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The impact of training on educators' reporting of child abuse and neglect

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The Impact of Training

On Educators' Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

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THESIS

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For my Mother and Father

Abstract

This study addressed the question: Does a training workshop developed by a local child welfare agency have an impact on teachers' and other school personnel's knowledge, attitudes and intended behaviour with respect to reporting child abuse and neglect? Previous studies (mainly in the U.S.) have shown that teachers have a high rate of underreporting, which may leave children at risk of further harm. Few Canadian studies have been conducted and consequently this study offers a uniquely Canadian perspective. In total, 61 teachers and other school personnel from a large South-Western Ontario school board participated in the study. The sample was composed primarily of elementary teachers, but also included principals, educational assistants, student teachers, early childhood educators and a secretary.

This one-group pretest-posttest study involved a two part self-administered questionnaire that was completed before and after a training seminar. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The training seminar was provided by social workers from a local Children's Aid Society. Analysis of the data revealed statistically significant differences between pre and post tests in terms of participants' knowledge of and attitudes towards their responsibility to report concerns regarding a child. A majority of the participants also indicated that they would be more likely to report suspicions of abuse or neglect following the training seminar. Qualitative data indicated that some participants were uncertain about the effectiveness of the child welfare system and as a result were reluctant to report. When participants expressed a reluctance to report, it was associated with concern that the report might do the child more harm than good. Other participants indicated that they believed they had a moral, professional and/or legal responsibility to report. At both ends of the continuum was a desire to act in the best interest of the child. Implications for future research and professional practice are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Professionals have a legal and ethical responsibility to report suspected child abuse and neglect to their local child protection agency. Despite this legal and ethical obligation there are professionals who fail to report. This failure places children at risk of suffering further harm or even possibly death. The purpose of this one group-pretest-posttest study is to examine whether or not there is a change in participants' knowledge, attitudes and intended behaviour with respect to reporting child abuse after receiving training. This study will contribute to our understanding of teachers' knowledge of their duty to report and the impact of a training seminar. The results of the study will provide recommendations for implementing policy, organizational and practice changes that will enhance professionals' knowledge, confidence and ability to report concerns regarding a child at risk.

The effects of child abuse and neglect on the long-term development and well-being of children are well documented. Children who have been abused may demonstrate the following behavioural characteristics: passive watchfulness or hypervigilance, developmental delay, passivity, enuresis, encopresis, aggression, compulsiveness, regression, and fear of failure (Crosson-Tower, 1999). "Children who have been neglected demonstrate retarded growth, poor motor and language development, flat affect, indications of malnutrition, unattended medical problems, and an inability to conceptualize" (Crosson-Tower, 1999, p. 85). When abuse is not reported, children fail to receive protection and treatment (O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole, & Lucal, 1999).

Each of the ten provinces and three territories in Canada has a statute that requires professionals to report child maltreatment to local authorities. "Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect has its origins in the USA, where model statutes for laws designed to introduce this process were first drafted in the early 1960's" (Ainsworth, 2002, p. 57). This requirement is also present in other countries such as Australia and Sweden. In the context of the history of child welfare laws, mandated reporting is a relatively new requirement. In Ontario, amendments were made to the Child Welfare Act in 1978 that included for the first time the obligation of professionals to report abuse (Ontario Child Protection Training Program, 2000). This amendment followed the deaths of two children from abuse by their parents despite having involvement with a protection agency (Ontario Child Protection Training Program, 2000). The current statute that mandates Children's Aid Societies in Ontario is The Child and Family Services Act (CFSA). The CFSA came into being in 1984.

> Most significant in this era, as a result of some high profile child deaths, the services designed to ensure the protection of children from abuse and neglect came under increasing scrutiny. In general there are increased concerns about the effectiveness of current child protection services not only in Canada but also in the United States, Europe and Australia (Ontario Child Protection Training Program, 2000, p. 11).

Several provinces launched inquiries and investigations into the deaths of children known to child protection agencies (Bala, 1999). Following the inquests into the deaths of six children who were known to Children's Aid Societies in Ontario, thirteen recommendations to strengthen the child protection system were made. These recommendations led to The Revised Statutes of Ontario, CFSA released in 1999 in the form of Bill 6. With these amendments, it was made clear that the best interests, protection and well-being of children are paramount (Ontario Child Protection Training

Program, 2000). One of the amendments included changes to reporting requirements by professionals. This was based on concerns regarding underreporting.

> A number of the recent child abuse deaths in Ontario raised concerns about professionals and community members being slow or unwilling to report suspected abuse to Children's Aid Societies. Bill 6 attempts to address these concerns by increasing reporting requirements (Bala, 1999, p.165).

Bill 6 extended the reporting requirements for professionals to report any situation where they have 'reasonable grounds to suspect' a child to be in need of protection instead of reasonable suspicions of 'abuse'. It also requires professionals to report directly to a Children's Aid Society (Bala, 1999) rather than to an administrator or some other third party. They may not request that an administrator or other colleague make the report on their behalf. According to the CFSA, it is an offence if a professional fails to report and a fine of $1000 can be applied.

This study will focus on teachers' and other school personnel's responsibilities as mandated reporters. There is acknowledgement in the literature that by the nature of their work with children, teachers are in a unique and unequalled position in society to identify children who are at risk of harm (Abrahams, Casey & Daro, 1992; Beck, Ogloff & Corbishley, 1994; Crenshaw, Crenshaw & Lichtenberg, 1995; Crosson-Tower, 2002). According to one study, "School personnel should be at the frontline in the battle to address child maltreatment, because no one else is better positioned to ensure the health and safety of children" (Kesner & Robinson, 2002, p. 7). Educators do in fact report a significant proportion of child maltreatment cases. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect provided estimates of child abuse and neglect reported to and investigated by child welfare services in Canada in 1998. This was the

first study of its kind in Canada. "An estimated 135, 573 child maltreatment investigations were carried out in Canada in 1998" (Trocme et al., 2001, Foreword xiv). The most common source of referral was from school personnel, who reported 21% of maltreatment investigation referrals (Trocme et. al., 2001). Of these reports, 39% were substantiated. Despite the fact that school personnel make the highest proportion of reports, studies have also shown that school personnel have high rates of underreporting (Abrahams, et. al., 1992; Beck et. al., 1994). In fact, schools are seen as both the largest reporting source and the largest underreporting source (Crenshaw et al., 1995).

The following literature review will outline what has already been studied with respect to educators' reporting behaviours. It will provide a critical analysis of studies and discussion papers that do not support duty to report as well as those that do. Literature regarding educators' reporting behaviours and perceived deterrents will also be reviewed. Furthermore, studies regarding the impact of educating teachers about their responsibilities to report any suspicions of child abuse and neglect will be described.

An important theme that is present in the literature is risk reduction. "The paramount purpose of this Act is to promote the best interests, protection and well being of children" (Child and Family Services Act, RSO 1999, Chap. 11, Sec. 1(1), p.5). Children's Aid Societies in Ontario are mandated by the CFSA to protect children and reduce the amount of risk they may experience. Professionals in the community, including educators, play an important role in helping with this critical task. Therefore, risk reduction is the theoretical construct that will guide this study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Analyses of Duty to Report

Studies that have been conducted to discover educators' reporting behaviours are based on the assumption that reporting suspected child abuse and neglect actually protects children. There are few studies that question duty to report as an approach to protecting children (Ainsworth, 2002). Critics of mandated reporting ask for evidence that shows that children are abused less in jurisdictions where such laws exist. Ainsworth (2002) conducted a study that compared two states in Australia. One state had mandated reporting laws and the other did not. Outcomes compared for 1999-2000 included: number of reports, number of investigations, substantiation rates and number of families receiving services. His study also examined the rates of child hospitalizations and child deaths in both states. Based on the data studied Ainsworth (2002) concluded: "...it looks as if mandatory reporting makes no difference to either hospital rates for non-accidental injury or to the incidence of child deaths" (Ainsworth, 2002, p.61). Ainsworth made this conclusion after finding that the death rate did not decrease for a ten year period after mandated reporting was implemented in Victoria (Ainsworth, 2002). Ainsworth (2002) also expressed concern about the amount of financial resources used to investigate reports, when the substantiation rate was lower in the state where mandated reporting has been implemented. Ainsworth concludes: "As a result of all of these factors mandatory reporting systems have to be characterized as inefficient and ineffective" (Ainsworth, 2002, p. 62).

Ainsworth's study has a number of limitations. His study is limited in scope, as it only assesses two states in Australia. It is difficult to draw conclusions that could be

applied to Canada due to differences in culture as well as differences in child welfare systems. Also of concern is that Ainsworth points to the high rate of un-substantiation as an indication that duty to report is ineffective. There are a myriad of other factors that come into play when a decision has to be made regarding whether or not abuse can be substantiated. Ainsworth (2002) acknowledges that his conclusion regarding mandated reporting having no effect on hospitalizations and deaths of children is based on limited evidence. Hospitalization rates for each state are not available in Australia, which makes comparison impossible. The way in which data regarding children's deaths was collected had changed and this also made comparison difficult (Ainsworth, 2002). Ainsworth (2002) was also not able to find many other empirical studies that support his conclusions.

Hutchinson (1993) has also voiced concerns regarding mandated reporting laws. In her discussion paper, she analyses and critiques the assumptions that lie behind mandated reporting. These assumptions include: 1) children need others to act for them, 2) parents who maltreat will not ask for service, 3) without reporting many children will not come to the attention of public agencies and 4) mandated reporting will lead to accurate reporting (Hutchison, 1993).

As for the first assumption, Hutchison does acknowledge that infants and the very young are not able to act on their own. Therefore, for these most vulnerable children, mandated reporting is essential. Regarding the second assumption, historically, we know that incidents of child abuse and neglect went unreported and the rights of children to grow up in a safe home environment were not recognized. Bala (1999) writes about parents that did not ask for help when their child had been physically abused:

> In the early 1960s physicians became aware of the "battered baby syndrome" and the problem of physical child abuse was "discovered." Doctors and agencies became aware that abusive parents would lie about the cause of injuries to young children, and that child protection workers had to carefully investigate parenting practices; this required agencies to take a more investigative and adversarial role with parents (Bala, 1999, p. 127).

Parents who were abusing their children were not likely to report that they were doing so. Regarding the third assumption, history also shows us that a significant proportion of child abuse cases went unreported. For example, the results from Russell's (1986) study of incest survivors clearly show that a very low proportion of cases were ever reported to the police.

> In our probability sample of 930 women, 648 cases of child sexual abuse before the age of eighteen were disclosed to our interviewers. Of these, only 30 cases – or 5 percent – were ever reported to the police: 4 cases of incestuous abuse and 26 cases of extrafamilial child sexual abuse. This represents 2 percent of all incest cases and 6 percent of all cases of extrafamilial child sexual abuse. These extremely low figures provide powerful evidence that reported cases are only the very tip of the iceburg (Russell, 1986, p.85).

As for the final assumption, that mandated reporting will lead to accurate reporting, this is not supported in the literature or by the experience of child welfare workers. However, this researcher would argue that mandated reporting increases the probability that children who are being abused or neglected will come to the attention of the Children's Aid Society.

The expectation for professionals is that they must report when they have 'reasonable grounds to suspect' that a child is in need of protection (Child and Family Services Act, RSO 1999, Chap. 11, Sec. 72(1), p.62). It is not their role to investigate the matter or determine if the report is accurate. This is left to professionals who are trained to complete this difficult task. Pointing to the rates of unsubstantiated cases is not a strong argument for changing reporting laws. The difficulty in substantiating cases is

based on a myriad of issues including lack of evidence. Inability to substantiate a report does not necessarily mean that abuse or neglect did not occur – only that sufficient evidence to support further involvement by child welfare personnel was unavailable.

A third author who presents a critique regarding mandated reporting is Professor Nicholas Bala. Bala criticizes the Ontario government for making changes to the Child and Family Services Act without spending enough time assessing the effectiveness of these changes (Bala, 1999). Bala raises an important point in that he does not believe that the problems related to under-reporting result from problems with the legislation. "Such problems as poor communication and mistrust between the C.A.S and other agencies and professionals in their communities, and lack of training and support for community professionals need to be addressed" (Bala, 1999, p. 165). Bala believes that legislative changes alone will not solve the issue of under-reporting.

Despite the criticisms of mandated reporting, there are concrete reasons why it has been implemented in Canada as well as in other parts of the world. As mentioned, these laws were developed in response to the realization that concerns regarding children were not coming to the attention of child protection agencies and children were suffering and at times dying as a result of the abuse that was being inflicted upon them. However, few empirical research studies can be found that provide sound research to support the claim that mandated reporting protects children. One study pointed to the drop in the rate of child mortality in New York as a result of reporting laws. "New York State experienced a 50 percent reduction in child fatalities within five years of passage of a comprehensive reporting law" (Whitelaw Downs, Moore, McFadden, Michaud, & Costin, 2004, p. 234). More research is warranted to ensure that children who are at risk

are receiving the protection they require. However, it is not feasible at this time to allow professionals to abandon their responsibility to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Although there is little empirical research that supports the claim that mandated reporting effectively protects children, professionals have a legal responsibility to report. As Hutchinson (1993) acknowledges "Choosing to overlook issues of family violence to avoid having to report them renders the professional ineffective, if not dangerous" (Hutchinson, 1993, p. 60). Professionals who choose not to report are taking the responsibility of protecting children into their own hands. In effect, they are making assessments about the safety of children when they do not have sufficient information or the appropriate qualifications to make such assessments.

