late to drop off his child, her reflective supervisor witnessed the interaction:

And um, we had a little heated exchange and I was very bothered by it, and [the reflective supervisor] was there and had witnessed it, and I was just like, "What should I do, I don't know what to do?"... She let me figure it out, that that was actually a good place to start with him. And umm, so that was, it's hard to say you're sorry, and really be sorry, and be sincere about it when I still don't think I really – she said, "You came on a little strong," and that was really valuable to hear, because from

my perspective it was like, I was stressed out because it was circle time, it was time to start, and I'm pulling this clipboard back and forth with dad. And [my co-teacher] was out that day, and I was just totally stressed. And so to hear her say that and be really honest with me about what had happened, that was hard to hear, and it was hard to apologize but I did, and you know, we laughed about it, and it was like, it totally, it was very easy to repair something that could have gone on and gotten worse. So that was humbling. ... [The dad] was like, "That's okay... I'm waiting for the babysitter to come before," so it was like, I can, I'm very empathetic, but I need to know that information, and so umm you know, I said, "Well, thank you for letting me know, and we've got to get here on time, so I don't know if you can..." so but the babysitter's late, so that's like out of his control, so how far is that out of my control? (laughs) It's like some babysitter I don't even know is showing up late. You know, just realizing, he's just doing his best, and so am I, and we're both coming from the same place. So, anyhow, that was very humbling to have her be really honest with me and encourage me to do the right thing. (Nicole)

In this instance, what started as a negative interaction became positive. This statement was coded as insightful, and Nicole initially starts off being upset and unsure how to respond. Through talking about it with her supervisor and getting feedback, she engages in perspective-taking and reflection and figures out how she would like to repair the situation. In gaining more information from the father about the reasons that he is late, she is able to empathize with his position, de-personalize the lateness, and accept having very little control about the outcome of the situation. Nicole rated high in insight in the IA Sum, and borderline in her frustration with parents, which is consistent with the quantitative analyses. Further, she

demonstrated insight in six of the ten instances when she discussed her satisfaction with teacher-parent relationships.

Julia discussed the evolution of her relationships with parents as initially challenging and ultimately positive:

Um, at the beginning it was not having a strong connection with them. I felt more like I had to speak with them. The more I communicated with them, even if it was something positive the child did, or negative, at the very beginning even though I kept talking to the same families, I wasn't able to get through to them. But as I talked to them more and as I made myself more open and as I showed more personal experiences with my daughters or nephews or nieces, I felt like the families kind of put down a barrier and we were able to connect more. So, that was the hardest thing at the very beginning, but at the end there were more stronger connections, both with the students and with the families. (Julia)

Julia initially may have been frustrated or upset because it seemed like no matter what she said, she could not “get through” to the parents. However, she found that sharing personal experiences helped foster connections with the families. Julia was in the highest third on the IA Sum and reported nonclinical levels of frustration with parents. She demonstrated insight in one of the four times she discussed her satisfaction with teacher-parent relationships.

Finally, many teachers described situations that were both stressful and rewarding. For example, Natalia discusses working with high-need clients who are living in a homeless shelter:

Yes, I have had families that are living in [a homeless shelter] that are trying to make it in their own. To go to school or to look for a job and sometimes you see them too

busy with their trying to make it that I noticed over working with children of this kind of situation that the children come with a lot of need of love, of understanding, of being available, of being present, hugging them, of just being there with them. That's what I've noticed. I tend to want to tell the parents but then I see the parents trying to survive and I tell myself, "Okay they're trying to do their best with what they can and right now their housing and food is more important providing than being here, available". So I'm going to provide whatever I can to help this child be safe and happy and caring and hoping that someday their parents can be stable enough to be able to be available and present. That's just some of the cases that are extreme, we also have families that are needy, that are poor that are very loving to their children. There's differences. (Natalia)

For Natalia, she describes empathizing with both the parents' high needs as well as the children's high needs, which demonstrated insight through her attempt to take different perspectives. She also recognizes that the parents' needs sometimes get in the way of being able to tend to those of their children. However, working with these families seems to give her more of a sense of purpose – to be the stability for the children while their parents cannot.

**Research Question 2c. Does Teachers' Report of Burnout Relate to their Perceptions of their Teacher-Parent Relationships and Insightfulness?**

**Burnout and teacher-parent relationship.** One-tailed bivariate correlations at time 1 found a small to medium non-significant association between burnout and frustration working with parents (Table 25). At time 2, there was a strong and significant correlation between burnout and frustration working with parents.



Table 25

*Correlations between ITS-FWP and Burnout Longitudinally (n = 20)*

ProQOL scale	ITS-FWP Time 1		ITS-FWP Time 2	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Burnout	.231	.328	.614	.004

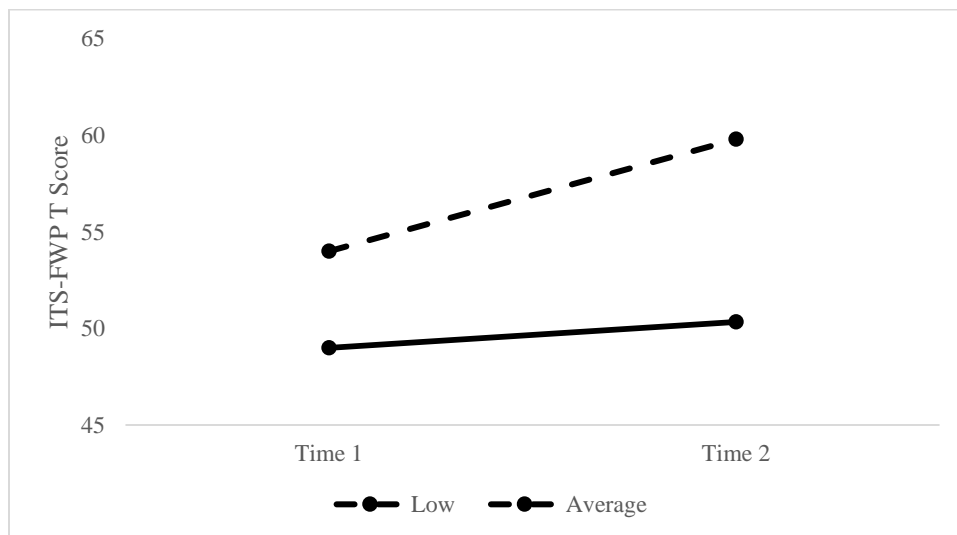
Within the longitudinal group, teachers' continuous T score means on the ITS-FWP were compared by level (low, average, high) within Burnout clinical levels (

Table 26). In both groups, teachers with average burnout had a higher mean FWP T score, and that difference is widens at time 2. This can be seen visually in Figure 11, and should be interpreted with caution due to the low  $n$  in the “average” group ( $n = 7$  at time 1 and  $n = 5$  at time 2). However, the figure still suggests some interesting trends. Teachers who report average burnout may experience a greater increase in frustration working with parents at the end of the school year.

Table 26

*Teacher Mean ITS-FWP T Scores by Burnout Level Longitudinally (n = 20)*

	Time 1			Time 2		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Burnout						
Low	13	49.00	6.403	15	50.33	9.424
Average	7	54.00	15.822	5	59.80	6.261



*Figure 11.* Burnout level (low and average) and mean FWP T scores at time 1 and 2 (*n* = 20).

**Burnout and insightfulness.** Bivariate correlations were run to examine the relationships between quantitatively and qualitatively-assessed burnout and the two measures

of insight. Both correlations with the ProQOL Burnout scale were positive and non-significant with medium effects [IA Sum:  $r(12) = .333, p = .245$ ; *INSIGHT*  $r(12) = .407, p = .148$ ]. In the qualitatively assessed *WORK STRESS (FRUSTRATION + JOB FACTORS)*, there was negative, medium effect, non-significant correlation with IA Sum [ $r(18) = -.300, p = .199$ ], and a negative, negligible effect, non-significant correlation with *INSIGHT* [ $r(18) = -.069, p = .774$ ]. The positive correlations with the ProQOL suggest that the higher teachers rated their burnout at time 2, the more insight they demonstrated in their interviews, but the qualitative data suggests the opposite relationship, whereby the higher the burnout, the lower the insight.

To examine this relationship in more detail, teachers were grouped by their level of burnout (low or medium) at time 2, and the means of IA Sum and *INSIGHT* for both groups were compared (

Table 27). Differences were examined using independent samples *t*-tests, and both violated the assumption of equality of variances. Not assuming equal variances, both measures of insight were significant, though because of the low *n* should be interpreted with caution [IA Sum  $t(11.468) = -2.213, p = .048, r = .482$ ; *INSIGHT*  $t(11.360) = -2.627, p = .023, r = .547$ ]. Both results underscore what the correlations found: teachers reporting a low level of burnout demonstrated lower insight in their qualitative interviews than teachers reporting average levels of burnout.

Table 27

*Mean of INSIGHT and IA Sum by ProQOL Burnout Category at Time 2*

Burnout Category	IA Sum		INSIGHT	
	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Low ( <i>n</i> = 9)	23.89	4.885	10.33	4.500
Average ( <i>n</i> = 5)	28.00	2.000	14.80	1.789

**Burnout, insight, and teacher-parent relationships.** Qualitative and quantitative data were mixed to further understand the relationship between burnout, teacher-parent relationships, and insight. The number of intersections between *TP* and *WORK STRESS* were included as a count variable. In the first analysis, there were 42 segments that contained intersections of the two codes from 15 different teachers, and each teacher had between zero and six intersections ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $S.D. = 2.024$ ). Bivariate correlations and independent-samples *t*-tests were run to see whether there was a relationship between FWP T scores (at the same time point of their interview) and the number of times a teacher discussed *TP* and *WORK STRESS* together. With the correlations, there was a small to moderate non-significant positive relationship,  $r(15) = .268$ ,  $p = .299$ , such that the more times teachers discussed their burnout and teacher-parent relationships, the higher level of frustration they also reported with parents. Looking at these data using an independent samples *t*-test, teachers' discussion of *TP* and *WORK STRESS* were compared by clinical level on the FWP scale. Teachers who fell into the borderline or clinical level of frustration also talked about

their work stress in teacher-parent relationships almost twice as much as parents with nonclinical levels of frustration. These differences were not significant, but had a medium effect size,  $t(15) = -1.350, p = .197, r = .311$  (Table 28).

A second analysis examined overlap between *TP*, *WORK STRESS*, and *INSIGHT*. The same analyses as those above were performed to see whether the relationship changed when insight was included. There were a total of 25 segments that contained intersections of the three codes, and each teacher had between zero and five intersections ( $M = 1.25, S.D. = 1.372$ ). Bivariate correlations and independent-samples *t*-tests were run to see whether there was a relationship between FWP T scores (at the same time point of their interview) and the number of times a teacher discussed *TP* and *WORK STRESS* with *INSIGHT*. With the correlations, there was a moderate to strong, non-significant positive relationship,  $r(15) = .455, p = .067$ , such that the more times teachers discussed their work stress and teacher-parent relationships in a reflective, or perspective-taking way, the higher level of frustration they also reported with parents. In other words, the relationship between frustration with parents and work stress strengthened as a teachers demonstrated greater insight. This is consistent with the previous findings about work satisfaction. Looking at these data using an independent samples *t*-test, teachers' discussion of *TP*, *WORK STRESS*, and *INSIGHT* were compared by clinical level on the FWP scale. Teachers who fell into the borderline or clinical level of frustration also talked about their work stress in teacher-parent relationships more than twice as often as teachers with nonclinical levels of frustration. While a medium effect, these differences were not significant and violated the assumption of equal variances,  $t(4.526) = -1.20, p = .289, r = .342$  (Table 28). Similar to the findings about work

satisfaction, when taken together, these findings suggest that greater insight may be associated with more discussion of work stress and frustration with parents.

Table 28

*Mean Number of Overlaps between WORK STRESS, TP, and INSIGHT by ITS-FWP*

*Category (n = 17)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>WORK STRESS and TP</i>		<i>WORK STRESS, TP &amp; INSIGHT</i>	
		<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Frustration with Parents					
Nonclinical (T < 56)	12	1.75	1.765	1.00	0.853
Borderline or Clinical (T ≥ 56)	5	3.20	2.588	2.20	2.168

Examining the teachers' statements, on the whole, teachers didn't discuss their frustrations in their relationships with parents as straightforwardly as compared to their direct discussion regarding frustration with coworkers and administrators or frustration dealing with children's behaviors. While there is a significant correlation between burnout and frustration working with parents, because it wasn't as present in the qualitative data, it's unclear whether this is an area that might be harder for teachers to talk about, or whether it may not feel relevant to them. Furthermore, burnout generally occurs over time, so it may be more challenging for a teacher to identify or articulate how particular experiences may build upon



one another, even if individual examples are, on their own, not as stressful. That said, many teachers did discuss their frustration with parents. Additionally, statements about teachers' dissatisfaction in teacher-parent relationships from 2b are also included in this section because they likely contribute to burnout even if they weren't coded *FRUSTRATION*.

As discussed in question 1b, Alex spoke about the challenges of working with parents who didn't take advantage of the entitlements they could access for free: "You know the [expression], 'you can lead a horse to water but you can't make them drink?' ... They don't always follow through. And so you can do what you can. You can offer them things, tell them how lucky they are to have these things. But then you just have to accept what they are willing to do.... So for these parents to have so much help free, you know – they really are lucky. But they, they don't always understand that." This is the type of sentiment that, over time, could lead a teacher to lose empathy and even become resentful of parents who might struggle to follow through. This statement was not coded as insightful, although Alex rated in the upper third on the IA Sum. They reported nonclinical levels of frustration with parents, and demonstrated insight in one of the three times they discussed stress related to working with families.

Similar to the discussion of their satisfaction, teachers also expressed frustration with parents who were in a rush. When asked about the most stressful aspects of working with children and families, Rosa answered:

I feel nowadays parents are like so in a rush, like it's hard to talk to them sometimes, 'cause like whenever I do to try to, like, have them slow it down, it's, like, always on the run. Sometimes I can't really have a conversation with them because it's like, "Oh, I'm running late." And it's like quick drop-off and leave. So I feel that. [I: "And

how do you know when you're feeling stressed?"] When everything starts to get to me, like I know that I need some space. Like I just, right away I'm just like, "Oh my god, I need to get out like I need some air." 'Cause like everything starts building up... I feel more just like, I feel like I can't concentrate and I don't know. Like I just get more irritated really easily. (Rosa)

Rosa identifies this as the most stressful aspect of her work with children and families. Parents being in a hurry and not talking to teachers may indirectly communicate that a conversation between them is not important, which may in turn make teachers feel devalued. Feeling undervalued can contribute to burnout, and in fact, when the interviewer follows up about her stress, Rosa identifies ways that she notices it impacting her physically and mentally. This statement was not coded as insightful, and Rosa rated in the lowest range on IA Sum. She made four statements about burnout in teacher-parent relationships and two of them were coded as insightful. It's possible that reflecting on a parents' perspective of their reasons for being in a rush, such as Nicole's experience checking in with a parent, may help to depersonalize this dynamic.

Several teachers discussed stress regarding child behavior problems, though only a few discussed their stress around communicating with parents about their children. Said Julia:

I think it [having children with behavior problems] is challenging for some of the parents. Some of the parents have communicated to me, that yes my child is a handful and they would share that because some of the parents would recognize it and some of those would be willing to work with myself and my assistants in making a behavior plan for the child. Whereas there are other parents who see their children act

up or scream in class and they would say that their child is okay. One parent, if I would say, “Your child did this,” instead of asking her child, “Why would you do that,” this parent would say, “Well what did the other child do to you? What did the other child do that caused you to hit him back? Did they push you first, is that why you pushed him?” This particular mother would turn the questions around, because she saw the child as the victim and not the initiator. (Julia)

Julia articulates the differences in communicating with parents who are understanding about the challenges their parents have versus communicating with parents who don't seem to encourage their child to take responsibility. In following up, the interviewer asked this parent what it is like to work with parents like this. In response, Julia gave an example of how she had handled a conflict with another parent. While her feelings about dealing with challenging parents were not acknowledged, even when asked directly, she was able to reflect on the parents' feelings and motivations. As a result, in working with the parent, she was able to address a conflict in a straightforward manner, which seemed to resolve it. This teacher discussed frustration in teacher-parent relationships three times, demonstrating insight in two of them. She rated in the highest group regarding her IA Sum, and rated her frustration with parents in the nonclinical range.

Working with individuals who face significant barriers can be an ongoing challenge for any type of service provider. This group is more likely to face challenges related to transportation, financial problems, flexibility with their employment schedule, or mental health or organizational concerns, for example. Teachers discussed the challenges they faced in balancing flexibility with enforcing rules with parents. For example, Erika stated:

You have rules and policies in the school and very important because they affect the good, uh management... I think that most of the families wanted to follow those... but there are a lot of factors that affect your follow[ing] the rules... there's a lot of factors every single day you come, you want to be on time but sometime you can't. So I understand that, before I was kind of a police: "Oh my god you didn't come or whatever," and now we learned that, "Okay so let's ask what you can do better or whatever." ...Like right now it's very important that families come before 9. Okay so, and uh we were discussing that it's okay you know what let's just [tell them] why it's important they come on time, don't question them or don't punish them. So you say, "Okay you know what very important you come on time, please. Because the kids need [unclear]... It is hard for them and it is hard for us, so please help us. So what is happening that you can't bring in on time, how we can help you?" And so [when you're standing in their] shoes it's different. And we use to be kind of, "Okay, you're coming late, I'm sorry...you know what it's already 5 times, so I'm sorry the child is gonna be very much, uhh I think we haven't have any kids that they have to be uh suspended or whatever. Or like uhh they forgot their clothes, you don't say oh my god you can come back tomorrow, whatever. It is very, in umm. So we have a little flexibility now. (Erika)

Erika acknowledges the stress that parent tardiness and disorganization puts on the classroom, and her desire to keep the classroom environment predictable for the other children while being understanding about parent barriers. This statement was rated as insightful, and this was the only statement that Erika made regarding burnout. Erika fell in

the middle third of teachers on the IA Sum and rated her frustration with parents in the nonclinical range.