Teachers' Reporting Behaviours

Several studies have shown that teachers do not report a significant proportion of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect directly to child welfare agencies (Abrahams et al., 1992; Kenny, 2001; O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole & Lucal, 1999). The information that was collected by the above named authors has come from a number of different sources, including teacher self-reports. A nation-wide survey of teachers in the United States provided the following results: 74% of teachers reported suspecting abuse, of which 90% indicated that they reported. This reporting rate seems high, however only 23% reported their concerns directly to Child Protective Services, while the rest reported to other school personnel (Abrahams et al., 1992). A limitation of this type of study is that it is difficult to know if these self-reports are accurate. Many professionals may be reluctant to admit that they have broken the law.

One manner in which researchers have attempted to address this limitation is by comparing teachers' self reports to their responses to case vignettes. For example, Kenny (2001) conducted a survey of teachers that included a questionnaire about their knowledge of child abuse laws and procedures and two case vignettes that were legally reportable. Only 11% of teachers reported that they had failed to report a suspicion of abuse, but their responses to the case vignettes suggested that a larger proportion may have actually failed to recognize the need to report suspicious cases.

> In the first vignette, in which the student confides in the teacher that her stepfather has been touching her, only 26% of the teachers would report this case to the child protective agency. However, 49% stated they would report to their school authorities (Kenny, 2001, p.88).

This study met an important objective by showing the differences between self-reports and actual behaviour.

Several other observations have been made about teachers' reporting behaviours. For example, although teachers make the largest proportion of reports to Children's Aid Societies, their reports have been found to have low substantiation rates. Kesner & Robinson (2002) found this to be true in their comparison of teachers to other mandated reporters in the legal, medical and social services fields. Other studies of teachers' reporting behaviours have found that teachers will often report to other school personnel (Abrahams et al., 1992; Kenny, 2001). Of concern is whether or not these reports eventually reach child protection authorities. In Ontario, the Child and Family Services Act was changed in 1999 in order to ensure that professionals are reporting directly to a Children's Aid Society. "A person who has a duty to report a matter...shall make the report directly to the society and shall not rely on any other person to report on his or her behalf" (Child and Family Services Act, RSO 1999, Chap. 11, Sec. 72(3), p.64). As no

studies that were conducted in Ontario could be found, there is a dearth of information regarding teachers' reporting behaviours from that jurisdiction.

Cultural Considerations

Researchers have examined cultural considerations with regards to teachers' reporting behaviours. Kenny's study (2001) found differences among teachers with various ethnic backgrounds. None of the African American teachers (11% of the entire sample) or African Caribbean teachers (0.5% of the entire sample) who responded to Kenny's survey had ever reported abuse. According to Kenny: "This may indicate a reluctance to abuse reporting based on cultural mores" (Kenny, 2001, p.88). Further explanation regarding the possible cultural mores that would promote a reluctance to report was not provided by Kenny. It is possible that this reluctance is related to a distrust of authority by marginalized groups. Another explanation may be differences in definitions of what constitutes child abuse or neglect. It is important to consider that the teachers surveyed came from a large, urban, diverse city in southwestern United States. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions that can be generalized to the larger population, as this study is limited in scope. In two studies reviewed that examined the issue of diversity, the race of the child was not found to be significantly related to the likelihood that they would come to the attention of child welfare agencies (Ards & Harrell, 1993; O'Toole, et al., 1999). Kesner & Robinson (2002) found the opposite to be true. In their comparison of teachers with mandated reporters in the legal, medical and social services fields, it was found that "educators reported significantly fewer African American children compared with medical personnel" (Kesner & Robinson, 2002, p.225).

Perceived Deterrents to Mandated Reporting

Out of concern regarding teachers' reporting behaviours and their low rate of reporting, researchers have attempted to determine the reasons behind these behaviours. A number of perceived deterrents have been identified. Teachers are often reluctant to report because of their negative impressions of child protection services. Many teachers believe that making a report will not help or that the report will cause more harm than good (Abrahams et al., 1992; Ards & Harrell, 1993; Edmundson & Collier, 1993; Tite, 1993). In a survey of teachers in the southeast of the United States, teachers reported that they did not feel child protection services assisted victims (Kenny, 2001). Some teachers believe that they are better equipped to protect a child than child protection authorities (Tite, 1993). Teachers have also cited fear of making an inaccurate report as a reason why they have not contacted a child protection agency (Kenny, 2001).

Definitions also present a problem. Teachers cite the difficulty in defining abuse as a deterrent to making a report, as many indicators of abuse are also symptoms of other child dysfunctions (Crenshaw et. al, 1995). There is no clear consensus of what constitutes abuse and neglect and therefore teachers are left confused (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Educators list several fears that prevent them from making a report. These include: the possibility of having one's professional judgment questioned, (Kesner & Robinson, 2002) fear of legal ramifications, fear of reprisal from parents and fear of reprisal on children (Abrahams et al., 1992). Other perceived barriers include a lack of support from a school board or principal (Abrahams et al., 1992; Kenny, 2002) and the professional's personal past experience with maltreatment (Ards & Harrell, 1993).

Many barriers that are identified are linked to inadequate education of teachers regarding identifying abuse and neglect and mandated reporting. Many teachers indicate that they received little to no training regarding abuse and reporting requirements while they were training for their career or following their entrance into the teaching profession (Abrahams et al., 1992; Reiniger, Robinson & McHugh, 1995). This leads to an inability to properly identify abuse and neglect (Hawkins & McCallum, 2001; Kesner & Robinson, 2002). It also leads to teachers being uncertain about their role in the process (Baginsky, 2000).

Canadian Study

Only one Canadian study was found that examined teachers' knowledge, compliance and attitudes towards child abuse reporting. Beck, Ogloff and Corbishley (1994) studied teachers in Lower Mainland British Columbia. The survey produced similar findings to the studies reviewed from the United States. There were 400 surveys mailed to teachers and the final sample consisted of 216 teachers. Of the teachers who responded, 16% acknowledged that they had suspected child abuse in the past year and decided not to make a report. The reasons cited for not reporting included: lack of evidence, belief that reporting would result in negative consequences for the child or family, lack of confidence in the child welfare system, and uncertainty regarding the definitions of abuse (Beck et al., 1994). Limitations of the study included a moderate response rate (56%), the fact that this study may not be generalizable to other jurisdictions, and that it is generally an investigation of reporting intentions rather than actual behaviours (Beck et al., 1994). The researchers used case vignettes in order to attempt to counterbalance the third limitation.

> Results indicated that teachers' age, educational background, grades taught, and years of teaching experience were not significantly related to any aspects of child abuse reporting we surveyed. Respondents' sex and level of information about child abuse issues, however, were significantly related to their knowledge scores and tendency to report the vignettes of child abuse (Beck et al., 1994, p.19).

Female teachers were more likely to report a case vignette that was related to neglect than their male colleagues. Teachers who had received more training regarding abuse were more likely to report to their local authorities.

How Training Impacts Reporting Behaviours

Studies that have investigated the effects of mandated training both in Australia and in the United States support the claim that training impacts reporting behaviours (Hawkins & McCallum, 2001; Reiniger, Robison & McHugh, 1995). The results of Hawkins & McCallum's (2001) study were summarized as follows:

> The training program increased participants' confidence in their ability to recognize the indicators of abuse, their awareness of their reporting responsibilities, their knowledge of what constitutes reasonable grounds for reporting, and of how to respond appropriately to a child's disclosure of abuse. Training also increased participants' acceptance of the incidence and seriousness of abuse (Hawkins &McCallum, 2001, p1603).

In order to study the effects of training, Kenny (2001) compared physicians' and teachers reporting behaviours. Differences were found between the two groups with the physicians having made significantly more reports. Physicians who participated in the study rated their preservice and professional training with regards to child abuse as more adequate than the teachers who were surveyed. This indicates that more adequate training may lead to greater compliance with mandated reporting.

Only one empirically based training program is reported in the literature. Donohue, Carpin, Alvarez, Ellwood & Jones (2002) evaluated the effects of training medical students to perform a standardized behavioural method of reporting child abuse.

Findings included improved interpersonal skills related to reporting child abuse. Results also indicated that participants found the intervention to be economical, relevant and effective. Studies involving educators with such a training program have not been conducted.

Many authors conclude their studies of teachers' reporting behaviours with a recommendation that more training regarding child abuse and reporting laws is required.

> Teachers play a critical role in preventing child abuse and in creating safe environments for children. To maximize this potential, current gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills must be addressed (Abrahams et al., 1992, p.236).

It is widely accepted that training will solve the problem of underreporting (Abrahams et al., 1992; Beck et al., 1994; Kenny, 2001). For example, Abrahams, Casey and Daro, (1992) whose study is often cited by other authors, reported findings from a national survey of teachers in the United States.

> The results of the National Teacher Survey highlight several shortcomings in the training and support available for teachers with respect to child abuse reporting and prevention. While the number of child abuse reports continue to increase and the majority of teachers indicate encountering cases of child abuse among their students, school systems are not sufficiently educating teachers on identifying, reporting, and preventing child abuse (Abrahams et al., 1992, p. 235).

The literature shows that teachers do not receive adequate training with regards to child abuse in general or the specific legal requirements to which they must adhere. "Unfortunately, many teacher education programs do not adequately educate pre-service teachers about the issues facing today's families" (Kesner et. al., 2002). Teachers themselves indicate that they do not believe they receive adequate training (Baginsky, 2000; Kenny, 2000 & Hinson & Fossey, 2000). Canadian researchers found a link between level of education and teachers' reporting tendencies.

> Level of information about child abuse issues was significantly related to teachers' reporting tendency. Specifically, teachers with substantial knowledge about child abuse were more likely to report both physical and emotional abuse than teachers with little information... It appears that informing teachers about their reporting responsibilities and providing professional training can be important factors in the decision-making process (Beck, 1994, p. 8).

Some authors believe that more training with respect to child maltreatment, not just procedures for reporting, is required (Kesner et al., 2002). Other authors provide specific guidelines for educating teachers.

> The data further suggest that training efforts must go well beyond ordering educators to report and giving them a hotline number. It must teach them to look at themselves as a first line of defence against child abuse, how to achieve reasonable suspicion, and ways to avoid extraneous issues which should not impact on their decision (Crenshaw et. al, 1995, p. 1111).

As was indicated above, it is widely accepted that training will solve the problem of underreporting. However, no empirical studies with regards to the effects of training educators could be found.

Summary

This literature review has included a critical analysis of a professional's duty to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Authors opposed to as well as in favour of this form of mandated reporting were cited. Review of this literature leads to the conclusion that underreporting leaves children at risk. Studies that revealed teachers' reporting behaviours were also outlined. Of concern is the high level of cases that are not reported to the appropriate child welfare agency. In response to this concern, several researchers have studied the perceived deterrents to mandated reporting and their findings were reviewed. Finally, studies that have touched on the relationship between training and reporting behaviours were described. Of the literature reviewed, only one Canadian

study was found. More research is required in this field that will provide the Canadian perspective on teachers' knowledge of and response to their duty to report.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Research Question

The research question addressed is: Does a training workshop developed by a local child welfare agency have an impact on teachers' and other school personnel's knowledge, attitudes, and intended behaviour with respect to reporting child abuse and neglect? Data was collected from teachers and other school personnel in the school board of a mid-sized, South-Western Ontario city. The board also has responsibility for rural areas surrounding this city. This study reports on a possible solution to the problem of underreporting (providing an educational workshop to teachers) and examines changes in knowledge, attitudes and intended reporting behaviour following the training compared with a pretest. This research contributes to the knowledge base regarding how teachers might be more effectively trained to meet their professional responsibilities to report suspected child abuse and neglect in a geographical area that has not been studied before. It is timely, as there have been recent changes to the Ontario Child and Family Services Act that mandate direct reporting by professionals. The ultimate goal of this research is to contribute to our understanding of how children at risk can be better served by the professionals with whom they come in contact on a daily basis, as well as by child protection agencies.

This one-group pretest-posttest study assesses the knowledge, attitudes and intended behaviours in participants before and after training. *Knowledge* can be conceptually defined as the information participants have about identifying child abuse and neglect and also their awareness of current reporting requirements. *Attitudes* involve the participants' thoughts and feelings about the current reporting requirements and the

child welfare system's response to referrals. *Intended behaviour* can be conceptually defined as the actions that an individual believes they will employ when faced with an allegation or suspicion of child abuse or neglect. These actions may include reporting to child protection authorities, reporting to school administration or choosing not to report. Teachers, principals, educational assistants, student teachers, early childhood educators and a secretary from three schools participated in this study. Prior to the presentation of a training session, staff members were informed about the purpose of the study and invited to complete a questionnaire. Following the training session the second part of the questionnaire was administered.

Specific Research Questions

Specific questions pursued during this study are as follows:

- How knowledgeable are teachers and other school personnel regarding their responsibilities to report child abuse or neglect? (Please see Appendix A, Part A (1), questions 1-4 and Part A (3), questions 1-6 of the questionnaire).
- Do teachers and other school personnel believe that the training they received regarding child abuse and neglect and reporting during teacher's college and in their professional careers to date was adequate? (Please see Appendix A, Part A, questions 5-6 of the questionnaire).
- Are teachers and other school personnel reporting their suspicions of child abuse and neglect appropriately? (Please see Appendix A, Part A(2), questions 4-5 of the questionnaire).

- Are teachers and other school personnel deciding not to report their suspicions? If so, what is influencing their decision? (Please see Appendix A, Part A(5) question 5 of the questionnaire).
- What are teachers' and other school personnels' attitudes towards their duty to report child abuse and neglect? (Please see Appendix A, Part A(4) questions 1-5 of the questionnaire).
- How does training impact teachers' and other school personnels' knowledge about reporting requirements? (Please see Appendix A, Part B(1) questions 1-5 and Part B(3) questions 1-2 of the questionnaire).
- How does training impact teachers' and other school personnels' attitudes towards their duty to report? (Please see Appendix A, Part B(2) questions 1-5 of the questionnaire).
- How does training impact teachers' and other school personnels' intended reporting behaviours? (Please see Appendix A, Part B(3) question 3 of the questionnaire).
- Do teachers and other school personnel want to receive more training? (Please see Appendix A, Part B(3) question 4 of the questionnaire).
- Are there any demographic variables (ie. years of teaching, level of education, gender, age, ethnicity) that are associated with teachers' and other school personnels' knowledge, attitudes or intended reporting behaviours? (Please see Appendix A, Part B(4) questions 1-7 of the questionnaire).

Design

A one-group pretest-posttest design is best suited for the research question (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). This type of design allows for comparison of a group before and after an intervention (pretest and posttest). In this case the intervention is the training session, the pretest is Questionnaire A and the posttest is Questionnaire B. It is a one-group design as it was not possible to enlist a comparison group. A large proportion of schools that were contacted declined to participate in the study. The researcher spoke to twenty-seven principals and twenty-four declined. In terms of a pretest-posttest design, the research question can be framed as follows: Is there a change in participants' knowledge, attitudes and intended behaviour with respect to reporting child abuse between pretest and posttest? The methodology is fixed (Anastas et. al., 1994) meaning that the questionnaire and the training session were created prior to the beginning of the study and were not altered as the study progressed.

Paradigm

The paradigm that frames this study is fallibilistic realism, which is also referred to as the heuristic paradigm. Fallibilistic realism proposes that: "there is a real world separate from the knower of it that can be studied empirically, at least 'in the appropriate conditions'" (Anastas et. al., 1994, p.19). This study examines the impact of training on teachers' and other school employees' knowledge, attitudes and intended reporting behaviours. According to fallibilistic realism, reality can be known, but only imperfectly due to the context within which a phenomenon is found. The particular context for an individual teacher or school employee who is confronted with a suspicion of abuse includes the school where they work, the administration to whom they report, their own

past experience with abuse as well as their past experiences with reporting child abuse or neglect. As a result of this context, drawing a direct link between training and reporting behaviours is difficult, if not impossible.

> According to fallibilistic realism, the goal of science is not to describe causal connections between variables in static contexts but rather to understand the fundamental properties of phenomena by describing them and how they act in the presence of other phenomena in closed or open systems (Anastas et. al., 1994, pp.24-25).

The conclusion of this study is not a statement about cause and effect nor does it provide results that are generalizable. According to fallibilistic realism, "Knowledge is also understood to be partial, or limited in its generalizability" (Westhues, Cadell, Karabanow, Maxweel & Sanches, 1999, p.141). The impact of the training seminar can be studied; however, this must be studied within the context of the real world. "...The goal of science becomes to understand how phenomena are structured and how they change" (Anastas et al., 1994, pp.21-22). Few researchers have attempted to describe how training impacts professionals' knowledge, attitudes and intended reporting behaviours. This study proposed to improve our understanding of this phenomenon, which is in keeping with fallibilistic realism.

Sample Recruitment

During the initial phases of developing this study, a school board in South-Western Ontario was approached and planning began for obtaining a sample of teachers from that board. Unfortunately a labour dispute made it impossible to collect data within the timeframes allowed for this study. A second board in the same area was approached and after the change was approved by the Research Advisory Committee of that board,

sample recruitment began. The name of the school board will not be revealed in order to protect the identity of the participants.

Due to issues related to financial and time constraints, a nonprobability sampling technique, convenience sampling, was used. "Convenience sampling, sometimes called availability sampling, relies on the closest and most available subjects to constitute the sample. This procedure is used extensively in social work research" (Grinnell, 1997, p.245). Convenience sampling fits the design of this study, as the researcher is not attempting to generalize the results to a larger population. As Anastas & MacDonald (1994) point out "the major advantage of such a sample is its feasibility" (Anastas et al., 1994, p.272).

There are approximately 1,300 elementary school teachers working for the participating school board. Due to time and financial constraints as well as difficulties obtaining participants, a relatively small sample of 61 participants was obtained. It was not possible to control for biases within the sample, as those who agreed to participate were accepted into the study. In this way, the sampling criteria were fairly open.

Once approved by the school board's Research Advisory Committee, the research officer contacted all principals of elementary schools working for the board, provided information about the study, including a letter of introduction written by the researcher, and informed them that they would be contacted to determine if their staff could participate. In choosing the schools to contact, the following selection criteria were used: the student population included kindergarten through grade eight and the schools' primary language of instruction was English. The principal investigator proceeded to contact twenty-seven schools. Five schools agreed to participate. Two schools later

withdrew due to scheduling difficulties. Some of the other reasons that were given for not being able to participate included: participation in other research studies this year and the timing of the study at a busy time in the school calendar. Attempts were made to schedule data collection during a less busy time of year however due to the labour dispute this was not possible. The principals who agreed to allow their staff to participate were provided with copies of an information letter and asked to distribute these to all staff who might attend the training session. Please see Appendix C for a copy of the information letter.

In designing the study the researcher originally had teachers in mind. As the study progressed and discussion occurred with school principals, it was determined that other school personnel would also be invited to participate. In total 61 school personnel, including teachers, principals, educational assistants, student teachers, early childhood educators and a secretary participated.

Pilot Testing

Prior to administering the questionnaire to the selected sample, it was pilot tested by six teachers known to the researcher. These teachers were not provided with the intervention, (the training session), as it was designed by a child welfare agency and for the purposes of the study was not altered. Feedback was, however, obtained regarding the questions chosen for the questionnaire, the wording of the questions and the time frame required to complete the questionnaire. This feedback was used in order to make final alterations to the questionnaire.

Data Collection

The data collection method used in this study is a questionnaire. The use of a questionnaire is possible as the phenomena of interest was specified and defined prior to the beginning of data collection (Anastas et al., 1994, p.368). A limitation of this form of data collection is that it relies upon self-reports. It is difficult to determine if the individual who completes the questionnaire is answering the questions truthfully or whether or not actual behaviour is reflected in the responses. Professionals may not be willing to admit that they have failed to report when they have suspected child abuse or neglect as this may go against social mores and is punishable by law. This tendency may in part be curbed by the anonymity offered by this form of data collection. According to Anastas & MacDonald: "the...most important advantage of the self-administered questionnaire is that it is sometimes easier for people to answer *threatening questions* privately on paper than to speak the answers aloud to someone else" (Anasatas et al., 1994, p.369, (Italics in original). Other advantages to using self administered questionnaires as a form of data collection include the fact that it is more cost effective than face-to-face interviews and it usually provides a higher response rate than mail surveys (Grinnell, 1997).

The questionnaire that was used in this study was developed by the researcher and incorporates questions from two studies related to teachers' reporting behaviours, (Beck et al., 1994 & Kenny, 2001). The questionnaire has face validity as well as content validity. The questionnaire was vetted by experts in the field as well as academics. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire that was administered.

Various types of questions were used throughout the questionnaire. Three, four and five point, Likert scales were used in order to elicit the opinions of the respondents. Participants were also asked to provide qualitative comments in order to explain their responses. Language barriers were not considered to be a significant factor in the development of the questionnaire, as participants were selected from schools where English is the primary language of instruction. It is therefore assumed that the informants were capable of understanding and responding to the questionnaire. Parts A and B of the questionnaires were labelled with corresponding identification codes. These numbers were not connected to the teachers' names and therefore could not identify the participants.

The confidentiality of the participants was treated with the utmost respect. Teachers would have been unlikely to reveal whether they have failed to make a report to the Children's Aid Society if they perceived any chance that they would be identified, as this could result in legal ramifications. To ensure confidentiality and the protection of the participants, no identifying information was collected, (i.e. teachers were not asked to record their names, addresses or the schools they work in on the questionnaire). It was essential that the informed consent of the individual participants was obtained prior to the collection of data. A copy of the consent form was attached to the questionnaire to ensure all participants had the opportunity to read it. They were also provided with a copy for their records. Their decision to complete the questionnaire indicated their informed consent. The participants' names were not revealed to the researcher and the name of the school board will not be identified in any written reports. Some responses from the questionnaire are quoted in this report. Participants were informed that only

responses that would not identify them in any way would be used in the report. Please see Appendix B for a copy of the consent form.

Questionnaire Administration

The principal researcher attended each of the three participating schools in April and May 2005. The rooms where the study took place allowed for each informant to have enough space to write. Considerations such as adequate lighting and minimizing possible distractions were also taken into account. The researcher read aloud a brief synopsis of the purpose of the study, and provided participants with a consent form. Consenting participants completed Part A of the group-administered questionnaire. Please see Appendix D for a copy of the synopsis that was read to the participants. The synopsis was altered slightly for the one school that completed the pretest and postest on two separate days.

After completing Part A of the questionnaire, the participants were provided with a training seminar from an employee of the local Children's Aid Society. Once the seminar was finished, the participants were asked to complete Part B of the questionnaire. Part A took approximately fifteen minutes to complete. Part B took approximately ten minutes to complete. The training seminar itself was approximately forty-five minutes in length.

Staff from two of the three schools were able to complete the pretest, training and posttest on the same day. Due to time constraints, this process was split in two for a third school. In splitting the process three participants were unable to complete the posttest due to scheduling conflicts. Therefore, at total of 61 participants completed the pretest questionnaire, and 58 participants completed both the pretest, and posttest questionnaires.

Training

The training that was provided to the participants was conducted by three social workers from a local Children's Aid Society. These individuals provide training sessions to various community organizations on a regular basis. The training was in the form of a Power Point presentation that was developed by staff and administrators at the Children's Aid Society. Please see Appendix E for a summary of the main topics that were covered by the training. In order to minimize differences between the training seminars, the principal researcher met with each of the trainers to review the presentation and ensure that the same information would be presented. One of the trainers had in fact taught the presentation to one of the other trainers. Topics that were covered included: the purpose of the Child and Family Services Act, definition of duty to report, consequences for failing to report, the reporting procedure, what constitutes a child at risk and the steps of an investigation. Please see Appendix E for a more detailed list of the topics covered. The participants also had the opportunity to ask questions during and after the training seminar. Due to technical difficulties at one of the three schools, an overhead projector was used. The same slides and information were however provided.

Ethics Review

In preparing this study several ethical considerations were thought to be important. First is the issue of informed consent.

> Informed consent means that the potential participants themselves make decisions about whether to participate and that sufficient information about the program be provided to enable them to weigh all the alternatives. If a person is misled or not given enough information about the risks involved, then informed consent has not been given (Posavac, 1997, p.88).

At any time during the study a subject had the right to withdraw without penalty, and was informed of such. A consent form outlining the participants' right to withdraw at any time as well as their right to confidentiality was provided; please see Appendix B for a copy of this form.

Prior to obtaining the sample, The Research Ethics Board at Wilfrid Laurier University reviewed the researcher's proposal and found it to be ethically sound. This study was also approved by the Research Advisory Committee at the participating school board. The researcher made herself available to speak to representatives from the participants' union. The Research Advisory Committee of the participating board did not deem this necessary. The research proposal was also reviewed and approved by a representative of the local Children's Aid Society. All stakeholders involved were asked for their input throughout the study, and the researcher made herself available for questions and suggestions.