Discussing mismatch or conflict was, not surprisingly, a common source of frustration in teacher-parent relationships, and the following two statements were also identified in question 2b as negative or contributing to dissatisfaction. Guadalupe discussed a time when she had to confront a parent about bringing a child with lice:

And it was with an older child and this child had lice, for maybe like a month...she [the mother] got mad at me because I was the one inspecting her hair, even thought that was my job... So she got really upset and she came and she talked to the office manager. And then they had to explain to her you know, she needs to do this and she's like, "Well you guys are always picking on me and I don't understand," ...and finally she kind of came around and we talked about it. And she wasn't okay with it, but she accepted it. But I think that was the hardest time... I was kind of scared I guess because I was like "Aww man, they are coming," you know. And like, "I'm going to have to check her head and I know she's going to be mad." [Starts to cry] ... I just don't like being like upset. Like, we're here to help them... I think my age might have something to do with it because a lot of the parents are a lot older than me and I think like in Hispanic culture, you need to respect elderly people. And I feel like they think my opinion doesn't matter. (Guadalupe)

In this example, Guadalupe describes a few dynamics. First, she describes a parent saying she is being singled out in the teachers' enforcement of the rules. She also describes personal factors that she wonders may contribute to the challenges, including age and culture. While she and the mother both are Latina, she sees their age difference as a potential source of role

identity confusion and subsequent conflict. Specifically, she identifies an intersection in her identities between her age, which might suggest that she needs to be more deferential, and being a teacher, which is a position of power. She also reflects on her own feelings and those of her client during the conflict. This statement was coded as insightful because Guadalupe reflects on how her identities might impact her relationships. Guadalupe rated as low on the IA Sum and reported her frustration with parents in the borderline range.

Another teacher, Catalina, also describes cultural beliefs as influences in past conflicts she has had with parents:

Umm, it does get difficult at times... umm something you have to just kind of stop and think and umm... you just – you find – you hear a lot of things and sometimes you don't know how to deal with it yourself. Because I mean, I sometimes I find myself saying, "I don't see how somebody can do this to a child." But then at the same time you also need to know how to respect sometimes their ideas or their culture, 'cause sometimes you know they come with these beliefs and you have to respect them even though you don't agree with them... [For example] One [child] enjoys putting on dresses a lot and shoes, like high heels, shoes and the mom came in one time and she was really mad that he had a skirt on and she picked him up and we tried to explain to her, you know, that it's normal, that its nothing bad, that every kid enjoys it. And she was just like, "No, I don't, please don't let him do this, don't ever." And we even took a picture of him one time because we were taking pictures of them dressing up and we put a picture on the classroom and she said, "Take it down." She didn't want any pictures like that, and I mean, you as a teacher know that it's normal, you know, it's nothing bad that they're experiencing. But at the same time you have

to respect that that's what the parent doesn't like and I'm not going to argue with her, you know, and sometimes I say to them, "You know it's normal," but she doesn't want to hear it, or no, you have to respect that. Yeah, a lot of things happen like that. One time we had an activity with nail polish and some kids wanted to put nail polish on, and, umm I think one of the boys we put some on and the mom said that the dad got mad when he got home, so I mean you have to respect their culture and what they believe. (Catalina)

Navigating different belief systems can be a challenge for teachers, and while Catalina accepts the parents' perspective, she also recognizes how difficult it can be to do so. This statement was coded as demonstrating insight because she was able to recognize the parents' perspective even though she disagrees with it. She also scored in the highest third of teachers on the IA Sum and reported nonclinical levels of frustration with parents.

Eleven teachers discussed negative experiences that suggested dissatisfaction or a loss or lack of satisfaction. While the following statements were not identified in the *WORK STRESS, TP* and *FRUSTRATION* search, they certainly may contribute to burnout. One type of concern related to teachers feeling as though the parents don't want a relationship with them or don't value the work they do. Says Guadalupe:

I think also, a lot of them are very private... they don't let you, kind of build a relationship with them. It's... this is just... you take care of their kids and sometimes they don't even see it like school. It's just like, drop off, pick up. I need to go to work. I need somewhere to leave my child. (Guadalupe)

Guadalupe has several ideas about why parents may not engage with her, including parents being private, parents being busy or preoccupied with other responsibilities (work), and

parents devaluing the work teachers do. Underneath her guesses about why a parent might not engage with her, it seems as though she may feel hurt by the lack of relationship, or she may feel used because of the minimal interaction some parents have with her.

Disappointment about relationships or feeling rejected may contribute to work stress and burnout. This statement was not coded as insightful, and Guadalupe demonstrated insight in one of the three statements she made about her satisfaction in her teacher-parent relationships. She rated her frustration in the borderline range, and her interview was rated in the low range in IA Sum.

Some teachers also talked about experiencing challenges related to dealing with parents who experience adversity and depression. Said Lisa:

I think I've seen parents kind of want to give up. Hopelessness. Their life is so stressful and so overwhelming with their situations. They don't know how to deal with it. I've heard parents say, "I just don't know, how to handle it, this child." Again, that comes for us, that we need to like build them up to try to help them build their child up. It's hard because if you know a child is leaving and you know the parents are not going to have a conversation with them. It's really tough. [I: What's it like for you knowing that?] Very emotional. I think it's sad, yeah. I think that, with my own kids, I think, "Wow, what would it be like for them." (Lisa)

Lisa puts herself in both the parents' and children's shoes in this quotation, taking each of their perspectives. In doing so, she also tasks herself with helping the parent so that the parent may help the child. While an important goal, it can also be a challenge to work with parents who are overwhelmed, and this can certainly impact a teachers' mental health. This statement was coded as insightful, and both of her two statements about her satisfaction



reflected insight. Lisa scored in the upper third of teachers on the IA Sum, and did not complete the ITS.

**Research Question 2d. Does Teachers’ Report of Secondary Traumatic Stress Relate to their Teacher-Parent Relationships and Insightfulness?**

**Secondary traumatic stress and teacher-parent relationship.** One-tailed bivariate correlations at time 1 found no association between secondary traumatic stress and ITS-FWP T score (Table 29). At time 2, there was a small to moderate non-significant correlation between secondary traumatic stress and frustration working with parents.

Table 29

*Correlations between ITS-FWP T Scores and STS Longitudinally (n = 20)*

ProQOL scale	ITS-FWP Time 1		ITS-FWP Time 2	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Secondary Traumatic Stress	.025	.917	.289	.216

Within the longitudinal group, teachers’ continuous T score means on the ITS-FWP were compared by level (low, average) within Secondary Traumatic Stress clinical levels (Table 30). Table 32 is also displayed visually, and should be interpreted with caution due to the low *n* in the “average” group (*n* = 6 at time 1 and *n* = 7 at time 2). However, the figure suggests some interesting trends. While secondary traumatic stress level appeared to make

some differences in frustration with parents at time 1, differences between groups appear to diminish at time 2 (Figure 12).

Table 30

*Teacher Mean ITS-FWP T Scores by Secondary Traumatic Stress Level Longitudinally (n = 20)*

	Time 1			Time 2		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Secondary Traumatic Stress						
Low	14	51.93	11.855	13	52.38	9.929
Average	6	48.00	6.573	7	53.29	9.569

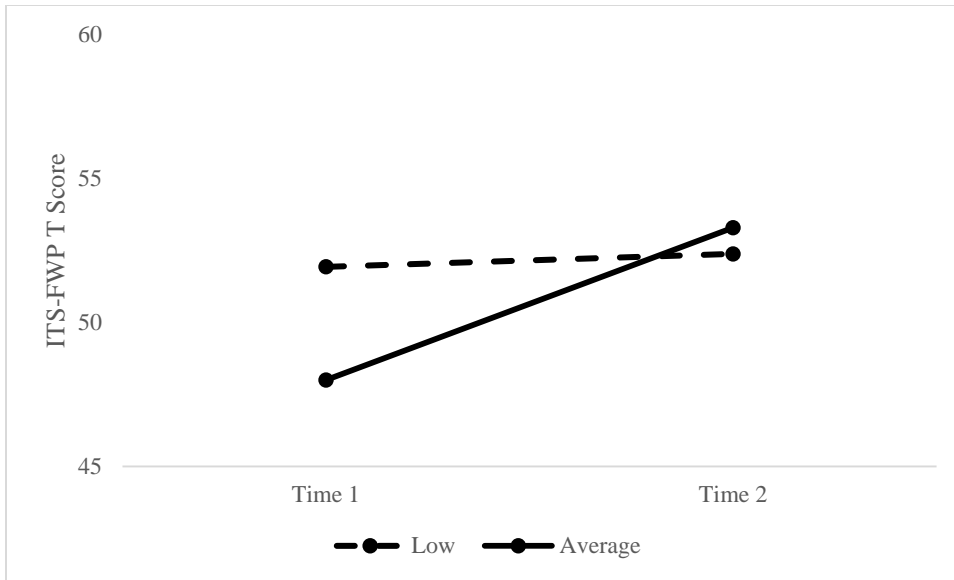


Figure 12. Secondary traumatic stress and FWP at time 1 and 2, longitudinally ( $n = 20$ ).

**Secondary traumatic stress and insight.** Bivariate correlations were run to examine the relationships between qualitative and quantitatively assessed secondary traumatic stress and the two measures of insight. Both correlations with the ProQOL's Secondary Traumatic Stress scale had small, non-significant effects that went in opposite directions, with *INSIGHT* having a positive correlation [ $r(12) = .116, p = .692$ ] and IA Sum having a negative correlation [ $r(12) = -.141, p = .631$ ]. In the qualitatively assessed *SECONDARY STRESS*, there was a medium, non-significant correlation with IA Sum [ $r(18) = .231, p = .327$ ], and a medium, non-significant correlation with *INSIGHT* [ $r(18) = .384, p = .095$ ]. The ProQOL's correlations suggest that Secondary Traumatic Stress may not have much relationship to insight, whereas the qualitative data suggest that discussion of secondary stress is associated with higher (in this case, average) secondary stress. The different directions, small effect sizes, and non-significance suggest that a larger  $n$  would be needed before interpreting any

potential directional differences, though the medium effect size with the qualitatively-assessed *SECONDARY STRESS* warrants further consideration.

Teachers were also grouped by their level of secondary traumatic stress (low or medium) at time 2, and the means of IA Sum and *INSIGHT* for both groups were compared (Table 31). On average, teachers who described their secondary stress symptoms as low rated about three points higher on the IA Sum scale, though these differences were not significant and had a low to medium effect size [IA Sum  $t(12) = 1.111, p = .288, r = .285$ ]. In terms of demonstrating insight in their interviews through the codes *REFLECTION* and *PERSPECTIVE*, there were no significant differences between groups and the comparison had a small effect size [*INSIGHT*  $t(12) = -.669, p = .516, r = .176$ ], with people in the average range displaying insight about one more time per interview. These results were consistent with the correlation findings.

Table 31

*Mean of INSIGHT and IA Sum by Secondary Traumatic Stress ProQOL Category at Time 2*

Secondary Traumatic Stress Category	IA Sum		<i>INSIGHT</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Low ( $n = 8$ )	26.50	4.209	11.25	4.234
Average ( $n = 6$ )	23.83	4.750	12.83	4.579

**Secondary traumatic stress, insight, and teacher-parent relationships.** Next, qualitative and quantitative data were mixed to further understand the relationship between secondary traumatic stress, teacher-parent relationships, and insight. The number of intersections between *TP* and *SECONDARY STRESS* were included as a count variable. In the first analysis, there were 54 segments that contained intersections of the two codes, and each teacher had between zero and six intersections ( $M = 2.70, S.D. = 1.720$ ). Bivariate correlations and independent-samples *t*-tests were run to see whether there was a relationship between FWP T scores (at the same time point of their interview) and the number of times a teacher discussed *TP* and *SECONDARY STRESS* together. With the correlations, there was a moderate, non-significant positive relationship,  $r(15) = .312, p = .223$ , such that the more times teachers discussed their secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships, the higher level of frustration they also reported with the parents. Looking at these data using an independent samples *t*-test, teachers' discussion of *TP* and *SECONDARY STRESS* were compared by clinical level on the FWP scale. Teachers who fell into the borderline or clinical level of frustration also talked about their satisfaction in teacher-parent relationships slightly more than teachers with nonclinical levels of frustration, but the differences were not significant and had a small to medium effect size,  $t(15) = -.840, p = .414, r = .235$  (

Table 32).

A second analysis examined overlap between *TP*, *SECONDARY STRESS*, and *INSIGHT*. The same analyses as those above were performed to see whether the relationship changed when insight was included. There were a total of 38 segments that contained intersections of the three codes, and each teacher had between 0 and 5 intersections ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $S.D. = 1.553$ ). Bivariate correlations and independent-samples  $t$ -tests were run to see whether there was a relationship between FWP T scores (at the same time point of their interview) and the number of times a teacher discussed *TP* and *SECONDARY STRESS* with *INSIGHT*. With the correlations, there was a medium to large, non-significant positive relationship,  $r(15) = .428$ ,  $p = .087$ , such that the more times teachers discussed their secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships in a reflective, or perspective-taking way, the higher level of frustration they also reported with parents. In other words, the relationship between frustration with parents and secondary stress strengthened as teachers demonstrated greater insight. Looking at these data using an independent samples  $t$ -test, teachers' discussion of *TP*, *SECONDARY STRESS*, and *INSIGHT* were compared by clinical level on the FWP scale. Teachers who fell into the borderline or clinical level of frustration also talked about their secondary stress in teacher-parent relationships almost twice as much as teachers with nonclinical levels of frustration, though these differences were not significant and had a small to medium effect size,  $t(15) = -.982$ ,  $p = .342$ ,  $r = .261$  (

Table 32). These findings provide moderate support that greater insight is associated with reporting higher frustration with parents and discussion of secondary stress.

Table 32

*Mean Number of Overlaps between SECONDARY STRESS, TP, and INSIGHT by ITS-FWP*

*Category (n = 17)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>SECONDARY STRESS and TP</i>		<i>SECONDARY STRESS, TP &amp; INSIGHT</i>	
		<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Frustration with Parents					
Nonclinical (T < 56)	12	2.25	1.815	1.42	1.564
Borderline or Clinical (T ≥ 56)	5	3.00	1.225	2.20	1.304

To explore this research question in more depth using qualitative data, the 54 statements from 18 different teachers were further examined. In talking about secondary stress, a few themes emerged. Teachers discussed several emotional consequences, including sadness, pain, worry, helplessness, guilt, and anger. Sometimes these feelings conflicted with one another, and they were often in concert with empathy and compassion for their families. Teachers also brought up feeling a sense of responsibility for children.

Several teachers discussed the feelings that working with children facing adversity can bring up, including the emotional toll that it can take. Said Jasmin:

There was a little girl that ... her mom was umm being abused by her dad. And umm the little girl saw the abuse and she was like, she used to just be like afraid of everything. ... Me and the mom had a umm a little conference... And then that's when she told me, and I told her, "You know what, I see that she's afraid of a lot of



things.” And she that’s when she explained to me umm her situation, that she was beaten and she saw all the abuse and her dad went to jail and this and that. And that’s when I started to like understand why the little girl was the way she was. She cried all day long, she was afraid of everything, everything. If you made a loud sound, she would feel startled and you know like, “What’s going?” You know? Sometimes, it’s good for us to know that like what’s going on, but then I think sometimes it’s not, because it’s sometimes, it gets to you. You know like, ‘cause we have hearts too, you know? We feel and it’s like poor things, we wanna like just hug them or you know like try to protect them, or keep them in a little overprotection below that or something. But it’s hard for us, because when we’re working with them, the mom comes in and sometimes it’s hard to know their situation. But then again, it’s good for us so we can try to help the children and also if the parents have like questions or they wanna know where to go to get certain help, then we know where to refer them, you know? But then sometimes, I wish I didn’t know like a lot of the things that the families go through because it’s, it’s sad. (Jasmin)

Jasmin discusses the advantages and disadvantages to knowing more about the families’ adversities. She acknowledges that she learns more about the context for the child’s behavior, but also recognizes the emotional burden that the additional knowledge can bring. Jasmin’s two statements relating to secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships were both rated as demonstrating reflection or perspective-taking. She did not complete the ITS-FWP or ProQOL.

Alma discussed the emotional and physical effects she has experienced in working with children facing pain:

I would say watching, or becoming aware of some of the... difficulties in their lives. Some of the kids bring a lot of pain, or struggles, and they're just so, they're so young, that umm, it's hard to know that umm, they're going through that, and the families, and umm... I believe that my job involves like, every part of me, and it's physical, it's mental, it's emotional... and ummm that can be... uhhhh (crying)... uhh... draining. [I: How do you know when you're stressed?] Ummm, my back hurts. Umm, and I start thinking about different career options (laughs) – so yeah. (Alma)

In this statement, Alma sees a direct relationship between the children's pain and the stress she experiences in her mind and body. She even considers leaving her job when she feels particularly stressed. She identifies the children's age as a factor in thinking about their pain: it is particularly upsetting to her because they are so young. Alma demonstrated insight in 1 of the 3 statements she made about secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships, and rated her frustration with parents in the nonclinical range. She rated her secondary traumatic stress on the ProQOL as low, though this statement offers a slightly different perspective. It's possible that she is better able to articulate her secondary symptoms of stress in an interview than on a self-report questionnaire, and this may be the reason that she was not rated as high on insight. Her IA Sum was in the average range, and based on her statements and her crying throughout the interview, there's a sense of disconnection between her felt experience and her acknowledgement or description of her stress. Alma may be at risk for further symptoms of secondary stress.

Several teachers discussed worrying about their students outside of work, experiencing feelings of helplessness, and experiencing sadness because of their students'

pain. These themes were typified in the sentiments of Sofia, who discussed all three of these sentiments:

For example, when mom and dad argue, they say why, why they do that. And I say, because sometimes grownups argue for little things. And I say, “What are you feeling now?” And they say... “I feel sad or I feel worried or I feeling disappointed with my mom because she is screaming, or disappointed with my dad because he pushed my mom,” and in my group we worry about what happens to the kids. And we have to follow rules, sometimes we must make a report. And this is one of the parts that I don’t like about here. Never, never do I enjoy that, because if a parent is doing something wrong they can take a kid somewhere, away from parents. We already have cases in here, one, one case, and I see my coworker and tears in her eyes and she is saying, “But what, what can we do about it? What can we do?” And I say, “Nothing. We, we have to let go and hope that they can be in the best place. And that the people are going to take care better.” It is very hard and you don’t believe it, but you take these kids with you in your heart... I take these kids with me. Sometimes I need to go out to my car, close to the beach and take a few minutes for myself. Many times I cry, because I am very emotional, but I don’t understand why parents don’t think for the kids. But I am not there to protect the kids in the house. I wish I had magic to be there and protect them so that nothing happens to them. So after that we have help from [a community mental health agency] and they say to [the reflective supervisor], “I need your help,” and she starting to listen to me everything and she hear me cry and cry and cry and after I finished crying, she say, “Do you feel better?” and I say yes. And after she say, “Do you want to tell me how you are feeling and

why you cry a lot?” And all these things, I feel in my heart a little light and there is nothing heavy inside. [I: Can you say more about what makes you cry?] What makes me cry, is because I worry because I don’t know what is going to happen to them. I don’t know if they are eating, if they found the right person to take care of them. Are they taking showers, are they covered with blankets? Or if they are being taken care of. But it is, I worry I am mad with the parents inside of my heart. I wonder, “Why are they not thinking of their children?” (Sofia)

In this quotation, Sofia communicates several important things related to secondary stress. First, she discusses the impact of being a witness to a child’s narrative that includes stressful and potentially traumatic events. She also acknowledges her own countertransference feelings of disappointment, sadness, and anger towards parents resulting from hearing about their circumstances, and worry about their children. Further, she discusses her own feelings of helplessness around her and her coworkers’ inability to change the situation. However, she also wrestles with feeling protective of a child and simultaneously feeling distressed at the idea of disrupting the parent-child relationship – a bind that mandated reporters often experience. These emotions lead Sofia to “take these kids with you in your heart,” a quality that makes a worker more likely to experience secondary stress and burnout. Finally, Sofia discusses using reflective supervision to talk about all these emotions and cry. Sofia’s four statements about secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships were all coded as insightful, and her frustration working with parents on the ITS fell in the nonclinical range. She rated her secondary stress in the average range; however, notably she has one of the highest STS scores of the group. Her statement conveys awareness of the bind she

experiences in her relationships with parents – feeling protective of and worried about their children, and at times, angry with the parents.