There were no known physical risks regarding this research. A potential emotional risk that was identified was regret over failing to report suspected child abuse or neglect. In order to minimize this risk, participants were provided with the phone numbers of local child welfare agencies in case they wished to discuss any concerns they may have had for a child. They were also provided with other resources they might consult should they want further information about child abuse and neglect and reporting requirements. This list included the phone numbers for local child welfare agencies as well as other literature. Please see Appendix B, the consent form, for the contact numbers and resource list. The resources are listed on the bottom of page two. School personnel may have experienced some emotional discomfort as they reflected on their

past reporting behaviours (or lack thereof), however this reflection may have assisted them in making changes to their behaviours.

Given the potential sensitivity of the results, (i.e. information regarding educators choosing not to report a concern) the researcher undertook that all reports of the study would present both positive and negative results in a fair and balanced manner, and that the limitations of this study would be made clear. A summary of the research findings will be made available to participants through their respective principals. Presentations will be made available to the local child welfare agency and the local school board.

Data Analysis

The researcher developed a rating scheme in order to code the correctness of the answers to questions about knowledge of reporting requirements. In order to minimize rating bias, six Master's level students were enlisted to score the knowledge section of the questionnaires. Each of these students had prior child welfare experience in the province of Ontario. In order to further minimize rating bias, the raters were not informed which questionnaires were the pretest and which were the posttest. The questionnaires were distributed evenly among the raters. All 6 raters scored 10 of the questionnaires in order to determine inter-rater reliability. They scored three pretests and seven posttests. The mean scores that were given by each of the six raters are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

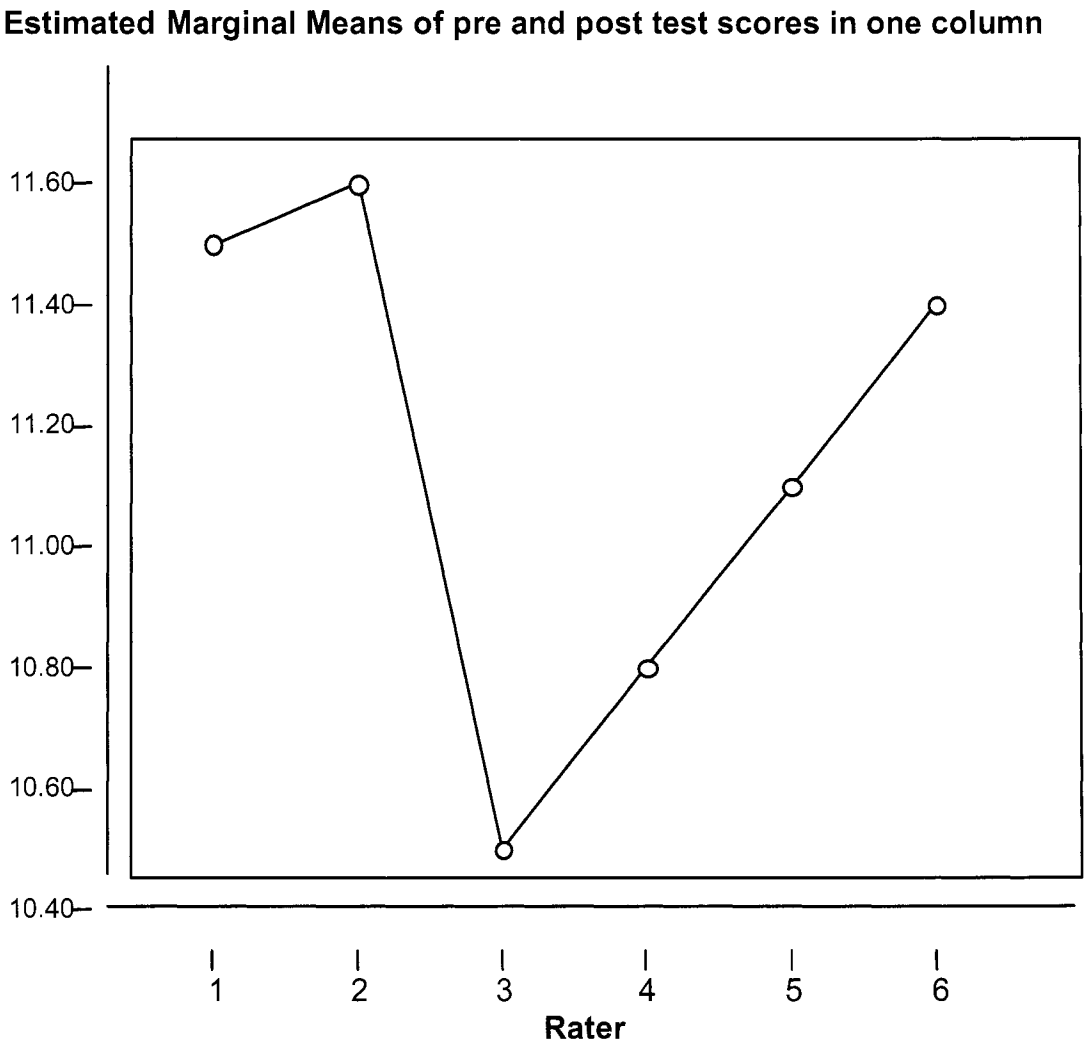
Mean Scores of 10 Questionnaires by Rater

Dependent Variable: pre and posttest scores in one column

	Rater	Mean	Std. Deviation
Score	1	11.50	2.461
	2	11.60	2.366
	3	10.50	2.068
	4	10.80	2.616
	5	11.10	2.644
	6	11.40	2.413
	Total	11.15	2.364

The mean scores ranged from 10.5 for rater three and 11.6 for rater two. The estimated marginal means of the pretest and posttest scores were plotted in a graph that is displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1:



A two-way analysis of variance, ANOVA was used to calculate the probability that any differences in mean scores between raters were due to random chance or sampling error. The table was six by ten, as there were six raters who scored ten questionnaires. The scores that each rater provided for each of the ten questionnaires are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

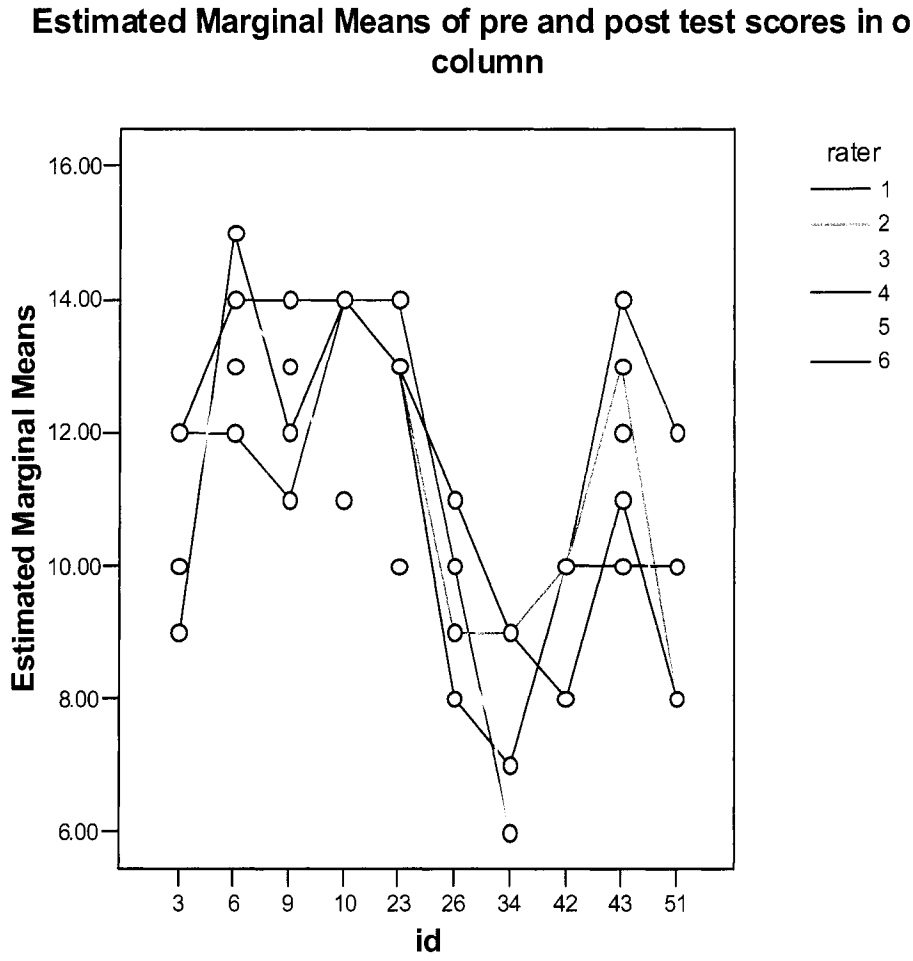
Mean Knowledge Scores by Rater for 10 Participants

Dependent Variable: pre and posttest scores in one column

Rater	id	Mean	rater	id	Mean	rater	id	Mean
1	3	12.000	3	3	12.000	5	3	10.000
	6	12.000		6	13.000		6	14.000
	9	11.000		9	13.000		9	13.000
	10	14.000		10	11.000		10	14.000
	23	14.000		23	10.000		23	13.000
	26	10.000		26	9.000		26	11.000
	34	6.000		34	7.000		34	6.000
	42	10.000		42	10.000		42	10.000
	43	14.000		43	12.000		43	12.000
	51	12.000		51	8.000		51	8.000
2	3	12.000	4	3	9.000	6	3	12.000
	6	14.000		6	15.000		6	14.000
	9	14.000		9	12.000		9	14.000
	10	14.000		10	14.000		10	14.000
	23	13.000		23	13.000		23	13.000
	26	9.000		26	8.000		26	11.000
	34	9.000		34	7.000		34	9.000
	42	10.000		42	10.000		42	8.000
	43	13.000		43	10.000		43	11.000
	51	8.000		51	10.000		51	8.000

In order to make sense of these scores, they are displayed graphically in Figure 2. The lines in the graph indicate a general trend among raters. In other words, there was general agreement among raters.

Figure 2:



Tests of between subject effects were conducted in order to determine the proportion of the variance that can be explained by the raters versus participants. The F value for participants was 17.1, which is significant ($p < .001$). The F value for raters was not significant. This means that variance is explained by individual differences between participants, not by the differences between raters. In conclusion, there was inter-rater reliability.

For the ten cases that were used to determine inter-rater reliability, it was necessary to randomly select one questionnaire of the questionnaires that was marked by

all six raters so that one score from each questionnaire could be used for further data analysis. This was accomplished with the assistance of http://www.random.org, which generates random sequences.

The computer program, SPSS, has assisted with the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data regarding knowledge scores, demographics, past training experience, prior reporting experience, attitudes towards duty to report and the degree to which participants believed that the training impacted the probability that they will report suspected child abuse and neglect. Where appropriate, means and standard deviations were calculated. Scores were graphed and tables were created in order to allow for ease of comparisons.

A paired t-test was used to determine if the differences between pretest and posttest knowledge scores were significant. Similarly, to investigate whether there were significant differences between pre and post assessment of attitudes towards child abuse reporting, a paired t-test was employed with data asking about participants' opinions about child abuse reporting.

Several statistical tests, including: correlation, one-way ANOVA, t-tests and chi-square, were used to determine the association between demographics and participants' responses to questions related to their knowledge, attitudes and reporting behaviours. Finally, content analysis of the qualitative data was conducted.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter presents characteristics of the sample and the results of the data analysis. The description of the sample includes demographic information, grades taught, duration of employment in the education field, and participants' assessment of prior training regarding child abuse and neglect and reporting requirements. Each of the ten research questions is subsequently addressed and the results are presented through the use of tables, charts and diagrams.

Characteristics of the Sample

The sample consisted of 61 participants, from three elementary schools belonging to a large school board in South-Western Ontario. The size of the student populations of the three schools ranges from 230 to 425 students. Of the three schools, two draw from low to middle income families. The third school draws from highly educated professional families who have middle to high incomes. Only one of the three schools appears to have a fairly diverse population, with approximately 30 families who speak a language other than English or French at home. In total 41 teachers, 3 principals, 8 educational assistants, 6 student teachers, 2 early childhood educators and 1 school secretary participated. Table 3 displays the demographic information for this sample.

Table 3

Demographic Information

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	8	13.1
Female	51	83.6
Missing	2	3.3
Total	61	100.0
Profession		
Teacher	41	67.2
Principal	3	4.9
Educational Assistant	8	13.1
Student Teacher	6	9.8
Early Childhood Educator	2	3.3
Secretary	1	1.6
Highest Degree Obtained		
Master's Degree	11	18.0
Bachelor's Degree	35	57.4
College Diploma	8	13.1
Some University	2	3.3
Missing	5	8.2
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	49	80.3
African Canadian	1	1.6
East Asian	1	1.6
Missing	10	16.4

The majority of participants (83.6%) were female ranging in age from 23 to 56, with a mean age of 37. These statistics are similar to those of the entire participating elementary school board, which employs 85% female teachers and 15% male teachers. Ages of teachers from the entire board range from 20 to 69. As expected, participants in this study were well educated. A total of 75.4% of participants have completed a university degree, with 18% having completed a Master's. Most participants identified themselves as Caucasian, with only two participants (3%) identifying themselves as members of minority groups. Statistics regarding the ethnicity of employees within the entire board were not available. The 44 teachers and principals who participated were

asked to record the year they graduated with their teaching degree. Answers ranged from 1971 through to 2004 with close to 65% of participants graduating since 1990. Years of teaching experience ranged from 1 to 34 with a mean of 10 years and a mode of 5. Table 4 displays the grades that participants have taught. The sum is greater than 44 because many participants have taught at more than one grade level.