Worrying about children outside of work was a common theme. Julia and Catalina also discussed their worry for children outside of work hours. Just like Sofia, they were both concerned about whether the children were being cared for:

But there was one case where, I think it was a week long, I just couldn't sleep thinking about one student's personal issues at home. I think after I found out the outcome of what was going on, I think that is when I finally felt like, "Okay, this student is safe, he's okay." [I: Do you mind sharing that example?] Sure, yea. Well one time during nap time I was helping a student fall asleep and I notice that he had a couple of marks on his arm. When I asked him what happened, he just said that he did not know, he wasn't sure... And I did seek advice from the preschool coordinator and I think I also felt more at ease, knowing that I was following all the correct protocol. After speaking to her she was saying just take it easy, you're doing everything correctly, "It is normal to feel worried about the student." Uh, we filed a report, they followed through with it, and it was known to me a week later what happened. So at the end, that's when I felt more like, okay. But every night after that I was just concerned about, "Was he okay?" (Julia)

Julia's experience making a report also led her to experience more feelings of worry outside of work. She also states that she didn't feel calm until she heard about the outcome of the investigation. Julia rated her frustration with parents as nonclinical and her secondary stress as low. Her interview was rated high in insightfulness, and her one statement that was coded

as *SECONDARY STRESS* and *TP* (this quote), was rated as insightful because she was reflecting on her feelings and how they related to her behavior.

Catalina also discussed how working with children facing more challenging circumstances has made her worry more about their well-being outside of preschool:

Before, I... I don't think I thought about it too much, I think I would just kind of like, "Oh it's my job, it's Monday through Friday," kind of, but I feel like, I notice myself thinking more about it, and on the weekends, I don't see it just as my job Monday through Friday, seven to three or four thirty and it stops right there. Now I think about it more I think now.... sometimes it gets difficult I guess, yeah, because when I am thinking about it, I usually kind of think in a worried way, not like, "Oh, they're having fun," kind of like, "I wonder," or if especially if I send a kid sick on Fridays, when he is really sick, and I have to call the mom to pick him up, I'm always wondering, if the mom is taking care of, if he is being taken care of, is going to be okay Monday, is he going to come on Monday? So it really gets difficult because, like I said, I'm more worried about them more than I'm thinking, "Oh they're having a fun time." I leave with worries, yeah. (Catalina)

Catalina identifies a shift in her thinking from not being worried about the children to taking a stance where she is uncertain and worried about the home environment. This worry spills over into her time off. Catalina rated high in insightfulness and demonstrated insight in one of the four times she discussed secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships. She also rated herself in the nonclinical range of frustration with parents at both time points, and in the average range in STS. Notably, while she still fell in the average range, her STS score was the highest of all the teachers. It's possible that her perceived lack of boundaries between

work and home life may encroach upon her ability to relax and enjoy her time off. Through her constant worry for her children, she may feel more depleted. Further, it appears to affect her outlook – she states that she has a hard time visualizing the families having fun and instead worries about whether a child is being cared for.

Teachers also discussed feeling helpless or a lack of control. Victoria feels she can separate her work and home life, but acknowledges how the children’s behaviors and family situations lead to feelings of helplessness:

Um, it is sad to know that, you these kids and their circumstances and their families’ situations. I can kind of separate that from my personal life, so it doesn’t stress me out outside of work, but then when I come here and I see their behavior, then it is kind of like, . . . “Oh what can I do?” But there is not much I can do. (Victoria)

Victoria rated in the average range on insightfulness and one of her two statements about secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships were rated as insightful. She also rated herself low in STS and in the nonclinical range on frustration with parents. She states that she is able to separate her work and home life, in contrast to Catalina, though she acknowledges the feelings of helplessness that some of the behaviors she observes elicits. It’s unclear from this statement whether Victoria feels she has the competence to address the child behaviors, or whether she feels more powerless to address the family circumstances but feels she is able to make a difference with the children.

Relatedly, feelings of helplessness may also lead to feelings of guilt. Natalia discussed wondering whether she could have done more for a family to prevent violence:

I have seen children that tend to be too shy. To kind of want to hide, like when you talk to them or when you get too near to them they go like this [cover up]. It’s

interesting that I didn't know that this child that I'm thinking about that used to go like this [cover up] when you get too close to him; he was going through some domestic violence at home. It wasn't until daddy stabbed mom... that he went to jail and then mom came and told us "he's in jail because he tried to hurt me" that I said, "Oh! So your son was seeing all that's going on, I don't know since when"...because ... it wasn't until later that he was in jail that I realized, "Oh maybe that's what was going on." Like I told you, maybe there's a lot more things that are going on that I can think about but that was a realization that, "Oh that's what happened." He would cover himself because I guess he would tend to hide when they were fighting or when something was going on. [I: What was it like to have that conversation with that mom about when she told you? How did that come up?] I was happy for her that daddy was not in the picture anymore and that she wasn't going through all that violence. But at the same time I was thinking, "Maybe I could have done more." Maybe more talking to the mom or saying, "How are you, how you feel? Is there anything we can do to help?" I knew that there was conflict going on and that issues were going on because the children that come to this place, there's something going on. Either they're in a [homeless shelter] or CPS reports or, I mean in order to qualify they have to go through some kind of situation. So I knew that much and I knew that far, but as far as connecting with the mom for her to tell me, "This is going on at home..." that could have been prevented. I guess wish I had the knowledge I have now. (Natalia)

Natalia is left feeling like there was something more she could have done to intercede with the family before the mother was stabbed. This statement suggests that this teacher may feel responsibility for the actions of the families with whom she works, even if she has little



influence over them. While not many teachers expressed this sentiment, it recognizes another factor that may lead to the experience of secondary stress. In fact, at the time of her interview Natalia rated her frustration with parents in the clinical range and her STS in the low range. She rated in the high range of insightfulness and demonstrated insight in all three of the statements she made about secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships. Based upon the severity of this situation and Natalia's own admission of guilt or self-blame for not preventing the situation, one might expect that she would have rated her STS higher than she did. However, it's possible that her own insight and self-awareness about this issue has buffered her from experiencing secondary stress symptoms. It's also possible that she has channeled some of her feelings into her frustration working with parents, rather than experiencing secondary stress symptoms.

While not many teachers assumed a sense of responsibility about their families' struggles, teachers did tend to personalize the relationship in ways that may contribute to secondary stress. Cecilia wonders about trust within her relationships with parents:

Another thing that stress[es] me is, right now, one of my little girls, she had been in the hospital for about three weeks and I went to the doctor's appointment and we don't know what happen and she's still oxygen, and etc. Those are the things that I wish I can do something for the family but I can only do so much. Right now, I'm wondering how much I put myself out when I meet a new family and little by little I learn things about them and then I feel like they are hiding things from me. I always think, "Wow, do they trust me?" I thought they will, that I know everything about them, or I wonder, "Why, if I always try to be there for them, there are some things

they keep to themselves?” And when I find out things, I think what I’m doing that I can help to get them open to me and see how we can talk to them. (Cecilia)

Cecilia hopes that families will be honest and forthcoming with her about their lives, and admits feeling suspicious about whether they are hiding things from her. It appears that she may feel hurt or upset if she doesn’t feel families are sharing things with her. By personalizing a family’s decision about how much to share with her, she may be setting herself up for disappointment. Despite this challenge in working with parents, she reported nonclinical levels of frustration working with parents and low levels of secondary traumatic stress. She rated in the average range of insightfulness, and five of her six comments about secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships were rated as insightful. In another statement she says:

It’s hard. Knowing what the difficulties they are coming through. When I hear the stories, maybe I go back and think, “Maybe this family can be support this way.” I get concerned and I go home and if there’s something going on, I like to talk to them. I go home and talk to them, “What’s going on?” It always worries me trying to protecting. Knowing that they already have a support system and if it is functional. [For] example, the family that I have in the hospital. I was willing to go to go after work to spend some time because I know the mom had to go to work but then that day the mom trust me. She decides to tell me the father is around and he’s supposed to be in Mexico. So I go, “Oh okay,” so it’s okay, it’s fine, he’s here. For me it was shocking. I was upset because I just found out he was there but I wasn’t expecting him to be there. I saw my little girl crying. I feel like she didn’t want to be around her father. My place is to leave now. He’s not the person that I wish he was. He’s a father

and he's there. I'm not going to be there all the time. I can be there for an hour or two. . . . I wanted to be there in the weekend. I wanted to go, then I call and I said, "How are you doing?" She said "good" and the father is there. I'm glad he's there. Even if he is harassing the mom and having all these issues, I was thinking "at least he's there". Maybe I'm not the person that's going to be available right away but it's ok. We're going to dismiss the child and somebody needs to come and pick her up. He was there. For me it's difficult to accept that he is here knowing all the negative relationship but he's there so it's tough. (Cecilia)

In this instance, Cecilia alternates back and forth between several feelings about the father's involvement: relief, shock, worry, protectiveness, and disappointment. Her feelings of protectiveness about the child pit her against the parents, whereby she feels pulled to protect the child and is unsure whether the father is trustworthy. She wants to visit on the weekend, and finds it difficult to accept that she can't be as involved as she would like.

Finally, a few teachers thought that working with families facing adversities impacted their own outlook and perspective. Said Lisa:

I definitely see things different since I've worked here. Umm I don't know if I can just say it's like stress, but I think in the whole outlook of raising children and umm... You know, just seeing families you know, not thinking where before I would think like, "Wow, these parents are horrible parents." Now I can I see the different life that some of these parents are truly doing the best that they can do. Um, so I think that helps me kind of not come in judging-- and try not come in judging, try not to come in, you know, with expectations and how it should be. You know I know

there's...nobody's the same, no family's the same they're all different. Umm and then with their stresses, I think it's-- they're all similar, but different. (Lisa)

Lisa appears to have developed a deeper sensitivity and understanding of the struggles that families go through. She sees herself as more compassionate and less judgmental after working with the families. Lisa did not complete quantitative measures, but she rated in the high range on insightfulness, and four of the five statements she made about secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships were coded as insightful. Her insight is demonstrated in her understanding of the developmental trajectory of her own growth over her career. She is able to see how letting go of the judgment towards families has helped her to be better at her job, and to experience less stress as well.

### **Goal 3: To Examine Differences between Teachers with One or Two or More Years in Reflective Supervision**

#### **Research Question 3a. How Does the Experience of Reflective Supervision Relate to Parenting and Frustration?**

Because half of this group was new to RS while the other half had experienced two or more years, it is important to consider whether RS impacted teacher frustration. Therefore, follow up analyses were conducted to examine differences between groups. Because the *n* of each group ranged from 2-11, results were not examined statistically and should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 13 and Figure 14 show teacher frustration with parents by their maternal and paternal low and high care relationships, respectively. Interestingly, responses suggest inverse relationships by years in reflective supervision whereby teachers reporting low care parenting who were in their first year of reflective supervision had increased frustration over

the school year, while teachers with two or more years reported similar levels of frustration over the year. For teachers reporting high care parenting, once years in RS is taken into account, a similar trend is observed. Teachers in their first year who report high care from their parents also report an increase in frustration, whereas teachers with multiple years of reflective supervision report a decrease in frustration over the school year. Figure 15 examines teachers reporting low overprotection, and a similar trend is observed whereby teachers with 1 year reflective supervision observe a slight increase for mothers (though fathers don't change), and a decrease for in frustration for teachers with two or more years reflective supervision. Finally, Figure 16 shows teachers with high overprotection, and finds that teachers with 1 year observe an increase in frustration while teachers with two or more years observe similar levels of frustration over time.

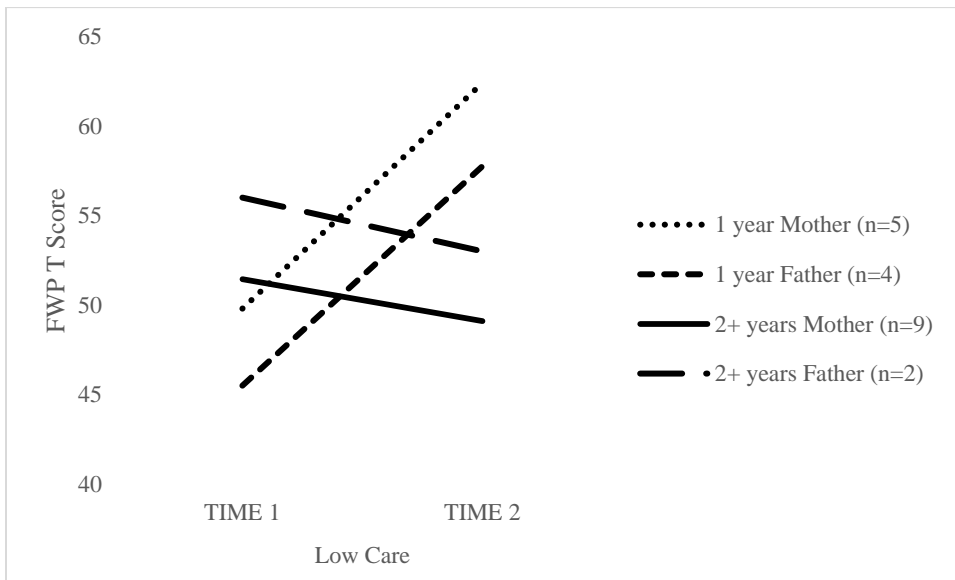


Figure 13. Low care mother and father FWP T Score by years of reflective supervision.

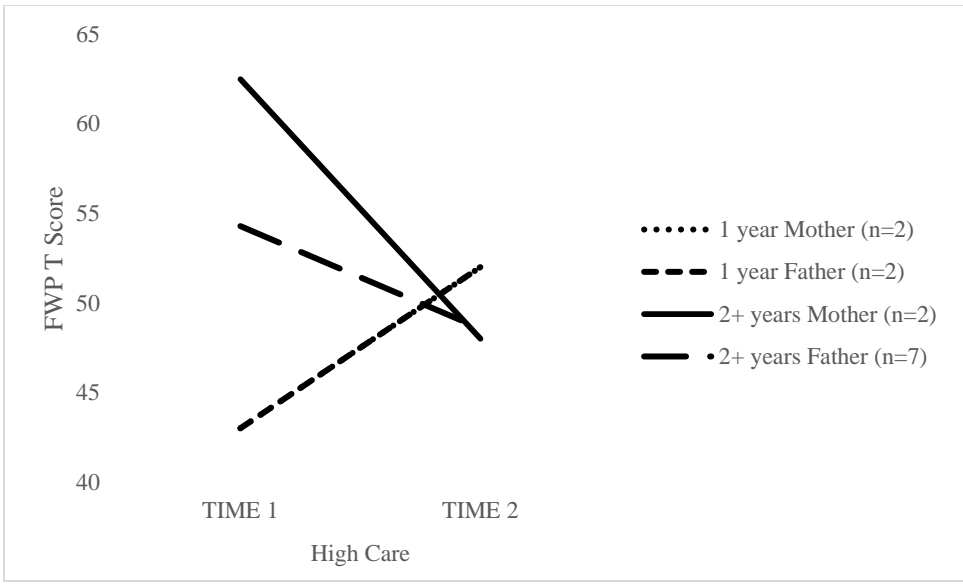


Figure 14. High care mother and father FWP T Score by years of reflective supervision. Note: 1 year mother and 1 year father have the same mean T scores at both time points, so the lines are overlapping and appear as one line.

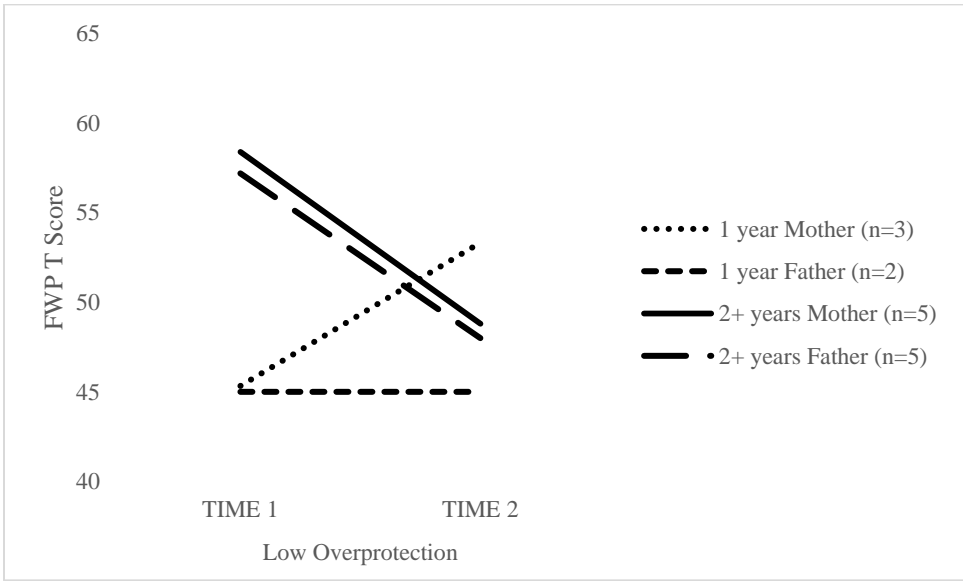


Figure 15. Low overprotection mother and father FWP T Score by years of reflective supervision.

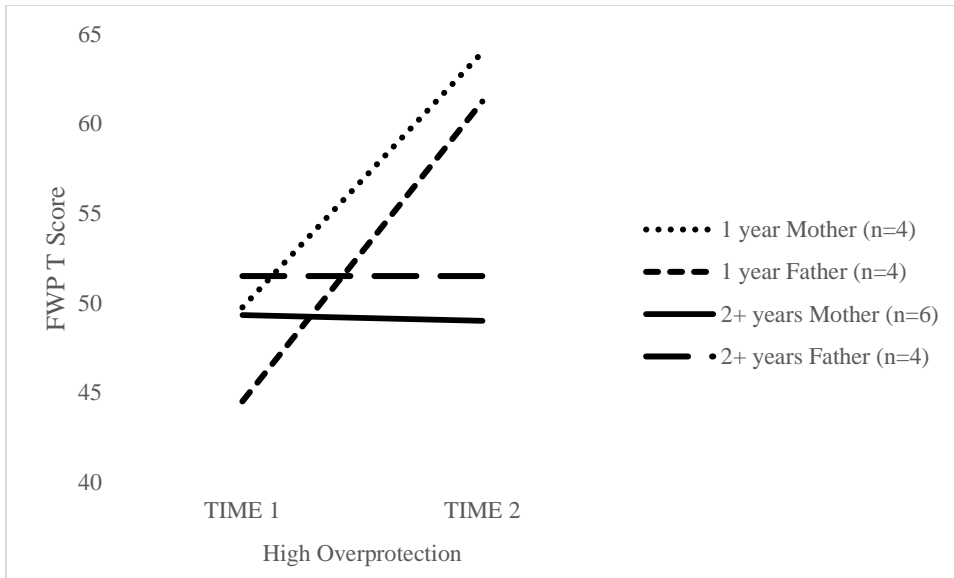


Figure 16. High overprotection mother and father FWPT Score by years of reflective supervision.

These follow up analyses suggest that reflective supervision may play a mediating role in the frustration level of teachers over time. While these trends were not examined for significance and should be interpreted with caution because of the low *ns*, it appears that teachers in their first year of reflective supervision experience increases in their frustration over the year with their most challenging parents, while teachers who have two or more years of experience have similar levels or even a decrease in frustration over time. These differences appear more pronounced for teachers with less optimal parenting. It could be that teachers in the beginning of their first year of reflective supervision are also less open to acknowledging vulnerability within their relationships, and are therefore more reserved in their relationships at time 1. Holding back from relationships with parents and families may mean that they experience slightly lower levels of frustration at the beginning of the year, because they are not as emotionally engaged in the relationships. However, after a year of

reflective supervision, they may have become more aware of the challenges their students' families face and become more emotionally invested in the relationships. This may lead to an increase in their frustration. Examining teachers with two or more years of reflective supervision, these results tentatively suggest that despite non-optimal parenting, teachers still experience lower levels of frustration over the year. This observation may be capturing a parallel process whereby participating in reflective supervision for multiple years results in lower levels of frustration with parents. While it's unclear whether it also results in increased intimacy in the relationships, the high levels of stress in year one followed by low levels after two or more years suggest that multiple years may be increasingly beneficial for teachers. This question should be further studied with a larger sample and a control group. Further, it would be helpful if qualitative research also asked teachers about their perceptions of intimacy in their teacher-parent relationships over the years.

**Research Question 3b. Are there Differences in Frustration with Parents and Insightfulness between Groups in their First Year and Groups with Two or More Years of Reflective Supervision?**

Teachers were grouped by years in reflective supervision (Group 1 was in their first year of RS and Group 2 had experienced two or more years of RS). In this analysis, teachers who had data from both time points were used so that change over time could be examined. At the spring data collection time, 10 teachers had experienced one year of RS and 11 had experienced at least two years.

Mean T scores and the transformed inverse scores for each group are displayed in Table 33. To test these differences, a mixed ANOVA compared the transformed dependent variable, inverse scores FWP T scores, over time (within-subjects factor) by amount of time



in supervision (between-subjects factor). Because comparing data for the same individuals over time reduced the sample size ( $n = 21$ ), assumptions of normality by the grouping variable, years in RS, were reexamined. In examining boxplots for outliers, one score in the group with less than 1 year RS was classified as an extreme outlier (greater than three box lengths from the mean). To decide how to address this outlier, original T scores were further examined. Nine of the ten teachers in the group with the outlier (less than 1 year RS) rated their FWP at time 1 in the nonclinical range (range  $T = 42-48$ ), while one teacher rated her stress in the clinical range ( $T = 67$ ). While within this particular group this teacher is an outlier, this level of stress is expected in a minority of individuals and makes clinical sense. Further, while this score is further from the group mean, it is less than two standard deviations from the normal  $T = 50$  mean. Finally, it was reasoned that this score would not exaggerate the interaction, and in fact it would, if anything, reduce the significance, because the higher T score raised the comparatively low group mean. Therefore, the transformed outlier was kept in the analysis.

After running the Mixed ANOVA, assumptions of normality were again examined. All studentized residuals were less than 3 standard deviations from the mean, suggesting by this method that there were no outliers. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated at time 2, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ( $p = .045$ ). Because the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated even after transforming the T scores, this result should be interpreted with caution. That said, moderate violations of the homogeneity of variances assumption is not a threat to ANOVAs unless sample sizes are small (Chiarotti, 2004) or group sizes are quite unequal. The length of the whiskers in the boxplots can also reveal heteroscedasticity, and the boxplot for the inverse scores at time 2

did not reveal any outliers. There was homogeneity of covariances, as assessed by Box's test of equality of covariance matrices ( $p = .033$ ). There was a statistically significant interaction between RS group and time on frustration working with parents,  $F(1, 19) = 8.754, p = .008$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .315$ . This is a large effect.

The non-transformed FWP T score means are displayed in Figure 17 in addition to the inverse means, because the transformed means are more difficult to interpret.

Table 33

*Teacher ITS-FWP Mean T Scores and Inverse Means by Years in RS Over Time (n = 21)*

Time of Year	New Group 1 year RS (n = 10)		Experienced Group 2+ years RS (n = 11)		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Time 1 (Fall) T score	47.30	7.119	53.45	12.144	50.52	10.318
Inverse	.021471	.0024436	.019454	.0037168	.020414	.0032649
Time 2 (Spring) T score	55.80	12.444	48.91	4.505	52.19	9.605
Inverse	.018669	.0037959	.020611	.0019709	.019686	.0030682

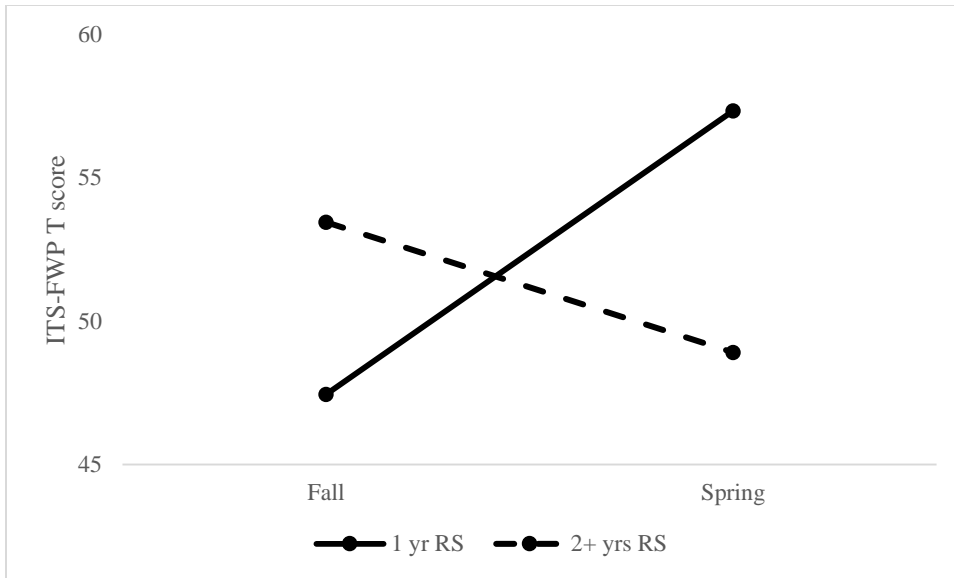


Figure 17. Frustration with parents by length of time in RS in fall and spring.

In mixing qualitative and quantitative data related to this question, this question was examined in a few ways. First, quotes coded as *GAIN* and *TP* were examined for intersections and the number of intersections each teacher had were coded as a count variable. In mixing the quantitative and qualitative data, a bivariate correlation was run to see whether teacher report of frustration with parents (FWP) at time of interview was related to the number of times they discussed things they learned or do better because of reflective supervision (*GAIN*) and their relationship with parents (*TP*). There was a strong, positive and significant effect,  $r(18) = .562, p = .019$ , suggesting that the more teachers discuss teacher-parent relationships and gains made due to reflective supervision, the higher frustration with parents they are also likely to report.

In looking at these counts by years in reflective supervision (Table 34), teachers with more than one year mentioned these topics together less than teachers with two or more years reflective supervision, though the differences were not significant and had a small effect size,

$t(18) = .926, p = .367, r = .197$ . There was more variation in the range of scores within the group of teachers with one year of reflective supervision, suggesting that this group varied more in how much this felt relevant to their experience. Further, when adding in *INSIGHT* intersections, we can see that this pattern switches: teachers with two or more years of reflective supervision now have more intersections than teachers with one year. While these differences are also not significant and yield a small effect size ( $t(18) = -.842, p = .411, r = .180$ ), it is important to note that if you look at the percentages of comments from teachers that are coded as insightful (*PERSPECTIVE* or *REFLECTION*), the teachers with two or more years have 90.6% of their comments coded as *INSIGHT* compared to 55.6% of teachers with one year.

Table 34

*Mean Number Intersections per Teacher and Total Quotes by Years of Reflective Supervision*

Years in Reflective Supervision	<i>GAIN &amp; TP</i> Intersections			<i>GAIN, TP &amp; INSIGHT</i> Intersections			Percent of Quotes coded Insightful
	<i>Total Quotes</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Total Quotes</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	
1 year ( <i>n</i> = 8)	27	3.38	2.134	15	1.88	1.727	55.6%
2 or more years ( <i>n</i> = 12)	32	2.67	1.303	29	2.42	1.165	90.6%

Examining this data another way, each teacher’s statements were converted to a ratio reflecting the percent of their quotations about teacher-parent relationship growth that were insightful (Table 35). For example, a teacher who made five statements that were coded *GAIN* and *TP* but had only one of these statements coded *INSIGHT* would have a ratio of 0.20, while a teacher who only made one statement coded *GAIN* and *TP* that was also coded as *INSIGHT* would have a ratio of 1.00. In the previous calculation (Table 34), each quotation is assigned equal weight and the percent is the portion of statements that are insightful. In this calculation (Table 35), each teacher is assigned equal weight and the ratio is the portion of their own statements that are insightful. These differences were examined using an independent samples *t* test. Teachers with two or more years of reflective supervision used reflection or perspective-taking in a significantly higher proportion of their statements than teachers in their first year of reflective supervision ( $t(18) = -4.971, p < .001, r = .730$ ). This is a very large effect.

Table 35

*Ratio of Quotes Coded as GAIN and TP also Coded as INSIGHT*

Years in Reflective Supervision***	Ratio	
	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
1 year ( $n = 8$ )	.4625	.27339
2 or more years ( $n = 12$ )	.9375	.15540

\*\*\* $t(18) = -4.971, p < .001, r = .730$ .

Finally, qualitative data was examined for teachers' statements that were particularly relevant to teacher-parent relationships. First, statements made by teachers with one year of RS are examined, followed by statements from teachers with two or more years. Insightfulness is considered in exploring the statements.

**Teachers with one year of reflective supervision.** Seven of the eight teachers at the end of their first year of reflective supervision commented on *GAIN* and *TP*, and the number of comments per teacher ranged from 2-6. Teachers' comments were sorted by the themes discussed. Teachers talked about reflective supervision providing a structured time to discuss families, improving their ability to communicate with families, giving them a greater awareness of what is happening in the home, improving their awareness of and referrals to collateral services for families, providing a direct support for families, and coping with challenges related to interactions with families.

***Structured time to discuss families.*** Several teachers reported that reflective supervision provided a dedicated time to discuss children and families with their colleagues which had not previously existed. Said Sarah:

It's helpful because [my co-teacher] and I get to sit with [the reflective supervisor] and talk about the families, whereas before, I can't stay and talk to her at all, we don't have time to talk. But I'm getting paid for that half hour, on my lunch. If I didn't have that, we would not be talking at all. Or say those feelings, or talk about those parents at all. So, that's a plus. I get a little money to stay for the meetings, yet, I come out winning, because we're talking. Whereas before we're not talking at all. (Sarah)

Victoria sees the extra time being paid to discuss the families as a win-win for both her and the families. Prior to reflective supervision being implemented, she reports that the teachers did not have time to communicate about the children and families, so it didn't happen. Said Victoria:

Um, at the beginning of the year I didn't know much about their families, but then, that was because the teacher, the [other teacher] and I didn't have time to get together and talk about these families and what [the teacher] knew about the families. So, but ever since we started doing the meetings with [the reflective supervisor], that's when the other teachers would share what they knew about the families, or what they, or [the other teacher], what she already knew about the families from last year. So that was a good time to talk about how the families are doing or going through, and things like that. (Victoria)

Again, Victoria reiterates how having the time for reflective supervision gave their team a dedicated time to communicate about the families.

*Improved ability to communicate with families.* Teachers also attributed improving their communication with parents to reflective supervision. Emily stated:

Yeah we had a family that was going through a very difficult situation and I know we, it was brought up in reflective practice and it helped us really kind of cope with it and learn from it. And learn how to handle the situation and be able to still like be okay with the family and you know learn how to talk with them. Cause there are a lot of situations where it could be awkward, but we still have to be there 100% for their children, for the families too. So I know reflective practice has helped us learn how to communicate with our families.... I guess all I can say is we had a family going

through a very difficult time, and reflective practice helped us learn how to handle the situation. (Emily)

Emily reports that reflective supervision served many functions in this difficult situation, including supporting her and her colleagues in handling the situation and communicating with the family, coping with it, and making meaning, or learning from it. Similarly, Julia said:

I just noticed that really helped out, even having [the Reflective Supervisor] ... giving us great strategies for working with each other, working with the children, talking to students, meeting with the parents, and that was like the opening for us to be comfortable with each other. And just knowing that she wouldn't share anything outside of our meetings or neither would we. (Julia)

Julia echoes Emily's sentiment that the reflective supervisor serves many roles. She also discusses the importance of confidentiality to her in being comfortable in the meetings.

Sarah considers how there may be a parallel process communicated to the families regarding the gains from reflective supervision:

We're more on target, like I would say on the same page. So when we talk to the parents, we kind of... maybe the parents feel how we feel. Maybe it's reflecting on them, too. I don't know, I can't see that, I'm just thinking. I wonder. (Sarah)

Sarah is developing awareness of how her own experiences and feelings may be communicated to the parents.

***Greater awareness of home environment.*** Teachers also discussed how their reflective supervisor's work with the families gives them more information about what is happening at home:



My Spanish is not great, and it's, you know, it's not... I speak Spanish fine with children and I can understand them and they me, but you know when it gets to be intricate stuff and words that I might not have heard, like "my ex-husband," or whatever, you know like words that aren't in a preschool vocabulary, I don't always understand it, so I don't always, don't always establish those kind of relationships with parents that I would like to because we're totally limited on time, and trust, and language, and so this year with [the reflective supervisor], when she's been able to have those relationships with parents and sit down and she can sit down and interview them for an hour, and I never have that luxury with parents one-on-one, and then after she's had that interview, she's got that trust and then she can, umm you know, of course there has been confidentiality issues where she can't tell us everything but she can tell me more than I knew before, like, "oh this family's going through a separation," and that just, this child didn't exhibit any kind of behavior that would have tipped me off or worried me or put up a red flag, but once I knew that, that the mom and dad were splitting up and the child was sleeping in a different houses and going back and forth, I was just so much better able to meet her needs and she wasn't like one of those kids that acted out or anything but she was super eager to please, and just, it was, once I knew that she was going through that stressful situation I just did my best to make her feel safe and comfortable. Same thing with the parents – let them know, you know, [the reflective supervisor] encouraged them to come and tell me and that's how I found out, is that you know, "We're not living together anymore, we're going through a separation." So I was able to support them better, too, you know, and be more sympathetic when they're late and for pick up, because it's not the same

family communicating, it's two different families communicating now, so I can just, I just understand where they're coming from and it's just so much easier to be understanding when you know what's going on....Lots of times before we started working with [the reflective supervisor], I didn't, I had no idea what was going on in the house, because like I said, we didn't have any opportunity to build the trust where you know... Like [the reflective supervisor] had to tell me specifically that there had been abuse. And umm, so, mostly, I never knew about that. (Nicole)

Nicole articulated a sentiment that several other teachers echoed – they learned information about the children's family that they previously were not aware of. This impacted their understanding about the context for the children's behavior and may have increased their ability to empathize.

*Referrals to collateral services for families.* Teachers also commented that they were able to help serve children and families more effectively through more referrals to community services. Many were not aware of collateral services, did not know families needed the support, or did not have the time to make referrals. Said Nicole:

Yeah, it was hard to hear that, and with a couple other kids, it was hard to hear what was their experience in their home life, but I think through knowing that we've been able to serve them, and I feel like I've seen more growth this year than I, emotional growth, than I do most years, so... [I: And what would you attribute that to?] I think, umm, the one-on-one with [the reflective supervisor] and her knowledge of the services that are available to parents, you know, umm, that has really, really helped. And then, her communication and relationship with us, so that she's able to, you know, put all the pieces together, she's like the missing link that we haven't had for

so many years, and maybe if we were a program where we were paid to work you know 5 or 6 hours shift and be with kids for 3 hours, then we would have time to sit down with parents, but you know, we don't have the time. So it's like, having that one person a couple times a week to be that bridge and advocate and educator for them, is really, really fabulous. (Nicole)

Nicole also recognizes how at her school, the reflective supervisor spends time with the children and parents in addition to RS with the teachers. Elisa articulates a similar sentiment:

Well, within the teaching, time giving, there's really no time. We're always with the children, so it's really hard. It could be maybe the parent volunteer and then they say something, then I can have some, give them some input. Or I could say, "[reflective supervisor], I have a concern, you know, about what the parent said." And then, so then, with that, [the reflective supervisor's] been really great, because then it's like, everything that I have mentioned, she's able to follow through with assistance. Not, you know, I mean, so then, they can kind of work through some of those things. Like, we have a mom that really needed some counseling and she expressed interest, and it's really turned around that family and their dynamics by them going through some training that [the reflective supervisor] referred them to. Umm, and again, I didn't have that information, so she has a wealth of information of what's really available. Uh, because she is part of [a community mental health agency], and has her fingers everywhere, where I didn't have any idea that the program even existed. (Elisa)

Elisa identified not having time to follow up with families and her lack of knowledge of community referrals as two areas that were barriers to supporting families. However, she has

seen the reflective supervisor filling in this role, and she notices a positive difference in a family as a result of her referral.