Table 4

Grades Taught by Teachers and Principals

Grades Taught	Frequency
Primary/Junior: Kindergarten – Grade 6	30
Junior/Intermediate: Grades 4-6	30
Intermediate/Senior: Grades 6-13	22

Participants were also asked about the training they have received regarding identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. As shown in Tables 5 and 6 a significant portion of teachers and principals received no such training in teacher's college (40.9%). Of the participants who did receive training, 29.5% reported they received less than one hour regarding identifying abuse and neglect; in terms of training regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect 36.4% said they received less than one hour. This indicates that the majority of participants received little or no training during teacher's college regarding how to respond when they have a concern about a child.

Table 5

Training Regarding Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect in Teacher's College

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None	18	40.9
	Less than one hour	13	29.5
	1-3 hours	5	11.4
	4 hours or more	2	4.5
	Can't remember	6	13.6
	Total	44	100.0

Table 6

Training Regarding Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in Teacher's College

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None	17	38.6
	Less than one hour	16	36.4
	1-3 hours	4	9.1
	4 hours or more	1	2.3
	Can't remember	6	13.6
	Total	44	100.0

The amount of training teachers and principals have received since beginning their careers is displayed in the tables (Tables 7 and 8) below. These statistics indicate that more training has occurred since their careers have begun; however, it appears that overall, the majority of participants have received little training.

Table 7

Training Regarding Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect Since Beginning Teaching

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None	7	15.9
	Less than one hour	17	38.6
	1-3 hours	13	29.5
	4 hours or more	6	13.6
	Can't remember	1	2.3
	Total	44	100.0

Table 8

Training Regarding Reporting Since Beginning Teaching

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None	8	18.2
	Less than one hour	16	36.4
	1-3 hours	15	34.1
	4 hours or more	4	9.1
	Can't remember	1	2.3
	Total	44	100.0

Research Questions

The overall research question addressed by this study was: Does a training workshop developed by a local child welfare agency have an impact on teachers' and other school personnel's knowledge, attitudes and intended behaviour with respect to reporting child abuse and neglect? Each of the individual research questions will now be addressed.

1) How knowledgeable are teachers and other school personnel regarding their responsibilities to report child abuse or neglect? (Please see Appendix A, Part A (3), questions 1-6 of the questionnaire).

Participants were asked if they were aware that a child abuse reporting law exists in Ontario. Almost all respondents, 96.7% indicated yes, they were aware of this fact. One teacher and one student teacher indicated that they were not aware of the reporting law.

Table 9

Are you aware that a child abuse reporting law exists in Ontario?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	59	96.7
	No	2	3.3
	Total	61	100.0

Participants were then asked five questions in order to assess their specific knowledge of the current reporting law. The pretest score reported participants' knowledge prior to the training seminar. The highest possible score was 15 and the lowest possible score was 0. As shown in Table 10, the mean score for the pretest was 8.91 with a standard deviation of 3.02. The lowest score received was 3/15 and the highest score received was a full 15/15.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Knowledge Pretest Score	61	12	3	15	8.91	3.02

A variety of responses were given to each of the five knowledge questions. For example, more than twenty different answers were provided to the following: "In order to make a report of child abuse, how certain should the reporter be?". Some participants

stated it was *not* necessary to be certain, merely concerned. Others indicated that a reporter should be 100% or 80% certain. Still others wrote that there should be evidence, valid proof or strong indications of abuse.

2) **Do teachers and other school personnel believe that the training they received regarding child abuse and neglect and reporting while training for their career and in their professional careers to date was adequate? (Please see Appendix A, Part A(1), questions 5-6 of the questionnaire).**

Participants rated the adequacy of the training they received prior to beginning their career and since beginning their career. They did so by circling a response between 1 and 10 on a Likert scale. Possible responses ranged from 1) "The training I received was inadequate"; to 10) "The training I received was more than adequate".

Table 11

Adequacy of training regarding child abuse and neglect and reporting while preparing for a career in education: Entire Sample

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Answered 1-5 on 10 point Likert Scale	45	73.8
	Answered 6-10 on 10 point Likert Scale	7	11.5
	Not Applicable	1	1.6
	Total	53	86.9
Missing	Missing	8	13.1
Total		61	100.0

Out of the entire sample, 53 participants responded to the question related to the training they received prior to beginning their career. Of these 53 participants, 73.8%

chose between 1 and 5 on the Likert scale, with a mean score of 1.2, indicating that the majority did not think the training they received while preparing for their career was adequate. When analyzing the responses from teachers and principals separately, there were similar results. As indicated in Table 12, 75% of teachers and principals circled between 1 and 5 on the Likert scale. The mean score was 1.1.

Table 12

Adequacy of training regarding child abuse and neglect and reporting while in teachers college: Teachers and Principals

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Answered 1-5 on 10 point Likert Scale	33	75.0
	Answered 6-10 on 10 point Likert Scale	5	11.4
	Total	38	86.4
Missing	Missing	6	13.6
Total		44	100.0

Of the other school personnel who responded to this question, 70.6% circled between 1 and 5 on the Likert scale, while 11.8% circled between 6 and 10 with a mean score of 1.3. The large majority of teachers, principals and other school personnel thought the training they received regarding their responsibilities to report child abuse and neglect prior to working in education was inadequate.

Table 13

Adequacy of training regarding child abuse and neglect and reporting while preparing for a career in education: Other School Personnel

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Answered 1-5 on 10 point Likert Scale	12	70.6
	Answere 6-10 on 10 point Likert Scale	2	11.8
	Not Applicable	1	5.9
	Total	15	88.2
Missing	99	2	11.8
Total		17	100.0

Regarding the adequacy of the training participants have received since beginning work, 63.9% circled between 1-5 on the same Likert scale while 21.3% circled between 6-10, with a mean score of 1.5. This indicates that a slightly higher number of participants believed that the training received since beginning work was adequate. However a large proportion of the sample continued to express dissatisfaction with the training they have received. There were eight participants who indicated that this question was not applicable to them and 1 response was missing.

Similar results were found when the data collected from teachers and principals were separated from the data collected from the rest of the sample. Of the teachers and principals who responded, 70.5% circled between 1-5 on the scale. The mean score for these professionals was 1.3.

Table 14

Adequacy of training regarding child abuse and neglect and reporting since beginning work: Teachers and Principals

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Answered 1-5 on 10 point Likert Scale	31	70.5
	Answere 6-10 on 10 point Likert Scale	11	25.0
	Not Applicable	1	2.3
	Total	43	97.7
Missing	Missing	1	2.3
Total		44	100.0

A total of 17 participants were labelled 'other school personnel'. Of this group, 10 indicated a response to the question about their satisfaction with the training they have received since beginning their career. Of these respondents, 47.1% circled between 1-5 and 11.8% circled between 6-10, with a mean score of 1.9. Although the mean is still quite low, these results suggest that more of these individuals may consider the training they have received since being employed in education to be adequate. However, comparison is risky because of the small number of participants who answered this question. One reason for this is that six individuals who were classified as other school personnel are student teachers and this question does not apply to them.

Table 15

Adequacy of training regarding child abuse and neglect and reporting since beginning work: Other School Personnel

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Answered 1-5 on 10 point Likert Scale	8	47.1
	Answered 6-10 on 10 point Likert Scale	2	11.8

3) Are teachers and other school personnel reporting their suspicions of child abuse and neglect appropriately? (Please see Appendix A, Part A(2), questions 1-5 of the questionnaire).

Participants were asked a series of questions about their reporting experiences to determine if they were reporting their suspicions appropriately. They were asked how many times they have suspected child abuse or neglect and how many times they reported their suspicion to a school official or to the Children's Aid Society. They were also asked how much time passed between their initial suspicion and their report. It is difficult to know from this data whether school personnel are reporting appropriately because there was a change in the reporting requirements in the year 2000. Up until that time, principals or other school officials could report suspicions to a child welfare agency on behalf of someone else. The Child and Family Services Act now mandates direct reporting. As the questionnaire did not ask participants to indicate when they suspected and/or reported a concern, it cannot be determined if they were complying with the legislation. This is a limitation of the questionnaire.

As shown in Table 16, answers ranged from 0 to 20 for the number of times participants had suspected that a student was being abused or neglected, with 20% of

participants indicating that they had never had a suspicion and 8.3% indicating their suspicions numbered 20. The mean number of suspicions was 3.8 with a standard deviation of 5.5. The most frequent response was one incident of suspicion, which was reported by 25% of the sample.

Table 16

Number of suspicions

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	12	19.7
	1	15	24.6
	2	10	16.4
	3	5	8.2
	4	3	4.9
	5	5	8.2
	6	2	3.3
	10	3	4.9
	20	5	8.2

As shown in Table 17, when asked how many times they had reported their suspicion to a principal, vice-principal or guidance department, 30% reported 0 times, which was the most frequent response. The mean number of reports that were made to a school official was 3.0 with a standard deviation of 4.6.

Table 17

Number of reports to principal, vice-principal or guidance department

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	18	29.5
	1	12	19.7
	2	8	13.1
	3	6	9.8
	4	5	8.2
	5	4	6.6
	6	1	1.6
	7	1	1.6
	10	2	3.3
	20	3	4.9
	Total	60	98.4
Missing	Missing	1	1.6
Total		61	100.0

In response to the question: "How many times have you personally reported your suspicions to a Children's Aid Society", 63.9% indicated 0 times. This indicates that very few participants have made direct reports. As indicated, it is difficult to determine if school personnel were acting appropriately as it was acceptable for school officials to make a report on others' behalf up until the Child and Family Services Act was changed in 1999. The mean number of reports to a Children's Aid Society was 0.97 with a standard deviation of 2.7. As shown in Table 18, one respondent indicated that he or she made 20 reports to a Children's Aid Society. This respondent was a principal who most likely has made reports on behalf of other staff from his or her school.

Table 18

Number of reports to CAS

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	39	63.9
	1	12	19.7
	2	5	8.2
	3	1	1.6
	4	1	1.6
	5	2	3.3
	20	1	1.6

Participants were asked if they had ever reported a concern to the Children's Aid Society, how much time passed between when they initially suspected child abuse or neglect and when the suspicion was reported. As shown in Table 19, of those who responded, 52.5% reported that they had never made a report, while 24.6% indicated that they had reported either on the same day or the day after their initial suspicion. Finally, 21.3% reported that they had reported anywhere between a few days and several weeks after they initially suspected abuse or neglect. This indicates that approximately one fifth of the sample have waited some period of time before reporting their suspicion. Under the current legislation individuals are required to report their suspicion 'forthwith', or in other words, immediately (Chid and Family Services Act, RSO, 1999, Ch.11, Sect. 70(4) p.62).

Table 19

Time passed Between Suspicion and Report to CAS

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Same Day	11	18.0
	Following Day	4	6.6
	Within 1 Week	6	9.8
	1 Week	3	4.9
	Several Weeks	4	6.6
	Never Made a Report	32	52.5

Correlation coefficients were computed between number of years as an educator and number of suspicions as well as number of reports to school officials and to child protection agencies. The results were not significant. This indicates that for the population studied, as number of years in the profession rose, number of suspicions and number or reports did not also rise.

4) **Are teachers and other school personnel deciding not to report their suspicions? If so, what is influencing their decision? (Please see Appendix A, Part A(2) question 5 of the questionnaire).**

When asked if they had ever suspected child abuse and decided not to report to a Children's Aid Society or a school official, 29.5% of all respondents indicated 'Yes'. As shown in Table 20, of the teachers and principals who responded, 34.1% indicated 'Yes', they had decided not to report.

Table 20

Decided not to report: Statistics from Teachers and Principals Only

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	15	34.1
	No	29	65.9
	Total	44	100.0

Table 21

Decided not to report: Statistics from Other School Personnel

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	3	17.6
	No	14	82.4
	Total	17	100.0

Although there were fewer participants who can be classified as 'other school personnel', the differences in responses between that group and the group of teachers and principals are of interest. As shown in Table 21, only 17.6% of the other school personnel indicated that they have decided not to report a suspicion, in comparison to 34.1% of the teachers and principals. A chi-square test was completed in order to determine if there was a significant association between position and decision not to report. The differences were not significant.

Participants who indicated that they had decided not to report were asked to explain what influenced their decision. A number of themes can be identified in the responses that were given. Five participants (8.2%) indicated they decided not to report because a principal, supervisor or other administrator advised them not to. Five participants (8.2%) indicated that they did not report because they felt they did not have adequate information. Two teachers, (3.3%) expressed concern about the child welfare system and believe that reporting could cause more harm than good. For example one teacher indicated the following: "Previous report had been made, but CAS did a very limited follow up at that time. Assumed if I also reported not much would be done to follow up with child". On a similar line, some participants stated they were concerned that a report would cause more harm than good for the child. One teacher wrote the following:

> "Weighing all things, reporting is risky for the child. Especially in cases where abuse/neglect leaves no physical marks. Also, there isn't much support. The reporter often gets "burned". Nothing changes for the child. They stay with abuse and I have to watch. You accept in despair".

Finally, one teacher indicated that they did not report because they were afraid of repercussions they may encounter from the child's parents.

5) **What are teachers' and other school personnel's attitudes towards their duty to report child abuse and neglect? (Please see Appendix A, Part A(4) questions 1-5 of the questionnaire).**

In order to elicit information concerning participants' attitudes towards their duty to report they were asked to rate their agreement with five statements. In response to the statement: "I believe that the child abuse reporting law is necessary", 91.8% of participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement while 4 participants, or 6.6% indicated that they strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that almost the entire sample believes that the reporting law is indeed necessary. See Table 22.

Table 22

Pretest: I believe that the child abuse reporting law is necessary.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	6.6
	Undecided	1	1.6
	Agree	13	21.3
	Strongly Agree	43	70.5
	Total	61	100.0

In response to the statement: "In my professional opinion, I can conceive of a case when I would ***not*** report suspected child abuse", 23% agreed or strongly agreed while 32.8% were undecided and 41% disagreed or strongly disagreed. See Table 23.

Table 23

Pretest: In my professional opinion, I can conceive of a case when I would *not* report suspected child abuse.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	18.0
	Disagree	14	23.0
	Undecided	20	32.8
	Agree	12	19.7
	Strongly Agree	2	3.3
	No Answer	2	3.3
	Total	61	100.0

A number of examples were provided of circumstances when teachers and other school personnel would not report their suspicions. Two participants indicated they would not report if they did not believe the child was telling the truth. A teacher wrote that: "Sometimes (i.e. a custody dispute) a child may be "coached" to report inaccurate information". On a similar note, a principal stated: "Child is known to lie/fabricate stories/manipulate truth and falsely accused T[eachers/E[ducational] a[ssistant]s in the school".

Responses were similar to those recorded to a previous question that asked respondents to explain why they had decided not to report in the past. These responses included: dissatisfaction with the child welfare system and fear of repercussions for the child. For example, one teacher indicated: "I know that reporting child abuse is a problem in some cases because we worry that the child will receive worse treatment when family is notified". Fear was also expressed regarding possible repercussions from the parents towards school personnel: "Fear of parents reactions. We as teachers have no protection from hostile parents". After receiving the training one teacher wrote that

knowledge of the possibility that a professional could be fined could influence his or her decision. There were two participants who indicated that an administrator had advised them not to report. For example, one teacher wrote: "I have been in situations where an intimidating authority figure forbid the call and refused support". An Educational Assistant expressed similar concerns: "It is very scary to report when a principal orders you not to. If I was ordered not to I would need to feel fairly certain in order to go ahead". Finally some participants indicated that they might not report if there was not enough evidence or information.

A third statement was used to elicit participants' opinions regarding the actions that are taken by the child welfare system after a report is made. Participants ranked their level of agreement to the following: "To me it seems that the child abuse reporting law is insensitive to the possibility that reporting can cause more harm than good for the child". In response to this statement, 21.6% of participants agreed or strongly agreed, while 51.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 25% were undecided. See Table 24.

Table 24

Pretest: To me it seems that the child abuse reporting law is insensitive to the possibility that reporting can cause more harm than good for the child.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	11.5
	Disagree	24	39.3
	Undecided	15	24.6
	Agree	8	13.1
	Strongly Agree	5	8.2
	No Answer	2	3.3
	Total	61	100

Many participants provided further comments in order to explain their responses. A number of respondents provided strong statements regarding the importance of reporting. Some themes that can be identified throughout these responses include: reporting is not harmful, school personnel have an obligation to protect children and it is in the best interest of the child. A principal wrote: "Need to err on side of the child". An Educational Assistant indicated: "Immediate response is necessary in all cases to ascertain what the next stage of response should be". Another participant, a teacher, indicated: "We need to do what we can to protect children". Another Educational Assistant stated: "It is in the best interest of the child to have the report investigated and either confirmed or recorded as not evident".

In contrast, a number of participants explained why they believed reporting could cause harm. Responses can be categorized as follows: false allegations could harm parents, parents may lie and continue abusing their children, the child welfare system's approach is faulty, the law is inadequate and parents may punish their children for disclosing. One teacher who circled 'strongly agree' indicated the following: "After a report has been made, the child will probably still remain in their home, which would cause more abuse". Another teacher is concerned about the manner in which CAS investigates reports: "I have never seen effective action as a result of calls. I call, CAS visits, child never discloses again!" An Educational Assistant also expressed fear regarding children's safety following the initiation of an investigation: "I have experienced CAS calling before checking a home, and the child saying they got it worse after. Trust is then also breeched between you and the child". A second Educational Assistant wrote the following:

> "I know they are sensitive to this but don't believe they have procedures in place to protect against this. Due to CAS going into the home (and giving parents a warning call 1st) I have witnessed children refusing to trust/speak to staff any more. The child also reported getting it worse after they left about a week later".

Other participants expressed some concern about reporting but indicated that they felt that it was necessary. For example, a teacher wrote: "Unfortunately these situations are very sensitive but not dealing with the issue would be worse". One teacher felt strongly about the procedure that should be taken once an investigation has begun: "I believe the child should be removed from the home until it can be proven one way or another".

Finally the participants who circled 'undecided' regarding the possibility that more harm could be done by reporting indicated that reporting was stressful and that it depends on how the child welfare system handles the investigation. For example an Educational Assistant indicated: "The reporting law is necessary to help children who cannot help themselves, yet being involved in a CAS case can prove stressful and detrimental to the child".

In response to the statement: "People in my profession should ***not*** be required to report all cases of suspected child abuse", 83.6% of participants indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that a large majority of the sample believes that they should report all cases of suspected child abuse.

Table 25

Pretest: People in my profession should not be required to report all cases of suspected child abuse.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	22	36.1
	Disagree	29	47.5
	Undecided	8	13.1
	Agree	1	1.6
	No Answer	1	1.6
	Total	61	100.0

Some participants provided explanations for their responses. There were a number of themes apparent in the responses given by individuals who believe that people in their profession should report. These themes included: they have a professional, moral and/or legal obligation, the consequences for omission are too great, and school personnel spend a great deal of time with children. The following are some examples of responses:

"We have a lot of contact with students and they may disclose info to us. It is our professional responsibility to report it". (Teacher)

"Our profession has a vital responsibility to care for kids and look out for their well-being". (Principal)

"If school staff did not report cases abuse could be prolonged over a number of years without being reported". (Teacher)

"We all need to report. Principals should not have the right to give you their opinion to report or not to report though". (Educational Assistant)

"Because it is law, it gives us protection to report". (Teacher)

Other participants who also believed that they should report indicated some hesitancy. For example one teacher wrote: "In the interest of the child, it should be reported,

however the person reporting needs some anonymity if working directly with the family". One teacher expressed disappointment with the system: "What is the line? I can't say we should not, but I see very little point in calling much of the time". A second teacher who circled disagree also expressed hesitancy: "Funding and red tape has made the system very weak in terms of dealing with real life situations. It seems that theory and protocol has little to do with reality".

When presented with the following statement: "I believe that the current reporting law/system in Ontario is effective in addressing cases of child abuse", 41.7% of respondents were undecided. This question elicited the largest proportion of undecided responses of the entire questionnaire. In response to the same statement, 28.3% of respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 28.3% agreed or strongly agreed. See Table 26.

Table 26

Pretest: I believe that the current reporting law/system in Ontario is effective in addressing cases of child abuse.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	6.6
	Disagree	13	21.3
	Undecided	25	41.0
	Agree	14	23.0
	Strongly Agree	3	4.9
	No Answer	1	1.6
	Total	60	98.4
Missing	Missing	1	1.6
Total		61	100.0

6) How does training impact teachers' and other school personnel's knowledge about reporting requirements? (Please see Appendix A, Part A(3) questions 2-6 and Part B(1) questions 1-5.

In order to determine if the training participants received had an impact on their knowledge about reporting requirements, participants were asked the same five questions before and after the training seminar. The highest possible score for the knowledge section was 15 and the lowest possible score was 0. The mean score for the pretest was 9.0 with a standard deviation of 3.1. The mean score for the posttest was greater than the pretest at 11.4, with a standard deviation of 1.95. See Table 27.

Table 27

Knowledge Scores Pre and Posttest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Knowledge Pretest Score	58	3	15	9.03	3.08
Knowledge Posttest Score	58	7	15	11.38	1.95

A paired t-test was used to test whether there were significant differences between pre and post training knowledge scores. The t-test indicated that there was a significant difference between the knowledge scores at time one and time two; $t = -5.499, 57,$ $p < .001$. This suggests that training had an impact on participants' knowledge of their responsibilities to report their concerns regarding a child.

7) How does training impact teachers' and other school personnel's attitudes towards their duty to report? (Please see Appendix A, Part A(4), questions 1-5 and Part B(2) questions 1-5 of the questionnaire).

Participants were asked to rank their agreement to five statements in order to elicit their attitudes towards their duty to report. These questions were repeated during the posttest. The first statement was: "I believe that the child abuse reporting law in Ontario

is necessary". Fifty-three participants, (91.4%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement prior to receiving training. Fifty-six participants, (96.5%) agreed with the same statement after receiving training. Almost the entire sample indicated that they believed that the reporting law is necessary prior to training and even more participants agreed with this statement after the training. See Table 28.

Table 28

Pretest/Posttest: Reporting law is necessary.

		PRETEST: Frequency	PRETEST: Percent	POSTTEST: Frequency	POSTTEST: Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	6.9	2	3.4
	Undecided	1	1.7	0	0.0
	Agree	13	22.4	14	24.1
	Strongly Agree	40	69.0	42	72.4
	Total	58	100.0	100.0	100.0

A paired t-test was used to compare the mean responses at time one and time two: prior to receiving training and after receiving training. The hypothesis that was tested was the following: Posttest scores on attitudes will be significantly higher than pretest scores. The null hypothesis was: There will be no difference between pretest and posttest scores. Training will have no impact on participants' attitudes towards their duty to report. There was not a significant difference between time one and time two. Therefore we cannot reject the null hypothesis. Training does not appear to have made a difference to participants' belief about reporting. As there was large agreement to the necessity of the law in the first place, there was not much room for change. The means at the two time points are displayed in Table 29.

Table 29

Paired Samples Statistics: Reporting Law is Necessary

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Pair 1	A)Reporting law is necessary.	4.47	1.063
	B)Reporting law is necessary?	4.62	.813

The second statement about which participants were asked to rate their agreement was the following: "I can think of a case I would not report". There was more variability of responses to this statement than there was to the first attitude statement. Prior to the training seminar 41.4% of respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, while 62.1% had the same response following training. On the other hand, 24.1% agreed or strongly agreed at time one, while 15.5% agreed at time two. See Table 30.

Table 30

Pretest/Posttest: I can think of case I would not report.

		PRETEST: Frequency	PRETEST: Percent	POSTTEST: Frequency	POSTTEST: Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	19.0	20	34.5
	Disagree	13	22.4	16	27.6
	Undecided	19	32.8	11	19.0
	Agree	12	20.7	9	15.5
	Strongly Agree	2	3.4	0	0.0
	No Answer	1	1.7	0	0.0
	Missing	0	0	2	3.4
	Total	58	100.0	58	100.0

The results of the paired samples t-test comparing the responses at pre and post training indicated that there was a significant difference between the responses to the above-mentioned statement before and after receiving training ($t = 3.194, 57, p < .002$).

This suggests that training had an impact on participants' beliefs that they could think of a case they would not report. Significantly fewer participants believed they could think of a case they would not report following training.

Table 31

Paired Samples Statistics: I can think of a case I would not report.

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	A)I can think of case I would not report.	2.72	1.196
Posttest	B)I can think of case I would not report.	2.29	1.284

Participants were also asked whether or not they agreed that the reporting law is insensitive to the possibility that reporting can cause more harm than good for the child. Prior to receiving the training seminar 22.4% agreed or strongly agreed, while 12% agreed or strongly agreed after receiving the training. (See Table 32). The percentage of participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement at time one was 50%. Following the training seminar, 70.7% indicated that they did not believe that reporting could cause more harm.

Table 32

Pretest/Posttest: Reporting can cause more harm than good.