*Direct support for families.* Teachers with one year of reflective supervision also mentioned the direct support for parents being very helpful. Said Sarah:

All I can say is that this is a positive program. So, I recommend it. So I think we're very fortunate to have [the reflective supervisor]. She worked with many families here. And then, umm, they were comfortable with her. And she was in the classroom, available, and available for them, private, I guess, and so that was very good, that they have the luxury of having her here where versus other schools don't have it. So maybe it's one of the schools here who need it, because we're impacting more with maybe, parents with more stress in this area. (Sarah)

Sarah highlights the importance of confidentiality between the reflective supervisor and the families. Victoria also discussed the impact of having the reflective supervisor being a therapist:

I think it gives them, well since she is a therapist, and I've seen that some parents have gotten really close to [the reflective supervisor] and they have shared confidential stuff, so they trust her. So it's good to have for the parent, like the parents feel like they appreciate the fact that they have a therapist here, where it would cost a lot of money to see a therapist elsewhere, so to them I see that they do really appreciate her and they value her. So I think that encourages them to open up, like now is your chance, she is here and she is free. (Victoria)

This sentiment again highlights the importance of confidentiality between the reflective supervisor and the parents. Importantly, while not directly related to this research question,

teachers also expressed some concerns about confidentiality between the reflective supervisor and the parents. Several teachers expressed feeling excluded when a reflective supervisor told them that things were going on but wouldn't be more specific. A few teachers felt entitled to and excluded from information about the families. For example, Amy said: "But a lot of times, she [the reflective supervisor] says it's confidential. So, you don't know. She just says, "Oh there's a lot going on." ... Like, we should, know more, you know? 'Cause they're our clients, they signed everything for us. So I thought, she should tell us more. Because it's our program." So, while teachers were happy to know more about the context, there was also a tension between the reflective supervisors now having additional information that could not necessarily be shared with them.

*Coping with challenges related to interactions with families.* A few teachers also discussed how reflective supervision has helped them to cope with their feelings related to the families. Nicole stated:

So [for the reflective supervisor], to point something out like that to me, is sometimes the more important thing is she pointed out was that you don't have any control over this, and to let that go, you know, making them toe the line, and follow the rules, you don't have any control over their behavior, they're adults, and you can try and you can keep putting more and more energy into it, or you can let it go and she says, "You know, you've already put lots of energy, how is that working out for you?" And I said, "Not that well." And she said, "Well, what's your other choice?" ...I felt like, once I heard that, I was like, "Yeah, I don't have any control over this," I was just able to forget about like the lesson that I created and just be in the moment and let the kids lead it a little bit more, if the parents need something... the whole lesson, I just, I

don't know, it just kind of clicked with me, stuff that I already knew I just kind of put all the pieces together, if the parents need something and the kids need something the most beautiful lesson is not gonna work. So you have to meet those immediate needs, and just let it go, it is what it is (laughs). And that was really, umm, I really appreciated, that was a really, like a huge breakthrough for me that week. And I told, like she had a little agenda and I'm like, "I really need to talk about what's going on, umm, and my frustration level with what I feel like is just, you know, a free for all, you know, come when you feel like it, leave when you feel like it." And so we had a really good talk, and I cried, and you know, it was, it just felt like a huge load had been lifted off me after we had that conversation, so... I just feel like since then I have been a little bit more easy going, and nothing has suffered for it, (laughs) really nothing has, so just that permission to just, you can put as much energy into this as you want, and it may or may not bear fruit, and if it doesn't, then you just have to let it go. (Nicole)

Nicole, a teacher who had earlier discussed challenges with being more flexible, related an experience when her reflective supervisor challenged her to step back and reflect on how her attitude was leaving her feeling frustrated. As a result, Nicole realized that she needed to adjust her expectations, which allowed her to be more easygoing and perhaps to not experience as much frustration.

Similarly, Elisa reflected on the difference in being able to acknowledge her feelings without fear of the consequences.

Yeah, well [my co-teacher] and I have fallen apart a couple of times (laughs). So that's been uh-hh, that's been different, definitely different, because I think umm, like,

I consider myself strong and stuff, so the idea of you know, breaking down, it's not like... and also, like, if we did that with our administrators, I don't think that would fly too well, you know. So, with co-workers or whatever, so it is kind of a safety zone where we can do that, and sometimes she's able to help us talk through it, or see different perspectives, or different aspects, I guess. (Elisa)

Elisa acknowledges the discomfort or problematic parts of being vulnerable with your boss. However, she feels that talking with confidentiality (having a "safety zone") allowed her to "fall apart," as well as examine other perspectives.

**Teachers with two or more years of reflective supervision.** All twelve of the teachers with at least two years of reflective supervision commented on *GAIN* and *TP*, and the number of comments per teacher ranged from 1-5. In categorizing the comments from teachers, four of the categories were similar to the first group: reflective supervision providing a structured time to discuss families, improving their ability to communicate with families, improving their awareness of and referrals to collateral services for families, and coping with challenges related to interactions with families. The areas of improving their awareness of the home environment and providing a direct support for families did not emerge as consistently for this group. Instead, two other categories: group process/learning and reflection, were present.

***Structured time to discuss families.*** A few teachers discussed the importance of having a dedicated time to discuss the families. For example, Catalina said:

I found it helpful after a while because I would want to tell my co-workers something about a family that I was concern[ed] [about, and] reflective supervision is where I can do it...I remember thinking, "When I can tell her, when's the time?" And I

thought: “Reflective supervision. Yay! Thank God for that.” That’s when I [told my] co-worker ... the mom has been talking to you but she has been telling me this. My co-worker didn’t know a lot of things so that helped. She talked to the mom and the mom was okay with me sharing with her. It helped for her. It was good that I told my co-worker because we worked together to help the mom versus me having to do it by myself. I learned from my co-worker... [I] wouldn’t have thought of if I hadn’t had shared it with my co-worker. (Catalina)

Catalina describes how communication with her coworker was helpful in working with a particular family. Relatedly, Erika sees RS as a place where, in addition to expressing feelings and opinions, information, or “data” about a family, can also be exchanged:

The purpose of supervision is the practice where the participants feel safe about and they can express their concerns, their um... their feelings about a child, a family. And uh with the purpose of find more um opinions, when we interchange opinions, or like you collect kind of the data. Ok the teacher saw this in this boy, this teacher saw this and the mom kind of collecting information. Sometimes because sometimes one teacher knows more about your family than you, then say, “Oh okay, that’s so, that’s why.” And then after collecting the data, you start exploring, “Oh, what do you think is, so what do you think is the situation of the mother is affecting the child?” And then, uh, say, “Oh yeah, because I don’t know,” or we can say, “Oh maybe not, maybe it’s this or whatever.” So we can discuss it and uh, how do you say it, like usually it’s confidential, also it’s a purpose. There’s a purpose that we can collect data, sometimes you don’t have it. And then that’s hard, no? You can just guess maybe this or now, okay so there’s no one to know now another step. Let’s ask the



[unintelligible]. Especially with the [reflective supervisor] has more some parts that we know, we can, she can disclose. But we express some concern. So yeah, it's a safe place where you can talk about your concerns. But also it's a place that you can express your real feelings and you don't have to worry about that um (pause) that it's gonna be... well at first maybe we can be sensitive, but sometimes you can and go back to your teaching thing or whatever. You don't have to feel, "Oh my God, what she's gonna think about what I say, that I don't like about you, whatever," no? You can just feel, "Okay so I say what I feel and let's find a solution." (Erika)

Erika discusses the group process of sharing information and collaborating about a family. She also reflects on how the reflective supervisor can add some information in, but may be bound by confidentiality. Further, she states that RS is a place for problem-solving, where everyone may not agree but as a group she and her coworkers will be able to get through a discussion without feeling unsafe or attacked.

***Improved ability to communicate with families.*** Teachers in this group talked a lot about RS improving their ability to communicate with families. Jasmin sees RS as something that has encouraged her to increase her communication:

I talk to them [parents] more. Before I was like, limit myself to just greet them good morning and you just like, you know? Or, "Hi, we need diapers tomorrow, thank you and bye." That's it. But now it's like, with the group that I have... it's more like trying to...not become friends, but to let them know that if, to make them feel comfortable and if they need something they can ask me and I'll try to help them out. And if I don't have the answer I can refer them to somewhere that they can have the answer. But now it's more, I think I'm a little bit more easygoing that before...

Because I reflect... on whatever [the reflective supervisor] talks about. And I mean I like to listen and observe people and a lot of the things that she says is true and I reflect on that. And I go like, “Well, I should be like more easy on other people, instead of just being on defensive,” you know? So that’s why it ...it has helped me to like, to be not friendly, but just to like a little bit more open to the parents that I have.  
(Jasmin)

Jasmin sees RS as helping her to be more open, talkative, and inviting with the parents with whom she works. Whereas her previous communication with families was as limited as possible, she has started to get to know parents and try to help them when possible. She also talks about her process of reflecting, which is further discussed at the end of the section.

Similar to Jasmin, Erika found herself changing her communication style with parents:

I develop[ed] a lot of more understanding. And, obviously the talking, and again with the reflective supervision we explore ... the different elements like, where is the family living, what is the situation, the economic situation, the dynamic, the needs and the moment, no? Some parents lost their home because they had to move away or the father is deported or the mom is having a baby, so we have to consider all those elements to see, to see the behavior it is kind of an exercise to see like right now I am serving the child that was kind of really, stable, and now his behavior is changing and I know why because I have that kind of communication with the parents... I went through to a lot of miscommunication, uh, also to the body language, or the tone of my voice or how I was asking if they were late or what happened. So, again, all the behaviors from the parents, the families, is a result of different kinds of things that are behind, there is a story behind it. (Erika)

Erika reflects on how she has made mistakes in the past regarding her communication with parents. She shows self-awareness in her reflection on the aspects of communication that she considers when interacting with a family. Further, she states that she considers the family context in trying to make sense of the family's behavior. Guadalupe also reflected on how her communication style with parents has changed over time:

[As a result of reflective supervision], I try to be more involved with the parents.

When I was with the older kids, I had just started. So it was just kind of...I started off as an aid, so I was trying to stay away and let the teacher kind of deal with it. And now that I'm a teacher, I kind of have to practice that because... I think I get panicked. So I talk too fast or things like that. So just trying to have them come around the room more, you know, in the mornings stay a little longer. Things like that, so that we can get to know them. So it's not so awkward when we do have to talk. (Guadalupe)

Guadalupe noticed that her panic resulted in talking too fast with parents. In participating in RS, she found ways to invite interaction with parents and get to know them better.

Cecilia elaborates on her growth process regarding her communication:

There is a lot of thinking about how you come to families. There was another family, she was a very young mom... The family thought it was best for her to go to LA to find her first job but she was leaving the child behind...And then I was like, "Why don't you find a job here, I think you will find a job." When I said that to the mom, like, "You're young, bilingual, you can find a job here,"...I was like, sometimes I come [off] very strong with my ideas to the families and maybe I [make] them [feel] intimidated or I make them feel bad or maybe I make them feel like life is so easy and

it's not, things like that... [My reflective supervisor] makes me think, "Do you think this is really what she wants or this is what's better for her family?" I was just like the child is here... I say, "Okay, I won't say anymore, I just ask question. I would ask her a question instead of saying, "Why don't you go do this and this and that? I was like, tell me with another approach, then I asked, I don't think I said anything for a week to that mom because I didn't know how to come up. At the end I don't remember how it came up but I say it was I asked her a question and I say [to my reflective supervisor], "It was so hard for me to...ask this mom a question, because I really wanted to tell her what she should be doing. So changing my perspective and approach to families.

(Cecilia)

Cecilia is able to acknowledge her urge to give advice or her opinion, and reflects on how hard it is for her to approach the parent with a more open, exploratory stance. Her ability to discuss this challenge demonstrates an ability to be self-reflective, vulnerable, and to take in and incorporate feedback.

Natalia discusses getting ideas from her reflective supervisor, as well as using role plays to practice communication with parents:

She's always been helpful with giving us ideas and what to do or how to talk to the parents, and even how to talk to each other. We have done role playing, like I'm the parent or you're the parent, can we talk about how we're going to talk to that mom...especially if that mom is strong, gets angry really quickly. I have also learned many different things that are going on with the families that I have no idea about. I guess a family is going – a mom is going through depression and I'm like 'Oh, maybe that's why she's acting the way she is now'... referring the families to [the reflective

supervisor] and then sometimes [the reflective supervisor] say, “A lot of things are going on with that family and um, she’s receiving services and she’s receiving help”. Oh okay, thank you [reflective supervisor], thank you for letting us know that that’s what’s going on so that we can be more patient and more caring and um not have our biased. (Natalia)

In addition to the practical skills, Natalia also acknowledges the importance of gaining information from the reflective supervisor about the home environment or family members. While teachers in this group didn’t discuss this area as much as the first group, this was also identified as a valuable resource for a few teachers in this group.

*Referrals to collateral services for families.* While not as common a category as in the year one group, a few teachers did reference how RS provided important referrals for their families. Said Morgan:

Do you know that, finally, because of the [RS] and me being able to refer her to someone that could help along with myself, they did find out he was having brain seizures and not where it wasn’t a physical outward thing. I know about these only because... [of personal experience]. So they actually did, they ran all the tests. Mom even came and showed me the picture of with the CAT and all the electrodes. They found out how many he’s had and about the severity of it and now he’s on medication. He’s the sweetest guy you can ever imagine. And he’s still in our school right now. If it wasn’t for [RS], if it wasn’t for [the reflective supervisor] being her, if it wasn’t for all these connections that I felt I had, I can’t imagine if that little boy would play his whole life as being a rotten little kid when here he had problems with his brain. I don’t think we have come around to that point of being able to help him if

we didn't have [RS] in this building. (crying.) I'm sorry, I love my children so much. He was with me since he was three months years old. It's like, you know, I knew something was going on. I knew it had to be more than just what was going on from the different things I've seen, so. I think...[community mental health agency providing RS] changed that little boy's life. (Morgan)

Morgan recognized that the child showed signs of seizures, but wasn't able to follow through with referrals for testing alone. Through talking with the reflective supervisor and advocacy, the child got testing, a diagnosis, and treatment. This is one of the more tangible ways that referrals can help clients, and was particularly impactful for Morgan.

*Coping with challenges related to work with families.* Several teachers discussed various challenges they have had in their work with families, and how RS has helped them address them. Erika, a teacher with more than two years of RS, recognized how she has shifted over time to become more flexible and understanding about lateness, while also communicating with parents in a different way about the expectations:

So there's a lot of factors every single day you come, you want to be on time but sometime you can't...before I was kind of a police:.. "Oh my god you didn't come or whatever." Now we learned that, "Okay, so let's ask what you can do better." ...Like right now it's very important that families come before 9... We were discussing that it's okay, you know what, let's just tell them why it's important they come on time, don't question them or, uh, don't punish them. So you say, "Okay, you know it's very important you come on time, please. Because the kids need ... It is hard for them and it is hard for us, so please help us. So what is happening that you can't bring in on

time, how we can help you?”... And we used to be kind of, “Okay, you’re coming late, I’m sorry.”... So we have a little flexibility now. (Erika)

Similar to Nicole’s discussion of “letting go,” Erika attributes the changes she has made to discussions in RS about how to handle this issue. While she states that timeliness is still a concern, she also sees her own approach as more understanding of the barriers parents face. Further, she has learned a new approach to talking with parents about timeliness – rather than “punish” like the “police,” she explains to parents why arriving on time is important to their child’s routine. Both of these changes seem to have alleviated some of her stress related to parent barriers. It is notable that within her discussion of her frustration, she recognizes the changes she has experienced in her outlook on rules and in her approach in enforcing them with parents, and attributes these changes to the group process in reflective supervision. Whereas her old “police” approach was in line with the high overprotection styles of both her parents, she has shifted to become more flexible.

***Group process and learning from each other.*** Teachers also found that the group process in RS allowed them to recognize their blind spots in their work with families. Interestingly, while a few teachers from the one year group talked about the reflective supervisor addressing blind spots, there was an emphasis on group process in the two or more year group. Said Cecilia:

When my co-teacher joined us, she remember and I didn’t remember and that even if I knew this family for a long time, she say... I never felt that all the issues they had around and how it affects other members of the family but not only that, I was only looking at the mom and the girl. I was forgetting about the brother that is left by himself while the mom is at the hospital, and I was thinking how I noticed this girl

from a long time and I didn't know she suffered so much when her sister was in hospital for so long so thinking things that connect you and make you realize how insensitive you can be for not asking or how you just go on with life without stopping and saying, "That must be very difficult for somebody else." (Cecilia)

While this statement is difficult to follow, Cecilia is describing a situation where a coworker reminded her of a family's history, and the other family members' perspectives. Cecilia is able to acknowledge that she overlooked this, and recognizes that how she handled it may have come across as insensitive.

Cecilia also discusses feeling supported in her work with families through the "system of support that reflective supervision provides:

For me it's kind of talking about it is the way I release my anxiety. If I'm able to know that I will be able to talk about it in a group or in a place or with [the reflective supervisor] when I'm feeling stressed or worried. I think I know that I will have that support system in play so I can release my anxiety. Being able to ask... Knowing that we have built a system in knowing that this is what, this is not the only place where we can work with the families, that we can work with them outside and have the support, gives you a lot of confidence as a teacher. It's like I'm not here only for the children, here but if they need me outside the school, I know I can do it because we have built the system. We know how to have a relationship with our families. It's very helpful to do that with reflective supervision. (Cecilia)

Cecilia sees RS as a support system, rather than an individual person, that allows her to feel assured and confident in her work with families.



In the group process, teachers also talked about learning from each other. Said

Catalina:

Yeah because we come together and I get ideas from my co-workers, like how to do things and sometimes she even tells me, “You know, I noticed you told the parents, maybe you could of said it this way, or maybe it wasn’t that good that you said it,” and sometimes I see things and I tell her, “You know,” or sometimes the parents tell me, “You know, I didn’t like the way your coworker talked to me this way or...”.

Yeah, so you learn, and I think just learning new ways of doing things. (Catalina)

Catalina is reflecting on learning from her co-workers, giving each other feedback, and taking in feedback. Being able to get to this place requires a certain level of trust, vulnerability, and confidence that is more typical of advanced group process stages.

**Reflection.** Finally, several teachers talked about their process of reflection as an important area of growth in their relationships with families as a result of RS. Said Morgan:

Every day on the way home, I go over things that I have done through the day and how I could have done things differently. Is there something that I could have helped someone? Because I’m only human. So I use [reflective supervision] methods... I wonder, “Why are they doing this? What is happening at home for them to have these temper tantrums here? Should I be hugging and giving them love instead of telling them: ‘Well, when you’re ready to join the group’...” So that’s why for me it’s most important to know what’s going on in the family so I know what to do. Are they just throwing the fit because they’re trying to get exactly what they want or is there some underlying thing that makes them react in this way because of that? So on the way home, you know, I think, “I need to talk to that mom tomorrow and ask her: ‘Your

little one is having a hard time and this is kind of what they've been doing. Is this what they've been doing at home or did you, have you seen this, or how do you deal or react to that?" (Morgan)

Morgan conveys their process of reflecting on their work and relates how they use it in their relationships with families. In using the methods they learned in RS, they wonder about potential hypotheses about the behavior, and gathers information from the parents to gain a better understanding. Importantly, their approach to interacting with the families is explorative: they do not assume to know the cause of a behavior but rather observes the behavior aloud and asks for the parent's input. Taylor also discusses using their commute to reflect on work:

I commute so it takes me 45 minutes to go home and it takes me 45 minutes to get here, so I reflect a lot like how I'm going to handle a situation, you know – like with one family. I have a few families that really need a lot of, I think, emotional support and a lot of support... just you know comforting. And thinking how, you know, how today how can I help this family or what can I do that's different, or what advice could I give them if they...you know? So I think a lot of reflection is sometimes learned through [RS] is you know, reflected in thinking about what's happening, not only in my own personal life, but just with my job too. Umm, you know, how I can make the difference and not overstep the boundary. Or, you know sometimes when you think about it after the fact, you hear something, you come up with something that you couldn't think about at that moment. So that's going to affect me a lot on the way home and on the way to work every day. (Taylor)

Taylor recognizes how they use reflection to consider possibilities for intervening with the more challenging families. They also reflect on how these options will impact their boundaries with the families. Similarly, Sofia stated:

My first answer is why, I try to understand, like [the reflective supervisor] says, try to understand their motivations, they are trying to help, not do something wrong. So for me it changed. One thing to the other. Or maybe because, when I am thinking something it is because I am thinking that, and perhaps I don't see the other side. It's like, I judge and I am trying not to. (Sofia)

For Sofia, she recognizes that sometimes she judges and she needs to step back and try to consider a family's motivations or other perspectives. She attributes this change in her approach to RS. Finally, Lisa further illustrates this point when she discusses reflecting on her interactions with parents:

Sometimes [unclear] tell you something, like the case I was talking about with the parents that are fighting. The mom thinks that the stepmom is doing stuff and I think with reflection is being able to not take it as face value. I don't know if that's the right word, but— hearing her say all this stuff and making sure I think about it and not just jump into something because I could be wrong and I think with this one situation in the beginning, I was like, “Argh,” and I tried to be on the mom's side but the more I reflected, it's like, “How do I know this is true? How do you know it's not just a bitter, you know, “I don't like the stepmom so I'm going to say this.” Because I see no evidence of what she's talking about and heard no evidence of it. I think with my reflecting, it kind of set me back a little bit and I think right now I think I'm in that stage where ...[I'm] kind of taking it in, the scene, being as supportive as I can be but

just making sure I'm not jumping on anything. I think reflective practices and you know, kind of just taking a moment back has really helped me deal with situations with family because you never know. (Lisa)

Lisa is considering how reflecting on the importance of thinking critically about the parents' motives for telling her information. Rather than get involved in the situation and emotionally "take sides," she is trying to stay neutral and open to information from an unbiased perspective. Interestingly, Lisa also says that reflecting "set me back a bit." She conveys that by taking a moment to think, she feels she may also be late in her response, though she simultaneously acknowledges that it helps her handle situations with families. She is also able to acknowledge her own stage of development, where perhaps she sees coworkers who are at different stages, or has an awareness that the ability to reflect is a developmental process.

## V: DISCUSSION

This research suggests that early childhood teachers' early experiences, including their parental relationships and trauma histories, may relate to their frustration in their most challenging teacher-parent relationships. Furthermore, RS may have somewhat of a corrective influence such that teachers' frustrations are no longer related to their parental patterns of interaction. RS over a longer time may also increase teachers' ability to take others' perspectives, and to reflect on behavior, thoughts, and feelings. Teachers who are in RS longer may see RS as a time to reflect, and may see their peers and the group process as supportive and helpful. To the best of the author's knowledge, this study is the first of its kind to explore early childhood educator personal history and its impact on stress. This information can inform early childhood program practice by making them aware of why some of their teachers may struggle more with navigating teacher-parent relationships, and how reflective practice may mitigate some of these challenges. Finally, these results provide quantitative and qualitative support for the development of increased insight, reflective capacity, and value on group process as a program engages in long-term reflective supervision.

### **Teacher Trauma and Parenting History**

#### **Teacher Trauma History**

Over half of teachers in this study reported one or more ACEs, which have been shown to have detrimental effects for health and mental health outcomes (Anda et al., 2006; Anda et al., 2002; Felitti et al., 1998). Specifically, individuals with more extensive child trauma histories experience deleterious outcomes in several domains, including affective (panic, depression, anxiety, hallucinations), somatic (sleep, obesity), substance abuse

(cigarettes, alcohol, drugs), memory, sexual (early intercourse, promiscuity, sexual dissatisfaction), and aggression-related (high levels of perceived stress, difficulty controlling anger, risk of perpetrating intimate partner violence) (Anda et al., 2006). Teachers in this sample reported an average of almost two ACEs, and the most commonly reported childhood adverse experiences included emotional abuse, physical abuse, parental separation or divorce, and living with someone with problems with substance abuse. Further, though a more extensive trauma history is related to poor outcomes, post-traumatic growth has been found to moderate the relationship between symptoms of post-traumatic stress and depression and quality of life (Morrill et al., 2008). Therefore, a trauma history also has the potential to make a teacher more sensitive to the presenting concerns of the families with whom they work. In other words, the experience of childhood trauma may be a risk factor, and it may also serve as an attribute, or both.

### **Teacher Parental Bonding Relationship between Care and Overprotection**

Teacher report of their parental relationships on the PBI showed significant inverse relationships between the two scales, care and overprotection, such that parents who rated higher in care also rated lower in overprotection. This is consistent with other research on the measure (Cubis, Lewin, & Dawes, 1989). However, it is also possible that because about two-thirds of participants fell into either the Optimal Parenting group (high care & low overprotection) or Affectionless Control group (low care and high overprotection), these scores were overrepresented within the data. Further, while the factorial validity of these scales have been confirmed through several factor analyses (Parker, 1998), the inverse relationship between the scales in this sample should be noted with regards to interpretations of other findings.

### **Teacher Trauma History Related to Parental Relationships**

Teachers' ACE scores were related to their parental relationships as children such that less optimal parenting (low care and/or high overprotection) was related to a higher ACE score. Teachers who rated their mothers and fathers as higher in care reported significantly fewer ACEs, while teachers who rated their fathers, but not mothers, as higher in overprotection, also reported more ACEs. Less optimal parents may expose their children to more potentially traumatic experiences, or be less available to shield their children from these experiences.

### **Ethnic Differences between White and Latina participants on Maternal Overprotection and Educational Attainment**

The sample was comprised of predominantly White and Latina women, and there were some differences observed between the groups. While there were no differences observed with regards age, paternal relationships on the PBI, total ACE scores, ITS-FWP T scores, Insightfulness Assessment scores, or the number of times *INSIGHT* was coded, Latina participants attained lower levels of education than their White colleagues, reported somewhat lower levels of maternal care (approached significance) and reported significantly higher levels of maternal overprotection on the PBI. While the PBI has been validated cross-culturally in a number of studies (see Parker, 1990; Parker, 1998 for reviews), these are important differences to note within this sample. Higher levels of protection and monitoring in Latino families (see Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006 for a review) have been noted in the literature, and higher levels of control have been tied to the values of *familismo*, *respeto*, and *educación*.

Lopez, Melendez, and Rice (2000), one of the few studies to compare ethnic differences on the PBI, assessed differences between White, Latino, and Black American college students from intact and divorced families. Their comparisons between White and Latino individuals found that when age and parental marital status were controlled, participants' race/ethnicity significantly predicted maternal overprotection, such that Black participants had higher levels of overprotection than their White peers. However, they did not find ethnic group regarding Hispanic/Latino participants. While the PBI has been used with Latino populations and considered in light of ethnocultural factors (see Diaz, Lizardi, Qian, & Liu, 2008), the available research on Hispanic/Latino-American groups as well as immigrant groups is limited and inconclusive and should continue to be explored.

### **Teacher History and Frustration with Challenging Parents**

#### **Types of Frustration**

Qualitative data suggested that related to frustrations with parents, teachers were frustrated about parent barriers (such as being late, forgetting or not meeting the school's expectations of parents), challenges with communication, holding different perspectives, and culture. While these areas were identified separately, they are often interrelated. Balancing flexibility and expectations with clients can be a challenge for the most seasoned clinicians. Effectively navigating the challenges that parent barriers present in the teacher-parent relationship requires good communication skills, the ability to hold another's perspective and navigate ambiguity and an awareness of the impact of culture on communication and expectations. Not surprisingly, much has been written about the challenges associated with working with families with multiple and complex needs. "Multiple and complex" needs refer to a *breadth of need*, including needs that are interrelated or interconnected, and a *depth of*



*need*, highlighting that needs are profound, severe, or intense (Rankin & Regan, 2004). Families with multiple and complex needs typically face poverty, unemployment, poor quality housing, disabilities, family violence, substance abuse, trauma histories, and/or mental illness, and are the primary client group of child protective services (Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2012).

While many of the families attending the early childhood education sites in this study do not fit in this group, many of the families do, and it's likely that they are the ones who face the most barriers to engaging in services. Engaging with and supporting families with multiple needs can be a long-term and challenging process for someone working in the mental health field; for someone with no mental health background, making sense of a families' needs and presentation may require additional training and support. Swick and Williams (2006) conceptualize these needs through Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective, and suggest that early childhood educators should: (1) help families develop caring and loving microsystems, (2) assist families in becoming more empowered in their exosystem relations, (3) nurture in families the ways they can use mesosystems to better respond to specific stressors, (4) advocate for stronger family support strategies and policies, and (5) help families learn from their personal, family, and societal, historical lives. These recommendations are important, and at the same time seem challenging for a teacher to meet without sufficient time, training, and support.

**A Teacher's Frustration with Parents may be related to their own Parental History, and Teachers with Less Optimal Parenting may Experience more Frustration at the End of the Year**

In the fall, teachers with non-optimal parent relationship reported slightly lower frustration than teachers with optimal parenting styles, but this difference was not significant. However, what is meaningful about it being slightly less than optimal parenting is that, with the exception of maternal care, this trend reverses over time to suggest a possible inverse relationship. Specifically, teachers with non-optimal parenting styles reported higher levels of frustration in the spring than teachers with optimal parenting styles. There are a few possible explanations for the differences in the fall. While the fall differences between optimal and non-optimal parenting aren't significant, the differences in spring suggest that teachers with less optimal parenting scores may experience an increase in their frustration over the course of a school year. Another trend was that the frustration level of teachers with more optimal parenting didn't change much over time. While a certain increase in frustration with the most challenging parent would make sense by the end of the year, teachers with more optimal levels remained relatively low in their frustration. This finding may suggest that teachers with more optimal parenting are better prepared to tolerate challenging families in their work.

Looking over time at teachers reporting non-optimal parenting, these teachers were more frustrated in spring than in fall, and more frustrated than more optimally-parented teachers in spring. In other words, the teachers with less optimal parenting experienced more frustration with their most challenging parents by the end of the year, and this may suggest fewer coping strategies or a lower tolerance for frustration. Douglas (2000) explored mothers' anxieties and stress about parenting. Including the comparison group (non-sexually abused) within the total sample, mothers whose mothers or fathers were rejecting (low care) were significantly more anxious about intimacy in their relationships with their sons. Those

with rejection from their fathers were similarly more anxious about intimacy with their daughters. Furthermore, in the overall sample, maternal rejection was also related to subsequent parenting stress. While there are certainly differences between parenting and teaching, this perspective may have some parallels with the role of a caregiver in a preschool or day care setting. Specifically, higher levels of care may give an individual more confidence in displaying such intimate emotions as concern and affection. Further, as the authors point out in specifically discussing child sexual abuse, intimacy and touching in a nonsexual and safe way can still feel unsafe and anxiety-provoking. In this study, two teachers endorsed child sexual abuse and two skipped that item, so it was not a common experience; however, eight teachers reported physical abuse and eight reported emotional abuse. Comfort with intimacy and touch are important aspects of caregiving in young children, and these findings offer a potential explanation for the higher frustration levels in teachers with rejecting and overprotective parents.

### **Father Relationships may be Particularly Important**

Father relationships were related to trauma history and teacher frustration working with parents more strongly than mother relationships.

**Father relationships related to ACE score.** In father relationships, teachers with low care fathers reported four times as many ACEs as those with high care fathers, and teachers with high overprotection fathers reported five times as many ACEs as teachers with low overprotection fathers. The relationship with fathers was stronger than with mothers, suggesting that a father relationship may be an important risk and protective factor for potentially traumatic experiences. In a study of mothers with a history of child sexual abuse, maternal care and paternal care was lower, and paternal overprotection was higher in

comparison to a non-sexually abused group (Douglas, 2000). Thus, child sexual abuse was related to less optimal scores on all subscales except maternal overprotection. These findings are consistent with the significant correlations in the present study.

In another study, borderline pathology in women was predicted by maternal rejection and childhood physical and sexual abuse, but not maternal overprotection or paternal rejection or overprotection (Russ, Heim, & Westen, 2003). While the combination of trauma history and non-optimal parenting may play also a role in predicting pathology, the role of the father in Russ' study was not found to be significant. In fact, in that study, mother rejection (low care) was related to symptoms of five different personality disorders (paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal, borderline, and avoidant), while mother overprotection was related to dependency; father rejection was related to borderline and avoidant and overprotection related to avoidant (Russ et al., 2003). While the findings of Russ et al. (2003) suggest that maternal care may be most critical in the development of personality psychopathology, it is important to note that father rejection and overprotection in that study were both related to avoidance. Father low care and high overprotection were found to predict adult attachment avoidance in college students with intact parental relationships, and low father care, but not father overprotection, predicted adult attachment avoidance in children of divorced parents (Lopez et al., 2000). This is consistent with the qualitative data of the present study, which suggested that some teachers may actively avoid getting involved in relationships with families or using open and direct communication. In a few cases, teachers directly attributed their interaction style with parents to their own upbringing.

**Father overprotection related to change in frustration over time.** While teachers with lower care and high overprotection levels for both parents experienced an increase in

their frustration over time, this difference was more pronounced in relationships with fathers. The significant interaction between father overprotection and frustration with parents over time indicated that within this sample, whether a teacher's father was overprotective/controlling or not related to their experience of frustration over time. Specifically, teachers who had fathers that were highly overprotective or controlling experienced an increase in frustration over time, while teachers whose fathers were not controlling experienced a decrease in frustration. A relationship with one's father may influence their expectations for their relationships with parents or administrators and school systems. When parenting interferes with one's development of independence and autonomy, an individual may have difficulties in development of social competence (Parker, 1979). Controlling parents may have expectations that establish more rigid, hierarchical boundaries that may make navigating systems and relationships with flexibility more challenging, and this may be particularly relevant and paternal relationships. Frustration with parents may increase over time because an individual with more rigid relational expectations may expect greater compliance with rules and have a harder time navigating relationships when someone challenges these expectations.

**Teachers with higher ACE scores report higher frustration and discuss their history more**

ACE score may be related to frustration with parents at the end of the year, though the low *n* limited the statistical analyses. Teachers with higher ACE scores also talked about their personal relationships and histories together with their current teacher-parent relationships more often in interviews. As mentioned earlier in the discussion, post-traumatic growth may enable a teacher to make meaning of these experiences and relate them to their

current work and relationships. However, as this data suggests, having a more extensive trauma history (and possibly compounded by poorer parental relationships) may be also a risk factor for greater frustration with parents. In thinking about the application of this finding, it would be important to encourage teachers to consider how their own personal history and defense style may influence their relationships with and expectations of families. A self-sacrificing defense style has been identified as a risk factor for vicarious trauma, and defense style has been shown to moderate the relationship between personal trauma history and vicarious trauma (Adams & Riggs, 2008). Thus, developing self-awareness and the capacity to reflect on one's own feelings (i.e. countertransference) regarding families seems to be an important way to minimize frustration.

### **Work Stress Overview**

#### **High Satisfaction, Low Levels of Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress**

Teachers reported average to high compassion satisfaction and low to average burnout and secondary traumatic stress at both time points. The quantitative data somewhat aligned with the qualitative data; however, in the qualitative data related to satisfaction, teachers also reported mixed and negative experiences that are not easily captured in the ProQOL items. Further, as detailed later in the discussion, teachers who endorsed more extreme likert scale items (high compassion satisfaction and low burnout and secondary traumatic stress) on the ProQOL also demonstrated lower levels of insightfulness. This suggests that teachers who endorse more extreme statements may also be less likely to consider and integrate the positives and negatives, or to see an experience from multiple perspectives. Further, while the results from the ProQOL suggest low levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress, the statements from the interviews provide more elaboration and

information on those topics. Therefore, in prioritizing the richer and more nuanced qualitative data, results from the ProQOL should be taken with caution and may reflect higher satisfaction and lower burnout and secondary traumatic stress than actually occur in this sample. Other factors that may have led to an underreporting in these areas might be that while teachers acknowledge these areas in their interviews, they aren't pervasive and are therefore not "loud" enough to impact their completion of the measure. Another factor that may have led to high compassion and low burnout and secondary traumatic stress was that for many teachers, the most immediate concerns were related to administrators. These frustrations appeared to overshadow considering how work with families may also be stressful. Finally, because of errors in the manual, T scores were not able to be derived from the raw scores. Previous research has dealt with this issue by reporting the raw scores, which is what this study has done as well.

### **Average to High Compassion Satisfaction**

On the whole, this sample reported relatively high levels of compassion satisfaction. The most commonly identified aspects of teacher-parent relationships from which teachers derived satisfaction were: (1) the *relationships* they and their school/community had with families; (2) the *information* they learned about the family context to understand a child's behavior and family system; and (3) the sense of *usefulness* they felt when being able to support families with particularly challenging circumstances. Teachers also discussed moments of *conflict* with parents as being initially stressful or distressing, but ultimately positive or rewarding. Thus it appears that teachers in this sample derive pleasure from aspects of their work related to teacher-family interactions.

### **Low to Average Burnout**

Teachers described several types of stress in working with parents that were related to burnout, which could be grouped in a few themes: (1) *challenges in communication*, including discussions about their child's behavior and mismatch or conflict; (2) *challenges in working with parents facing adversity*, including balancing flexibility while enforcing rules, parent mental health concerns and lack of resources; and (3) *feeling devalued or resentful*, including when parents are in a rush or seem to avoid a teacher-parent relationship, and when parents do not follow up with referrals or appear not to be paying attention to their children. While teachers' self-reported burnout levels were low or average, they still described areas that appeared to be potential sources of burnout. Burnout has been differentiated from vicarious traumatization because of its gradual progression as a result of emotional exhaustion (Trippany, Kress, & Wilcoxon, 2004). In integrating the quantitative and qualitative data, it appears that on the whole, these areas are sources of stress in the teacher-parent relationship, but don't have such wide-reaching impacts as to affect teachers' perspective on their hopefulness or feelings about their ability to effectively do their job.