		PRETEST: Frequency	PRETEST: Percent	POSTTEST: Frequency	POSTTEST: Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	12.1	12	20.7
	Disagree	22	37.9	29	50.0
	Undecided	14	24.1	10	17.2
	Agree	8	13.8	5	8.6
	Strongly Agree	5	8.6	2	3.4
	No Answer	1	1.7	0	0.0
	Total	57	98.3	58	100.0
Missing	System	1	1.7	0	0.0
Total		58	100.0	58	100.0

A paired t-test comparing the pre training and post-training responses to this statement was significant ($t = 3.636, 56, p < .001$). It appears that training had an impact on respondents' attitudes regarding the harm that reporting may or may not cause. Fewer participants thought that reporting could cause harm following the training compared with before the training. Means and standard deviations at the two time points are shown in Table 33.

Table 33

Paired Samples Statistics: Reporting can cause more harm than good.

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	A)Reporting can cause more harm than good.	2.74	1.22
Posttest	B)Reporting can cause more harm than good.	2.25	1.01

There was general agreement among participants regarding whether or not teachers and other school personnel should have to report. At time one, 82.8% of

respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: "People in my profession should ***not*** have to report suspected child abuse". This percentage rose to 93% at time two.

Table 34

Pretest/Posttest: Teachers should not have to report.

		PRETEST: Frequency	PRETEST: Percent	POSTTEST: Frequency	POSTTEST: Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	22	36.1	32	52.5
	Disagree	29	47.5	22	36.1
	Undecided	8	13.1	4	6.6
	Agree	1	1.6	0	0.0
	No Answer	1	1.6	0	0.0
	Missing	0	0.0	3	4.9
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 35

Paired Samples Statistics: Teachers should not have to report.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	A)Teachers should not have to report.	1.88	57	.927	.123
Posttest	B)Teachers should not have to report.	1.51	57	.630	.083

The results of the paired samples t-test comparing the responses at pre and post-training indicated that there was a significant difference between the responses to the above-mentioned statement before and after receiving training ($t = 3.848, 56, p < .001$). Therefore it appears that training had an impact on participants' beliefs regarding their obligation to report, with fewer participants continuing to think that teachers should not have to report suspicions of child abuse and neglect following the training.

Finally, participants were asked to rank their agreement with the following statement: "I believe that the current reporting law/system in Ontario is effective in

addressing cases of child abuse". Prior to receiving the training seminar, 29.3% agreed or strongly agreed, while following the training seminar, 56.9% agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 36

Pretest/Posttest: Current reporting system is effective.

		PRETEST: Frequency	PRETEST: Percent	POSTTEST: Frequency	POSTTEST: Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	5.2	0	0
	Disagree	12	20.7	7	12.1
	Undecided	24	41.4	17	29.3
	Agree	14	24.1	23	39.7
	Strongly Agree	3	5.2	10	17.2
	No Answer	1	1.7	0	0.0
	Total	57	98.3	57	98.3
Missing	System	1	1.7	1	1.7
Total		58	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 37

Paired Samples Statistics: Current reporting system is effective.

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	A)Current reporting system is effective.	3.09	1.023
Posttest	B)Current reporting system is effective.	3.67	.970

It appears that training also had an impact on participants' beliefs regarding the effectiveness of the current reporting system. The results of the paired samples t-test comparing the responses at pre and post training indicated a significant difference between the responses to the above-mentioned statement before and after receiving

training (t = -4.828, 56, p < .001). Participants were more likely to believe that the current reporting system is effective following the training.

8) How does training impact teachers' and other school personnel's intended reporting behaviours? (Please see Appendix A, Part B(3) question 3 of the questionnaire).

More than half of the respondents indicated that they were more likely to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Aid Society after receiving the training provided (65.5%). On the other hand, 34.5% indicated that the training would have no impact on their reporting behaviours. None of the respondents chose the following option: "I am less likely to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Aid Society".

Table 38

Impact of Training on Intended Reporting Behaviours

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	I am more likely to report.	38	62.3
	This training will have no impact on my reporting behaviours.	20	32.8
	missing	3	4.9
	Total	61	100.0

9) Do teachers and other school personnel want to receive more training? (Please see Appendix A, Part B(3) question 4 of the questionnaire).

When asked whether they wanted to receive more training about duty to report and about child abuse, as shown in Table 39, 50% of respondents indicated 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' while, 27.5% indicated that they did not want to receive any more training and 22.4% were undecided. This indicates a split among participants. As they were not asked to provide an explanation for their response it is difficult to determine if those who are undecided were leaning more towards one response or the other.

Table 39

I would like to receive more training.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	3.3
	Disagree	14	23.0
	Undecided	13	21.3
	Agree	25	41.0
	Strongly Agree	4	6.6

Participants were asked to indicate the topics they would like to have covered at future training sessions. A number of participants indicated they would like to be provided with specific examples of what should be reported. Others stated they thought that regular training would be useful in order to review information they may have forgotten as well as to inform new staff of their reporting responsibilities. Several participants stated that they would like to learn about signs or red flags that they should be looking for. Others wanted to learn more about how to respond to a child's disclosure, procedures and what is reportable. An educational assistant suggested that written materials of the information that was presented be provided to the school. Finally, a

teacher suggested that perhaps further training was not required, but that a forum where school personnel could ask questions about specific cases or particular scenarios would be helpful.

10) Are there any demographic variables (ie. years of teaching, level of education, gender, age, ethnicity) that are associated with a teacher's or other school personnel's knowledge, attitudes or intended reporting behaviours? (Please see Appendix A, Part B(4) questions 1-7 of the questionnaire).

A number of statistical tests were used to identify any relationships between the independent variables, demographics and the dependent variables, knowledge, attitudes and intended reporting behaviours. As this sample is relatively homogeneous, with only two respondents identifying themselves as members of minority groups, analyses of associations between ethnicity and the dependent variables could not be calculated.

Results indicate that overall, there was no relationship between the demographic characteristics of the sample and the participants' knowledge scores. The Pearson's correlation between years teaching and knowledge of reporting requirements was not significant indicating that participants' knowledge of their responsibility to report concerns regarding a child was not associated with the number of years they have been working in the field of education. Age and knowledge scores were also not significantly correlated.

A one-way ANOVA test was used to examine whether there was an association between level of education and knowledge scores. The relationship was not significant. An independent t-test was used to examine the association between gender and participants' knowledge scores. The results were not significant.

Pearson's correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between number of years teaching and participants' responses to each of the attitude questions. Among the 61 school personnel participating in the study, the correlation between number of years teaching and the question related to the effectiveness of the current reporting system was $r = + 0.341$ (n= 56) $p = 0.010$. This means that those respondents who had been teaching longer were more likely to report that the current reporting system is effective. The relationship between number of years teaching and each of the other four attitude questions was not significant.

Pearson's correlation was also used to determine the relationship between age and each of the attitude questions. The correlation between age and participants' responses to the statement regarding the effectiveness of the current reporting system was $r = 0.269$, n=60 $p = 0.05$, which indicates that older participants were more likely to rate the current reporting system as effective. A statistically significant relationship between age and the other four attitude questions was not present.

In the process of conducting the above-mentioned correlations, it was discovered that there were two pairs of attitude statements that were positively correlated. The correlation between the following statements: 'Reporting can cause more harm than good' and 'Educators should not have to report', was $r = 0.323, p = 0.012$. The correlation between the statements: 'Reporting can cause more harm than good' and 'I can think of a case I would not report', was $r = 0.548, p < 0.01$. These findings further support the comments participants made on the questionnaire suggesting that the decision not to report a suspicion of child abuse or neglect is associated with perceptions that reporting can cause more harm than good.

Chi-square was used to determine the association between gender and each of the five attitude questions. A significant relationship was present between gender and participants' opinions regarding the reporting law being necessary, $X^2 = 13.368$, $df=4$, $p = 0.010$. See table 40. Males were more likely to be undecided about this statement. However, seven of the nine cells had an expected count less than 5 indicating that the results may not be valid. There were only eight men and fifty-one women. A more balanced sample in terms of gender would be required to examine gender differences reliably.

Table 40

Reporting Law is Necessary: Gender Crosstabulation

Gender	Disagree
Male	
Count	0
% Within Gender	0.0%
Female	
Count	3
% Within Gender	5.9%

Gender	Undecided
Male	
Count	1
% Within Gender	12.5%
Female	
Count	0
% Within Gender	0.0%

Gender	Agree
Male	
Count	7
% Within Gender	87.5%
Female	
Count	51
% Within Gender	94.1%

Table 41

Chi-Square Tests: Reporting Law is Necessary * Gender

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.878(a)	2	.032
Likelihood Ratio	4.904	2	.086
Linear-by-Linear Association	.002	1	.966
N of Valid Cases	59		

a 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .14.

A significant difference was not present between male and female responses to each of the other four attitude statements.

Finally, a series of statistical tests were used to determine the relationship between the sample's demographic characteristics and participants' perception of change in intended reporting behaviours following the training. A chi-square analysis was calculated to determine if gender was related to whether or not participants were more likely to report following training. The result of the test was not significant. A chi-square was also calculated to determine if level of education was related to whether or not participants were more likely to report following training. The results were not significant.

An independent t-test was used to calculate the strength and direction of the relationship between years teaching and perceived change in intended reporting behaviours as a result of training. The relationship between the two variables was not significant. An independent t-test was also used to see if there is an association between age and participants' perception of the impact of training on their intended reporting behaviours. The results were also not significant.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The main findings of this study are that training had a significant impact on the knowledge, attitudes and intended reporting behaviours of teachers and other school personnel. The chapter begins with discussion of the participants' knowledge of their duty to report prior to receiving the training seminar. Next, the teachers' and other school personnel's reporting behaviours and attitudes towards their duty to report prior to training are addressed. Next, the specific impact of training in this study is considered, followed by discussion of the tests of relationships between the demographic factors and the participants' knowledge, attitudes and intended behaviours. The chapter ends with discussion of the limitations of this study and implications for professional practice.

Knowledge of Duty To Report Prior to Training

Almost all participants in this study were aware of their duty to report child abuse and neglect before receiving training. This is interesting to note especially because most participants reported that they had received little to no prior training. Other studies have also reported that teachers receive very little training regarding reporting while preparing for their careers and even after entering the profession (e.g. Abrahams et al., 1992; Reiniger, Robinson & McHugh, 1995). It is also of interest that a large proportion of the participants felt that the training they had received up to that point was inadequate. These findings are of concern as studies have shown that lack of adequate training leads to an inability to properly identify abuse and neglect (Hawkins & McCallum, 2001; Kesner & Robinson, 2002) as well as uncertainty about the referral source's role in the process (Baginsky, 2000). The findings of this study indicate that there is much room for

improvement in terms of providing training to teachers and other school personnel, and in designing training that they perceive as adequate.

Participants' scores ranged from 3 to 15 out of a total possible score of 15 on the knowledge section of the questionnaire. Several explanations for the range in scores are possible. Some participants may have gained knowledge regarding reporting from actually having to report during their career in education. Some others may have received recent and/or thorough training regarding reporting or have informed themselves through the use of the World Wide Web or other resources. It is interesting to note the number of different responses that were given to each of the five questions. See Results, Question 1, page 35. This finding speaks to the complexity of the issue of reporting and the variety of information and possible misinformation professionals in the community have acquired. The mean knowledge score for participants at the first testing was 8.92. This relatively low score suggests that participants may be unaware of their responsibilities under the law or in some cases may misunderstand their responsibilities.

Reporting Behaviours

As was indicated in the literature review, the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect that was conducted in 1998, found that the most common source of referral was from school personnel, who reported 21% of maltreatment investigation referrals (Trocme et. al., 2001). Given this fact, it was somewhat surprising that 20% of the sample in this study had never suspected abuse and another 25% had only suspected abuse on one occasion. Reporting rates also seemed somewhat low as 63.9% stated that they had never made a report to a child protection agency while another 19.7% had only reported on one occasion. This is in spite of the

fact that the average amount of time participants have been in the teaching profession is ten years. It is difficult to determine the reasons behind these rates. It may be that this particular sample is not representative of teachers in general, or that rates of abuse and neglect in this geographical area are lower than in areas previously studied. Another possibility is that the participants are not accurately remembering the number of times they suspected abuse or neglect.

It appears that school personnel are more likely to report their concerns to a school administrator than to a child protection agency. This is indicated by a lower percentage (30%) of respondents who have never made a report to a school official as opposed to respondents who have never made a report to a Children's Aid Society (63.9%). Furthermore, 58.3% have made between 1 and 5 reports to a school official. Other studies of teachers' reporting behaviours have also found that teachers will often report to other school personnel (Abrahams et al., 1992; Kenny, 2001). This is of concern as it may indicate a reluctance to call a child protection agency. If this is the case, this reluctance may delay the initiation of a child protection investigation and in turn delay any assistance to the child and his or her family. Furthermore, in some cases a reluctance to contact a Children's Aid Society directly may result in the report never being made. As indicated previously, there are administrators who actively discourage teachers and other school personnel from reporting. Principals who participated in this study presented as (for the most part) compliant with the mandated reporting law. However, one principal did report that he or she had decided not to report following a suspicion.