### **Low to Average Secondary Traumatic Stress**

Teachers described several types of secondary stress as a result of their work, including: (1) *emotional consequences in working with families facing adversity*, such as sadness, pain, worry, helplessness, guilt, and anger; (2) *personalization of the teacher-parent relationship*; and (3) their *outlook towards families facing adversity*. Secondary traumatic stress, or vicarious traumatization, has typically been investigated with counselors because they are most likely to hear the trauma narratives of their clients. Discussing trauma is not an expectation of a teacher-parent relationship (Trippany et al., 2004), so the low levels on the quantitative measure make sense. Vicarious trauma symptoms are differentiated from



symptoms of burnout in their sudden and abrupt onset, as well as the emotional consequences of leading to changes in trust, feelings of control, issues of intimacy, safety concerns, and intrusive images (Rosenbloom, Pratt, & Pearlman, 1995; Trippany et al., 2004). So, while many teachers did not report hearing about the trauma narratives of their families, in discussing the advantages and disadvantages of knowing children's histories, teachers did report experiencing similar emotional consequences of working with families facing adversity. This makes clinical sense, because even if one does not hear a trauma narrative, they are certainly able to experience the feelings that a client projects through the processes of transference and projective identification. Further, just like beginning therapists and therapists with no formal trauma training are at greater risk for vicarious traumatization (Adams & Riggs, 2008), teachers with no formal trauma training are likely to be at similar or higher risk for the development of vicarious traumatization.

### **Work Stress, the Teacher-Parent Relationship and Time**

#### **Compassion Satisfaction Negatively Associated with Frustration with Parents in Fall and Spring**

In fall, compassion satisfaction had a medium effect, non-significant relationship with frustration with parents such that teachers reporting higher satisfaction also reported lower levels of frustration with parents. This was also true in spring, but the relationship had a slightly weaker (small to medium) effect size. This makes sense, because a teacher who feels more fulfilled is likely to have fewer challenges or frustrations at their job. In trauma therapists, compassion satisfaction has been shown to be higher in more experienced providers and providers who are trained in evidence-based practice (Craig & Sprang, 2010). Furthermore, compassion satisfaction has been found to increase when therapists engage in

personal therapy and supervision in conjunction with their work (Linley & Joseph, 2007).

Finding the positive aspects of one's work may buffer against frustration, and it appears that the most helpful ways to improve compassion satisfaction are through experience, training, supervision, and personal reflection.

**The relationship between compassion satisfaction and frustration with parents may change over time.** Examining the longitudinal group at the end of the year, teachers with high satisfaction reported frustration levels similar to teachers reporting average compassion satisfaction. This finding was not assessed for significance due to the low *n* in the average group, so it should be interpreted with caution. However, it does offer a different perspective: perhaps at the end of the year, teachers' frustration with parents is somewhat independent of their compassion satisfaction, at least when compassion satisfaction is average or high. Specifically, this may suggest that teachers are able to derive meaning and pleasure from their work regardless of their frustration with parents. Over the year in reflective supervision they may learn to separate their frustrations with their most challenging parents from their overall enjoyment of the profession.

**Teachers who discussed their satisfaction in teacher-parent relationships more also reported higher frustration with parents.** In the qualitative data, there was a moderate strength, non-significant trend that the more times teachers discussed their satisfaction and teacher-parent relationships, the higher frustration with parents they reported. In fact, teachers who reported borderline or clinical levels of frustration were coded significantly more for *SATISFACTION* when discussing teacher-parent relationships. Because *SATISFACTION* was coded for both satisfaction and dissatisfaction or loss of satisfaction, teachers are expressing both their dislikes in these coded segments. Therefore, this qualitative

data should not be seen as describing the same, purely positive construct that the ProQOL assessed. Rather, it was useful in understanding teachers' appraisals of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Teachers who are more likely to admit frustration with parents are probably more likely to talk about their satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their relationships with parents.

### **Burnout Association with Frustration Strengthened in Spring**

In fall, there was a small to medium, non-significant correlation between burnout and frustration with parents. In spring, there was a strong, significant correlation between the two variables. Further, qualitative data revealed a similar relationship between burnout and frustration with parents in the spring. There was a medium effect, non-significant correlation between the discussion of work stress/burnout and teacher-parent relationships and quantitative report of frustration. Teachers falling into borderline or clinical levels of frustration talked about their work stress in teacher-parent relationships almost twice as much as parents with nonclinical levels of frustration.

What might have changed the relationship between these quantitative variables over time? It's likely to be caused by a few factors. First, it makes sense that over the school year a teacher's stress related to their work and their frustration with parents both increase, thus strengthening the relationship. However, it also may be that teachers in their first year of RS are, for the first time, being given the space to acknowledge and explore their own stress and challenges with parents. As their relationships with families become a topic that is given attention, they may experience more stress because they are more aware of the barriers that the families face, and more aware of their own feelings.

### **Secondary Traumatic Stress Associated with Frustration in Spring but not Fall**

In fall, there was no association between secondary traumatic stress and frustration with parents. In spring, there was a small to moderate non-significant correlation between the two variables. When comparing teachers who reported low levels of secondary traumatic stress to teachers reported average levels, there were minimal differences at both time points, though teachers with average levels of secondary traumatic stress went from having lower frustration than the low group in fall to having similar levels of frustration as the low group in spring. In other words, some of the differences in frustration between the two groups disappeared over time.

Qualitative data suggested a stronger relationship than did the quantitative data. Specifically, qualitative analyses suggested a moderate strength, non-significant relationship between the variables such that the more times that teachers discussed their secondary stress and teacher-parent relationships, the higher level of frustration they also reported with parents.

### **Insight Overview**

#### **Moderate to High Levels of Insight across Sample**

Across the sample, there was overall a high level of insight as reflected in the IA Sum scores. The high level of insight across the sample may be attributed to a few factors. First, because participation was voluntary, many (but not all) of the participants had overwhelmingly positive things to say about reflective supervision. They are likely a self-selected group who wanted to participate because of the benefits they have experienced in reflective supervision. Second, the insightfulness assessment was initially designed as an interview for parents of young children, and is likely to have a larger range in a population whose job isn't focused on children. Finally, because the assessment was also designed to be

an interview about an interaction on video, there might be fewer opportunities in the original assessment to demonstrate insight. However, in an hour-long interview, teachers may demonstrate the capacity for insight when there is a wider range of topics than just reflecting on a child's experience in a particular video clip.

Also, the IA Sum, independently rated by two graduate students, and the *INSIGHT* codes were significantly correlated. Their large effect size suggests that the modified coding scheme for IA Sum was a meaningful assessment of the insight that a teacher demonstrated in their interview. This large effect size suggest that the Insightfulness Assessment may be applied to other interviews.

### **Relationship between Work Stress and Insight**

#### **Inconclusive Relationship between Compassion Satisfaction and Insight**

Correlations between measures of insight (IA Sum and *INSIGHT*) and the ProQOL's CS scale were both negative and not significant, but had medium and small effects, respectively. This may suggest that teachers who rated their satisfaction as more extremely positive in the likert scales demonstrate lower insight in their interview. However, when examining qualitative codes, the potential relationship becomes slightly muddled. There was no relationship between *SATISFACTION* and IA Sum, and a medium effect, positive and non-significant relationship between *SATISFACTION* and *INSIGHT*.

Regarding the findings from the ProQOL, perhaps teachers who show more thoughtfulness and reflection in their interview are also more likely to rate in the less extreme likert categories. This perspective was triangulated through a member check with a reflective supervisor, who reported that some teachers (which may include teachers who did not consent to be interviewed) would hardly ever acknowledge being upset in their work, even if

it was a particularly valid and upsetting situation. She reported that for these teachers, she observed that it was difficult to see the grey area. Perhaps with some teachers, acknowledging frustration or dissatisfaction feels threatening, or the teachers do not feel enough safety and worry that saying something negative will impact their employment. However, this explanation runs somewhat counter to the research that suggests that higher compassion satisfaction may be cultivated through training, supervision, personal therapy, and experience (Craig & Sprang, 2010). Thus, it may be that those endorsing high compassion satisfaction are a nuanced group.

Regarding the findings from the qualitative codes, it appears that talking about satisfaction and dissatisfaction may be associated with more reflection and perspective-taking. However, because this result was inconsistent across measures of insight, and this coding did not match the definition of compassion satisfaction by only coding for the positive, not much can be made of this analysis.

### **Complex Relationship between Burnout and Insight**

Higher levels of quantitatively-measured burnout (in this sample, this was average levels of burnout), had a medium effect, non-significant correlation with both measures of qualitatively-measured insight. Comparing low and average burnout groups found a similar result: teachers with average burnout demonstrated significantly greater insight in their interviews than teachers with low burnout. However, similar to the qualitative coding results assessing compassion satisfaction, the qualitative codes yielded different (negative) directions in the relationship. This finding suggests that the more a teacher talks about frustration related to work stress, the lower their insight. Because the two measures of insight were both negative, but one had a negligible effect size, the evidence for this conclusion is

weak. It's possible that teachers who communicated their frustration about their work stress more often and readily demonstrated less insight because their statements were more black-and-white and were overshadowed by their frustration.

### **Inconsistent Relationship between Secondary Traumatic Stress and Insight**

The opposite directionality, small effect sizes, and non-significance of the correlations between the ProQOL's secondary traumatic stress scale and insight suggest no relationship between these two variables. A larger *n* would be needed to examine the association between these variables in more depth if there is indeed a relationship. Further, when comparing the low secondary traumatic stress group to the average group, there were no differences in insight demonstrated through either the ratings or the amount of perspective-taking and reflection demonstrated in the interview. However, the qualitative data provided consistent support with medium effects in both measures of insight for a positive relationship between the two variables. These findings would suggest that the more secondary stress expressed in an interview, the higher the level of insight. This makes some sense because when teachers the ability to articulate how the impact of family stress on oneself requires some degree of reflection.

### **Work Stress, the Teacher-Parent Relationship, and Insight**

#### **When Teachers Demonstrated Insight in Discussing Satisfaction and the Teacher-Parent Relationship, the Relationship with Level of Frustration Strengthened**

Using only the comments coded as *INSIGHT* strengthened the relationship between the qualitative codes *SATISFACTION* and *TEACHER-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS*, and teachers' frustration T scores. Teachers who fell into borderline or clinical in the frustration with parents were coded for these topics almost twice as much, which was significantly more

than teachers falling in the nonclinical range. These findings suggest that greater insight is associated with teacher report of higher frustration and more discussion of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in teacher-parent relationships. It's possible that teachers who are more able to admit their frustration may be more talkative regarding their likes and dislikes.

**When Teachers Demonstrated Insight in Discussing Work Stress and the Teacher-Parent Relationship, the Relationship with Frustration with Parents Strengthened**

When statements that did not demonstrate insight were excluded, the relationship between work stress in teacher-parent relationships and frustration with parents strengthened to a moderate to strong effect, non-significant correlation. This finding echoes the findings of satisfaction, and again, teachers who reported borderline or clinical levels of frustration with parents also discussed their work stress almost twice as often as teachers with nonclinical levels of frustration.

**When Teachers Demonstrated Insight in Discussing Secondary Stress and the Teacher-Parent Relationship, the Relationship with Frustration with Parents Strengthened**

When statements that did not demonstrate insight were excluded, the relationship between secondary traumatic stress in teacher-parent relationships and frustration with parents strengthened to a medium to large effect, non-significant correlation. In other words, the more times that a teacher discussed topics related to secondary stress and their relationship with parents with perspective-taking or reflection, the higher their self-reported frustration with parents.

Across all three areas of work stress (satisfaction, work stress, and secondary stress) in relation to teacher-parent relationships, the relationship between frustration and work stress strengthened when insight was demonstrated. In other words, teachers showing greater



insight in their discussion of their stress and satisfaction reported higher frustration with parents. Perhaps this is a reflection of teachers being better at communicating their feelings in the interview, and more willing or able to acknowledge their frustrations.

### **Years of Reflective Supervision**

#### **Interaction between Years of Reflective Supervision and Time in Frustration with Parents**

The significant and large effect interaction between years of RS and time indicated that teachers who had received reflective supervision for over two years (mean = 4.09 years) decreased in their frustration with parents over the school year, while teachers with just one year increased in their frustration. This result underscores the differences in the two samples in terms of their frustration with parents over time. There are a few possible explanations. First, it may be that teachers in their first year of RS complete the measures reporting stress somewhat defensively in the fall because they haven't yet developed enough trust that their responses won't be made available to their bosses or administrator. Thus, they don't report potential concerns at the beginning, but may feel more comfortable reporting them later. A second explanation for this change is that by the end of the year, teachers in their first year are more frustrated with the parents because they have had to deal with them all year, whereas at the beginning of the year the problems hadn't happened for as long. However, that explanation does not explain the discrepancy between teachers in their first year and teachers with more years of RS.

Finally, a third explanation, and likely the most probable, was offered when doing a member check about this result with the RS coordinator. When teachers are in the beginning of their first year of RS, many have never given much consideration to the context of the

child and how their experiences and home life may impact their behavior. Therefore, teachers are not feeling stressed about working with parents, because they don't spend much time reflecting on them. However, over the course of the year, the teachers are encouraged through RS to work more closely with parents and consider how a child's environment may impact their behaviors. Consequently, by the end of the year, teachers are more concerned about these issues, and subsequently more distressed and frustrated by them. Whereas teachers who have experienced years of RS may feel more comfortable with the emotions of uncertainty, confusion, worry, frustration or disappointment about the parents, these are often new feelings for many of the teachers who are just starting RS. Thus, it's possible that what is being observed is the beginning and end (or middle) of a developmental curve, whereby an initial increase in stress leads to an ultimate decrease in stress. This parallels the process in therapy where it may get worse before it gets better.

### **Number of Years of Reflective Supervision may Influence the Relationship between Parental Relationship and Frustration with Parents**

Because of the low  $n$  in some groups, this data should be interpreted cautiously. Furthermore, because this analysis compared two groups with different amounts of supervision, rather than studying one group longitudinally over several years, this result cannot be interpreted as causal. However, the visual differences observed in teachers' mean frustration over time suggested that more years in RS may impact teachers' frustration such that non-optimal parenting may no longer be related to increased frustration after several years engaging in RS. While more research must be done to investigate this possible trend, this finding suggests that over several years, RS may improve teachers' approach to and expectations of relationships with parents. Specifically, teachers with more overprotective

parenting may see a change in their more rigid relational expectations, and teachers with lower care parents may become more engaged and comfortable with intimacy in interactions with parents.

### **Number of Years of Reflective Supervision may Improve Insight**

When discussing teacher-parent relationships and what they have learned in RS, teachers with two or more years demonstrated insight in significantly more of their statements (90%) than teachers in their first year (55%). This is consistent with a study that found that preschool teachers receiving reflective supervision showed greater insightfulness than a control group who did not receive reflective supervision (Virmani & Ontai, 2010).

Qualitative data was grouped into themes. For teachers in both groups, the themes that emerged related to gains made regarding teacher-parent relationships from RS included structured time to discuss families, improving ability to communicate with families, referrals to collateral services for families, and coping with challenges related to interactions with families. For teachers in their first year, additional themes that emerged were a greater awareness of home environment, and direct support for families. Teachers in their second year and beyond also identified the themes of group process and learning from each other, and reflection. These differences in themes underscore the differences between groups regarding insight and frustration working with parents. Specifically, teachers in their first year acknowledge the new information they are learning about the home environment. First, they see the direct support to families that the reflective supervisor provides as being helpful as a resource to the children and families. However, these themes are not seen in the *Experienced* group, and it's likely because they are more comfortable interacting directly with parents themselves, navigating the referral process with their reflective supervisor, or

getting support from their team. They see reflection and learning from their team members as further gains in RS and resources in navigating teacher-parent relationships.

### **Limitations**

There are limitations to this study. First, the low sample size limited the ability to statistically analyze the findings. Several analyses had notable effect sizes but a lack of significance, most likely the results of a low sample size. This threat to validity was minimized through the triangulation of findings, but still limited the ability to draw conclusions. Because it is community-based, longitudinal research, the sample size was further impacted when one of the sites unexpectedly decided to stop conducting RS groups, preventing the collection of post questionnaires from several participants, and not all teachers participated in both pre- and post-assessments. However, when viewed in context, this sample size may also be seen as a strength. Other studies that have examined reflective supervision have used even smaller samples because reflective supervision is an involved and still somewhat rare intervention, so the population is quite select. Even within samples receiving reflective supervision, supervision groups are relatively small, making data collection labor-intensive and requiring multiple years of engagement or engagement with many sites. Finally, in merging data, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) recommend equal qualitative and quantitative sample sizes to allow for the same number of cases to be selected. Therefore, quantitative analyses may have limited power alone, but are interpreted in corroboration with qualitative data.

Second, because of the differing services agreed upon in contracts, each site had slightly different agreements regarding the time that a reflective supervisor spent. Two sites received biweekly group RS while three received weekly group RS. Further, four of the five

sites had other components of early childhood mental health consultation, including referrals and collateral meetings with parents, and in-classroom work with children and teachers. Thus, the intervention looked different depending on the site, making measurement of the impact of the intervention difficult.

Third, because the intervention was expanded after the study was started, the researchers were able to include three sites in their first year. However, this resulted in the timing of interviews to vary between fall and spring, because the majority of interviews with the first sites had already been conducted, and it wouldn't have been practical to interview teachers in their first year at the beginning of the intervention. As a consequence, when doing side-by-side comparisons of quantitative and qualitative data, quantitative data were matched to the time point of the interview in order to reflect the current state of each teacher.

Fourth, teachers were not asked in the interview directly about their parent relationships and trauma history, so this information was not always triangulated within the qualitative data. If teachers discussed these topics, it was spontaneously, and this may have consequently underrepresented the perspectives of teachers who did not volunteer the information. If re-designing the interview, additional questions could have asked, "What messages did you receive from your parent figures growing up about communication about problems, professional relationships, or closeness?" and "How do you relate your own particularly challenging, stressful, or traumatic experiences to the families with whom you work?"

Fifth, the lack of a control group and inability to follow a group from pre-intervention to two or more years of the intervention limited the ability to draw any causal conclusions.

Sixth, the insightfulness assessment procedure was modified significantly its original design. Due to several practical limitations, videotaping interactions and reviewing them with teachers was not realistic for the scope of this dissertation study. Therefore, while the same ten dimensions of insightfulness were maintained, some dimensions were more present and easy to evaluate within the interviews than others. For example, while *coherence* was easy to rate, it was more difficult to rate *focus on child* because the interview did not explicitly ask the teacher to focus on one child, and sought to elicit the teacher's perspective, thoughts, and feelings, more often than those of their children. As a result, the coders adapted the definition of *focus on child* to be considered only at times when the interview specifically addressed child needs or teacher-child relationships. Further, the coders shortened the likert scale to a 3-point scale. In previous studies, the ratings have used a 7-point (Koren-Karie et al., 2002) and a 9-point (Virmani & Ontai, 2010) rating scale. The scale was reduced to increase the ease of use, the inter-rater reliability, and because some areas were harder to assess than others due to the different interview content being rated. In fact, in analyzing their results, Virmani and Ontai (2010) collapsed their 9-point scale into three categories: low, medium and high. An assessment of the relationship with the codes *REFLECTION* and *PERSPECTIVE* helped confirm the measurement of insightfulness, and triangulate the inferences from the data.

Finally, each school and even teaching team has its own unique culture and context that is influenced by each of the teachers in the group, as well as the reflective supervisor. While a cluster analysis might be useful with a much larger *n*, it is not feasible with a study this small.

### **Strengths**

This study has a number of strengths. First, the intervention was delivered by a community-based organization within several early childhood programs. This community-based approach increases the study's external validity and clinical relevance. Furthermore, this research topic was developed and carried out through a collaborative partnership that incorporated the input of community service providers through ongoing involvement and an iterative feedback process. Community involvement is a primary feature of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), and the advantages of CBRP include improved research quality outcomes, increased capacity within the community, improved health outcomes, greater participation rates, increased external validity, and decreased dropout rates (Viswanathan et al., 2004). CBPR is meant to increase the value of the research for researchers and community members by building on community strengths, creating bridges between researchers and community members, promoting co-learning and attending to social inequities, and addressing health from positive and ecological perspectives (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998). This study has attempted to fulfill CBPR practice standards.

Second, this research used mixed methods, was longitudinal, and assessed groups with different amount of time engaging in RS. There have been several calls in the literature for more empirical investigation of the impact of RS (e.g. Bernstein & Edwards, 2012; Eggbeer, Shahmoon-Shanok, & Clark, 2010; Korfmacher et al., 2008; Watson et al., 2014). This study contributes to this research gap.

This study also addressed each component of the PPCT model, which increased its adherence to a bioecological framework. Through including aspects of process, person, context, and time, this study is one of a few that have attempted to sufficiently address each aspect of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Tudge et al., 2009).

While more complicated, research that attempts to examine each aspect of the PPCT model may also offer value by attempted to understand different contextual influences on development.

Finally, in this study the majority of the teachers identified as Latino/a. As our country's population and workforce becomes increasingly diverse, it is vital that research represents perspectives from multicultural communities.

### **Implications**

This research has some exciting implications. In 2013, 61% of children ages 3-6 in the U.S. attended center-based early childhood care and education programs (Child Trends Databank, 2014). Early childhood teachers have the potential to have a widespread impact on the children and families in poverty who may need but not have access to other services. Furthermore, suspension rates within early childhood programs are alarmingly high, and disproportionally affect boys and Black children (U.S Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). Disrupted relationships for children in their early years can have harmful long-term effects. The Departments of Health and Human Services and Education recently put out a policy statement specifically addressing the prevention of high rates of expulsion and suspension within early childhood settings, and recommended several strategies that early childhood programs should employ, including collaborating with community-based service providers, forming strong relationships with parents and families, exploring culture and diversity, and using self-reflective strategies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This study provides evidence that reflective supervision, especially when employed over several years may support teachers in developing competence in these areas.



Unfortunately, many of the prevention activities associated with lower worker stress (more training and supervision, reduced caseloads, more supervisor support) have a high short-term price tag. Most administrators likely recognize the need but have limited means in the publicly funded social service context to provide this higher level of employee support. However, the long-term costs associated with the effects of staff stress may be more expensive. This is why one of the most important implications of this study involves increasing public awareness and advocacy at a policy level. Lawmakers and funders must be made aware of the importance of taking care of the workers whose job it is to care for young children, so that funding for stress prevention efforts are built into early childhood care.

### **Future Directions**

Regarding parental relationships, future research should examine whether teachers with more optimal parenting are able to communicate that to the families via a parallel process. Is there is a transmission of parenting style from a teacher's parent to the teacher, and from the teacher to the families with whom they work? Attachment research has historically prioritized focusing on the maternal relationship; however, future research should continue to explore the impact of paternal relationships on trauma history and later approach to other relationships. Culture, including race and ethnicity, is also an area that should be explored. This study found some differences between Latina and Caucasian participants in maternal but not paternal relationships. This is an important area to better understand. Future directions should also examine whether teachers' relational patterns influence the relationships with the parents with whom they work. Does a higher level of frustration impact the children and families?

Future studies would be strengthened by having a control group. While this study was able to assess two different groups, it would be interesting to see whether teachers who do not engage in RS experience different types of stress. Additionally, climate of a program is an important and understudied variable. Through leadership and staff longevity, some programs can cultivate supportive environments while others struggle to achieve this. This study examined teachers as individuals and their grouping variable was time in reflective supervision; however, an alternate way to group teachers in the future may be by program atmosphere.

Furthermore, more efforts should be made to try to unify or differentiate the theoretical concepts of VT, STS, and CF. In practice these terms are often used interchangeably, though researchers continue to attempt to describe differences between them. It may be less confusing if, for example, CF was used as an overarching term related to worker stress, and underlying domains included more cognitive, psychological, or PTSD-like symptoms. Researchers may address this gap in the research by examining a wider range of worker stress symptoms to develop a consistent operationalization and measurement of this construct with attention to better understanding symptom clusters. From this, more research efforts could also be made in understanding whether certain clusters are associated with particular fields, and whether particular intervention strategies work better to address each area. For example, if researchers found that individual-based interventions better targeted psychological symptoms of stress, but combined or organization-based interventions worked more effectively with cognitive symptoms or burnout, then agencies would be better able to assess and address staff stress.

Also, the majority of the literature focuses on childcare settings, but this should be expanded to consider workers in the healthcare, legal, social services, child welfare, or substance abuse fields, for example. Workers in each of these fields experience significant work-related stress, and often do not have the support of RS or MHC to process their reactions. We don't know whether these interventions would benefit these workers in the same way that they have been shown to benefit early childhood workers. For example, depending on the field, emphasizing individual, organizational, or both in the intervention may be appropriate. With regard to impact, measuring worker and institutional observed changes using quantitative methods is a significant gap. Quantitative studies are important because they allow researchers and policymakers to study trends across larger samples and the statistical significance of changes in staff, families, and systems. Quantitative research can be difficult because there are many interacting components in an institution's cultural climate, but this may be further supported through the use of mixed methods, the coding of observations and interactions, and measures that can capture relational changes.

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## APPENDIX A: MEASURES

### Demographics Questions

- 1) How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2) What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Transgender
  
- 3) Which best describes your race? Check as many as apply.
  - American Indian or Alaskan Native (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Asian (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Black or African American (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Hispanic/Latino/a
  - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - White
  - Other (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
  
- 4) Are you a parent?
  - No
  - Yes →
    - If yes, how many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
    - If yes, how many of your children currently live with you? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5) How many people live in your home (including yourself)? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 6) What is your current marital status?
  - Currently married
  - Separated
  - Divorced
  - Widowed
  - Never Married
  - Unmarried, living with Partner/Significant Other
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 7) What is the highest education level and/or degree you have obtained?
  - 8<sup>th</sup> grade or less
  - Some high school
  - High school diploma
  - Completed GED
  - Some college or a 2-yr degree
  - Bachelor's degree / 4-yr college degree
  - Master's or other advanced degree

- 8) Are you currently participating in continuing education?
- No
  - Yes →
    - Taking classes unrelated to my work
    - Taking classes towards a higher degree/certification
    - Taking classes related to my work **not** towards a higher degree/certification
- 9) How many TOTAL years have you been teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) How many years have you been teaching preschool-aged children? \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) How long have you worked at this agency as a teacher? \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) Have you participated in the reflective practice groups or mental health consultation through the CALM-Storyteller Reflective Practice Preschool Collaborative?
- Yes →
  - No
- If yes, how long have you been participating? \_\_\_\_\_ Years and \_\_\_\_\_ Months
- If yes, what has your participation entailed?
- Group reflective supervision
    - How often?
      - Every week
      - Every other week
      - Every month
  - In-classroom mental health consultation
    - How often?
      - Every week
      - Every other week
      - Every month
- 13) Did anything unusually stressful happen over the past year? (For example: loss of a loved one, financial stress, medical problems.)
- Yes → If yes, how many separate or ongoing stressors can you count? \_\_\_\_\_
  - No

### Index of Teaching Stress, Frustration Working with Parents (ITS)

For the following questions please reflect on **a specific student with whom you experience some difficulty**. We are interested in how distressed you feel about your interactions with the student. Respond based only on the degree to which you find the situations described to be stressful or frustrating to you.

ITS Item (Items for the <i>Frustration Working with Parents</i> Scale)	Never Distressing	Rarely Distressing	Sometimes Distressing	Often Distressing	Very Distressing
1. Interacting with this student's parents is frustrating.	1	2	3	4	5
2. This student's parents call me to tell me they are unhappy about something I've done with this student.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel harassed by this student's parents.	1	2	3	4	5
4. This student's parents don't seem concerned about their child's behavior at school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I feel this student comes from an unsupportive home situation.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am unable to agree with this student's parents about how to best handle the student's problem behavior at school.	1	2	3	4	5

### Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

When you teach people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you teach can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experience, both positive and negative, as a teacher. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the **last 30 days**.

ProQOL Item	Never	Rarely	Some- times	Often	Very Often
1. I am happy.^	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I teach.#	1	2	3	4	5
3. I get satisfaction from being able to teach people.*	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel connected to others.^	1	2	3	4	5
5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.#	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel invigorated after working with those I teach.*	1	2	3	4	5
7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a teacher.#	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I teach.^	1	2	3	4	5
9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I teach.#	1	2	3	4	5
10. I feel trapped by my job as a teacher.^	1	2	3	4	5
11. Because of my teaching, I have felt “on edge” about various things.#	1	2	3	4	5
12. I like my work as a teacher.*	1	2	3	4	5
13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I teach.#	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have taught.#	1	2	3	4	5
15. I have beliefs that sustain me.^	1	2	3	4	5

16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with teaching techniques and protocols.*	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am the person I always wanted to be.^	1	2	3	4	5
18. My work makes me feel satisfied.*	1	2	3	4	5
19. I feel worn out because of my work as a teacher.^	1	2	3	4	5
20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I teach and how I could help them.*	1	2	3	4	5
21. I feel overwhelmed because my workload seems endless.^	1	2	3	4	5
22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.*	1	2	3	4	5
23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I teach.#	1	2	3	4	5
24. I am proud of what I can do to teach.*	1	2	3	4	5
25. As a result of my teaching, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.#	1	2	3	4	5
26. I feel “bogged down” by the system.^	1	2	3	4	5
27. I have thoughts that I am a success as a teacher.*	1	2	3	4	5
28. I can’t recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.#	1	2	3	4	5
29. I am a very caring person.^	1	2	3	4	5
30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.*	1	2	3	4	5

\*compassion satisfaction scale; ^burnout scale; #secondary traumatic stress scale

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

*While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:*

- Yes  No 1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often...**  
Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? *or*  
Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
- Yes  No 2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often...**  
Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? *or*  
**Ever** hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
- Yes  No 3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever...**  
Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? *or*  
Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
- Yes  No 4. Did you **often** feel that...  
No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? *or*  
Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
- Yes  No 5. Did you **often** feel that...  
You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? *or*  
Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
- Yes  No 6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?
- Yes  No 7. Was your mother or stepmother:  
**Often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? *or*  
**Sometimes or often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? *or*  
**Ever** repeatedly hit at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
- Yes  No 8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
- Yes  No 9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
- Yes  No 10. Did a household member go to prison?



### Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI)

This questionnaire lists various attitudes and behaviors of parents. Please respond to the questions as you remember your **MOTHER/FATHER** in your first 16 years. Please circle the most appropriate box next to each question.

PBI Item	Very Like	Moderately Like	Moderately Unlike	Very Unlike
1. Spoke to me in a warm and friendly voice*	1	2	3	4
2. Did not help me as much as I needed*	1	2	3	4
3. Let me do those things I liked doing^	1	2	3	4
4. Seemed emotionally cold to me*	1	2	3	4
5. Appeared to understand my problems and worries*	1	2	3	4
6. Was affectionate to me*	1	2	3	4
7. Liked me to make my own decisions^	1	2	3	4
8. Did not want me to grow up^	1	2	3	4
9. Tried to control everything I did^	1	2	3	4
10. Invaded my privacy^	1	2	3	4
11. Enjoyed talking things over with me*	1	2	3	4
12. Frequently smiled at me*	1	2	3	4
13. Tended to baby me^	1	2	3	4
14. Did not seem to understand what I needed or wanted*	1	2	3	4
15. Let me decide things for myself^	1	2	3	4
16. Made me feel I wasn't wanted*	1	2	3	4
17. Could make me feel better when I was upset*	1	2	3	4
18. Did not talk with me very much*	1	2	3	4
19. Tried to make me feel dependent on her/him^	1	2	3	4
20. Felt I could not look after myself unless she/he was around^	1	2	3	4
21. Gave me as much freedom as I wanted^	1	2	3	4
22. Let me go out as often as I wanted^	1	2	3	4
23. Was overprotective of me^	1	2	3	4
24. Did not praise me*	1	2	3	4
25. Let me dress in any way I pleased^	1	2	3	4

\*care scale; ^overprotection scale

## APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Job Stress, Satisfaction:

- What parts of your job do you most enjoy?
- What are the most stressful aspects of working with children and families? How do you know when you are stressed?
- How have the stressors of your job changed over time? How has your ability to manage your own job related stress changed over time (over the year, your career?)
- Many of the families have been through and continue to endure very difficult life circumstances. Tell me about this experience for you. (What is it like for you to work with such multi-stressed families? Has this changed over time? How do you cope with this stress?)

### Child Development/Trauma/Family:

- Think about some of the difficult circumstances that the children you work with have been through or continue to go through. What are some of the common experiences they face that stand out to you?
  - What do you perceive are some of the effects on children? What has your experience been like working with these children?
  - What do you perceive are some of the effects on parents? What has your experience been like working with these parents?
- What have your interactions with parents been like over the course of the year? Can you think of a time when you had a particularly challenging interaction or relationship? What about a relationship or interaction that went really well?
- Do you think your perception of the impact of stress or difficult circumstances on children and families has changed over time? (the last \_\_ years). If so, what do you attribute this change to?

### Support:

- How do you feel towards your coworkers? Has this changed since you have been working there? If so, what has changed and why do you think it has changed?
- What is it like to express concerns or seek help from your peers?
- What is it like to express concerns or seek help from your supervisors?
- How do you think culture (your own, your families', and your colleagues' identities, values, training, etc.) has been a factor in your work? Can you give an example of a time you feel it has affected the work?

### Reflective Supervision: (defined specifically as the group supervision time)

- What does reflective supervision mean to you/how do you define it? What do you think its purpose?
- What does it look like (e.g. frequency, duration, topics, number of group members, location, attendance, confidentiality)?
- Do you remember your first time (or an early experience) meeting for reflective supervision? What do you remember about it?
- What about a more recent reflective supervision meeting? What do you remember about it? Has anything changed?

- What is it like for you to share your perspective during reflective supervision?
- What aspects of reflective supervision do you most value / have helped the most?
- What isn't working? Do you have any ideas that you think would improve your or your coworkers experience in reflective supervision?
- How do you think your co-workers feel about reflective supervision?
- Has anything changed about you over the course of the reflective supervision? (Would you attribute this change to your reflective supervision group?) Can you give an example?
- Has anything changed about the way that you interact with children and families? Can you give an example?
- Do you feel supported by your managers to integrate reflection and reflective supervision into your work? Why/why not?
- How has reflective supervision been similar or different to mental health consultation? Are there certain aspects that have been more helpful or less helpful about one or the other?

## APPENDIX C: CODES AND DEFINITIONS

### **Initial Codes**

*TC*: Teacher-child relationship/communication, discussion of child

*TP*: Teacher-parent relationship/communication, discussion of parent/family

*CONFLICT*: When differences of opinions are discussed, fights (between anyone, not just teachers)

*COMMUNICATION*: Any discussion of previous, current, pending, or intent to share information

*ROLE*: Teacher role clarity and how role clarity of administrators and reflective supervisor's role clarity affects teacher, role boundaries.

*SUPPORT*: Anything related to support in relationships with peers, administrative staff, or reflective supervisor

*COMPETENCE*: Anything related to the ability to effectively work with and manage difficult situations with their peers, administrative staff, stress, and students and families (the self/self-efficacy)

*WORKPLACE CULTURE*: Climate, atmosphere among staff and administrators, perspective about environment, collateral or other systems supporting child/teacher

*SATISFACTION*: (Or loss of/lack of satisfaction from teaching). Reduced energy, general demoralization, stress related to work responsibilities, enjoyment of profession, feeling fulfilled, seeing purpose in teaching profession, recognizing the positive impact you can have on a child

*FRUSTRATION*: Frustration/anger/isolation/disappointment (teacher's emotion)

*WORRY*: Worry/fear/anxiety/uncertainty/confusion (teacher's emotion)

*EMOTION*: Expressed sadness, joy, worry, affection about children/families (teacher's emotion about/towards children/families)

*HISTORY*: Teacher talks about their current experiences, relationships or history of relationship

*PERSPECTIVE*: Willingness/openness to acknowledge validity/possibility of another's perspective, be fallible, see another's point of view, adapt/be flexible in interventions with children/families

*REFLECTION*: (Own/other). Acknowledging assumptions, reflection on own/others' feelings and thoughts related to behavior, awareness of alternative motives

*ADVERSITY*: (Child/family adversity/suffering). Discussion of the barriers that clients/children/families face, challenges, stress and trauma that they experience

*STRESS RESPONSE*: Teacher responses to stress (can't stop thinking about situation, boundaries concerns, worrying/thinking about it outside school)

*GAIN*: (from RS). Things they've learned, do better, because of reflective supervision, resolution

### **Thematic Categories**

*FAMILY* = *TC* or *TP*

*FEELINGS* = *EMOTION*, *WORRY*, or *STRESS RESPONSE*

*JOB FACTORS* = *CONFLICT*, *COMMUNICATION*, *ROLE*, *SUPPORT*, *COMPETENCE* or *WORKPLACE CULTURE*

*INSIGHT* = *PERSPECTIVE* or *REFLECTION*

*WORK STRESS* = Intersections between *FRUSTRATION* and *JOB FACTORS*

*SECONDARY STRESS* = Intersections between *ADVERSITY* and *FEELINGS*