Many teachers within the sample (34.1%) have suspected abuse or neglect and chosen not to report. Beck et al., (1994) found that 16% of participants had suspected abuse in the past year and not reported. It is difficult to draw a direct comparison between the two studies, as participants in this study were not asked to record when their suspicions occurred. This finding is similar to results from other studies in the field, (Abrahams et al., 1992; Kenny, 2001; O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole & Lucal, 1999) however the percentage of the sample that has decided not to report was in some ways unexpected. It seems to be in contrast with the fact that an overwhelming majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I believe that the child abuse reporting law in Ontario is necessary". Perhaps this is an indication of the differences between beliefs and actual behaviours. Also surprising, was the difference between the number of teachers who indicated they had decided not to report (34.1%) and the other school personnel who had made the same decision (17.6%). It would be interesting to determine if this remained the case within a larger sample. One can speculate that school personnel such as educational assistants and student teachers may be less likely to decide not to report a suspicion because they receive regular supervision from teachers, and might feel less free than teachers and principals to make such a decision.

Participants provided a number of explanations for why they decided not to report. These explanations included: an administrator instructing the individual not to make the report, lack of information, concerns about the child welfare system, fear of repercussions for the child and fear of repercussions against themselves as reporters. These responses speak to the difficult position school officials find themselves in when they suspect that a child is at risk. Their decision to report may be influenced by many

competing values and pressures. Participants' explanations for deciding not to report were quite similar to those that have been provided by participants in several other studies (Abrahams et al., 1992; Ards & Harrell, 1993; Edmundson & Collier, 1993; Kenny, 2001; Tite, 1993). The change in the law in 1999 in Ontario that requires professionals to report suspicions directly to the CAS and not to another person in their employing institution complicates the collection of accurate data regarding appropriate reporting. Future studies will need to find a way to resolve this dilemma.

Attitudes Towards Duty to Report Prior to Training

The questions posed in order to elicit participants' attitudes towards their duty to report produced several interesting findings. Three questions in particular seemed to draw out a range of responses. In response to the statement: "In my professional opinion, I can conceive of a case when I would ***not*** report suspected child abuse", participants were divided. Among those who responded that they could indeed think of a case they would not report, a general feeling of fear was evident. Participants' feared that their decision to report could lead to negative consequences for the child or for themselves as reporters. Dissatisfaction with the system was a common response. A few participants indicated that they did not report as they lacked information or felt they lacked enough evidence about the abuse. Others stated that they did not report because the child was known to lie or presented as being coached during a custody and access dispute. These findings support the results of other similar studies (Abrahams et al., 1992; Ards & Harrell, 1993; Edmundson & Collier, 1993; Kenny, 2001; Tite, 1993). These findings are also quite similar to the one other Canadian study that has been conducted in this area (Beck et al., 1994). The perception that they lacked sufficient evidence to make a report,

of course, reflects misunderstanding of the law. Teachers are not required to have evidence of child abuse or neglect. They are required only to report their suspicions and the reasons for those suspicions. It is the responsibility of the CAS to determine whether there is evidence of child abuse or neglect. Participants who indicated that they did not report, as they believed that the child was coached during a custody and access dispute, are also reflecting misunderstanding of the law. When a child is coached to distort the truth in the context of a custody and access dispute they are at risk of emotional harm and this in and of itself is cause to make a report to a child welfare agency. It is also not the responsibility of the concerned professional to determine if the child is lying or telling the truth.

A second statement that produced a variety of responses was: "To me it seems that the child abuse reporting law is insensitive to the possibility that reporting can cause more harm than good for the child". Respondents who provided qualitative data to explain their responses seemed to feel quite strongly one way or the other. In fact, this question produced the greatest amount of written explanations out of the entire questionnaire. A common theme that was apparent in both groups (those who agreed and those who disagreed) is the desire to protect their students. All participants who stated that they disagreed explained that they must do what they can to protect children. On the other hand, many participants who agreed with the statement indicated that they would not report because they felt that reporting would cause more harm to the child. The vast majority expressed their desire to do what is in the best interest of the child. It is clear that the participants of this study were very concerned about the children with whom they

came into contact. The disagreement lies in the method that will achieve "the best interests of the child".

A great deal of ambivalence among participants regarding the effectiveness of the current reporting system is evident. Prior to the training seminar 41.7% of respondents indicated that they were undecided about whether or not the current system is effective. The other respondents were split evenly between 'agree' and 'disagree'. This finding suggests that Children's Aid Societies may need to do more to educate teachers and other school personnel about the effectiveness of the current system.

Impact of Training

It is widely accepted that training will solve the problem of underreporting (Abrahams et al., 1992; Beck et al., 1994; Kenny, 2001). Training has been shown to make a difference in health care workers' reporting of suspected abuse. As this hypothesis has not been tested extensively with regards to educators' reporting behaviours, this study set out to determine if training does indeed make a difference with this population. The results indicate that the training offered as part of this study did have a significant impact on school personnel's knowledge regarding reporting requirements, attitudes of participants' towards their duty to report and their intended reporting behaviours.

It is encouraging to find that the participants reported more knowledge about their responsibilities around reporting child abuse and neglect following the training, especially in light of Beck's (1994) findings that teachers with substantial knowledge about child abuse are more likely to report. Although it was not possible to do so in this study, it would be important to learn if participants' gain in knowledge actually has a

long-term effect on their reporting behaviours. This is an empirical question to be addressed by future research.

It is also interesting to note that compared to the pretest, there were significant differences in responses towards four out of five of the attitude questions following the training. Participants seem to have been convinced by the trainers that reporting is necessary and that in most cases good consequences will come from reporting. It would be logical to assume that these changes in attitudes regarding reporting would lead to an increase in reporting behaviours. However, further study is required to test this assumption.

The majority of participants (65.5%) indicated that they would be more likely to report their suspicions following the training seminar. This finding is also encouraging, as past research has shown that reporting may decrease the likelihood that a child will suffer further harm (Hutchinson, 1993). However, a substantial proportion of respondents (34.5%) stated that the training would have no impact. This could mean that this group of participants believed that they were already reporting effectively. It may also mean that approximately one third of participants were not convinced of the merits of reporting.

Effects of Demographic Variables

Demographics that were collected from the sample included: gender, age, ethnicity, education and years of experience. These were collected in order to determine if there were any characteristics of participants that were associated with their responses on the questionnaire. As the results indicate, none of the demographic characteristics were significantly correlated with participants' knowledge scores at pretest or with the

perceived impact of training on their intended reporting behaviours. It would be interesting to determine if this were also the case with a larger sample. These findings do not support those of Beck et al., (1994) who found a significant relationship between gender and knowledge scores.

School personnel's age and number of years teaching were significantly related to their beliefs regarding the effectiveness of the reporting system in Ontario. As number of years in the teaching profession rose so did the likelihood that respondents would indicate that the current system is effective. It is logical that this would also be the case for the age of participants as well, as age and number of years in the profession would be strongly correlated. It may be the case that individuals with more years of experience have received more training. As training seems to influence attitudes towards reporting, individuals who have been in the profession for longer periods and who have possibly received more training, may be more likely to view the reporting system in a positive light. It is also likely that individuals who have been working longer would have had more encounters with the child welfare system. It is surprising to note that this was not the case for this sample. A significant correlation between number of years of experience and number of reports to a child welfare agency did not exist. This is concerning as perhaps it is an indication of a reluctance to report. Further research is required to determine if more experience with reporting would result in a more positive view of the effectiveness of the system. These findings may also be explained by the ability of educators with more experience to refer back to the reporting system prior to various legislative and policy changes. These individuals may view the current system as more effective when comparing it to past reporting requirements (or lack there of).

A significant correlation was also present between gender and participants' responses to the attitude statement related to the necessity of the reporting system. Males in the sample were more likely to indicate they were undecided (12.5%) than were females (0%). It is difficult to make any inferences from these statistics, as there were so few male participants. Even with a larger sample, the number of males in comparison to females could continue to make interpretation difficult given the relatively small number of male elementary school teachers.

Limitations

As in all studies, this study has a number of limitations. Given the small sample, and the fact that data was collected in only one large South-Western Ontario school board, it will not be possible to generalize findings to other populations. Also, participants were teachers and other school personnel employed only in elementary school settings. This sampling criterion also limits the generalizability of the findings to other grade levels. Furthermore, the sample did not include many school personnel from diverse backgrounds and is therefore probably not representative in terms of ethnic diversity of the larger population of individuals who live in the geographical area of study. It is unclear whether the sample is representative of the teachers and other school personnel who work for the school board from which the sample was drawn.

Another issue related to sampling is the fact that the sample was obtained by asking principals to permit the teachers and other school personnel reporting to them to participate in the study. This may have resulted in a bias if only principals who have similar opinions regarding mandated reporting agreed to have their schools participate. There is also the question of whether or not participants responded honestly to the

questions regarding their past reporting behaviours. Due to the social desirability effect of responding appropriately to a suspicion of child abuse, respondents may have been reluctant to identify incidents when they failed to do so. However, the fact that some participants reported that they had not reported all cases in which they suspected abuse suggests that participants did feel that their anonymity was sufficiently protected that they could be honest.

During the design phase of the study, steps were taken to provide the training to a large number of teachers and school personnel on one occasion only in order to control for any differences in information that might be presented if the training were offered on different dates. Because of the labour problems, this opportunity was not possible and the training had to be provided on three separate occasions by three separate trainers. As a result, in preparing for the training seminars much care was taken to ensure that each of the three schools was provided with identical information in the presentation. The same Power Point presentation that is used by the local Children's Aid Society to educate other professionals in the community was used by each of the trainers. The principal researcher also met with each of the three trainers to discuss the content of the presentation and ensure continuity. It was, however, impossible to control for the differences in the individual presenting styles. It was also not possible to control for the questions that were asked by participants, which may have influenced other participants' responses on the questionnaire.

A further limitation is the timing of the posttest. Since the posttest was administered immediately after the training seminar the long term effects and implications of the training cannot be measured. Ideally, this study would have provided

more accurate results with respect to behaviour if it had been possible to conduct a posttest several months following the training to determine if reporting behaviours had indeed changed. The timing of the posttest in this study meant that participants could only be asked about their intended reporting behaviours. Also of concern is the fact that the method had to be altered for one of the three schools. Since the posttest was administered one week after the prettest for this particular school there are a number of confounding variables that may have impacted the participants' answers. For example, participants may have consulted with each other and influenced each other's answers to the posttest. There also may have been information in the media that triggered certain responses. This was indeed the case for one teacher who indicated that if he suspected abuse he would call the Children's Aid Society or Crimestoppers as he had learned this from a news program during the week between the pretest and the training.

A limitation of the design of the questionnaire includes the fact that when participants were asked if they had made a direct report or reported to a school administrator they were not asked when this report occurred. It is not possible to determine if participants followed the proper procedures at the time they suspected abuse or neglect as the legislation changed in 1999 and now requires direct reporting. Future studies would provide more accurate results if the timing of the reports (at least the year in which the report was made) were to be recorded.

Implications for Future Research

Future studies could build on the results that have been discussed in a number of ways. A study employing a larger sample of teachers and other school personnel and from several school boards could produce findings that would allow for greater

generalizability. If the findings from a larger sample were similar to the findings in this study, they would provide considerable support for the need for more training of teachers and other school personnel. A control group of teachers who did not receive the training would also help to clarify whether it is, in fact, the training that leads to an increase in knowledge and change in attitudes or some other factor. It may also be interesting to conduct the study with other professionals (ie. doctors, nurses, early childhood educators) in order to determine if there are any similarities or differences in responses. As mentioned, a longitudinal study with more than one posttest would provide information about the long-term effects of training. More research is required to enrich the Canadian perspective on teachers' knowledge of and response to their duty to report.

Although there are a number of limitations inherent in this study, it is unique in that it provides information regarding the reporting behaviours, knowledge and attitudes of school personnel in a geographical area that has not been studied before. The findings from this study are similar to those from research that has been conducted in the United States as well as in Western Canada, indicating that school personnel in Southwestern Ontario may be similar to those in other areas in terms of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.

Implications for Professional Practice

As this study has demonstrated that training has a significant impact on the knowledge and attitudes of educators regarding their duty to report, it supports the importance of providing training to all educators. It has been shown that it is not uncommon for educators to report that they receive little to no adequate training regarding their duty to report. As training influences the knowledge, attitudes and

behaviours of educators, it will influence their responses to a child in need of protection. Teachers and other school personnel are in a unique and unparalled position to identify and report concerns regarding a child and it is crucial that they receive adequate training.

Some participants who had decided not to report a suspicion spoke of negative past experiences with reporting. These negative experiences seemed to be influencing the likelihood that professionals would report in the future. Although the confidentiality of clients must be maintained by Children's Aid Societies, providing more information to schools about the reasons why actions are or are not taken may go far to improve professionals' attitudes towards the current system. Understanding on the part of front-line child protection workers is needed regarding the stress and anxiety that professionals may be experiencing when they do make a report. Educators must also be made aware of the constraints within which child protection workers must work. Perhaps it would be helpful, as one participant pointed out, to provide a forum at which child protection workers and educators could discuss issues regarding reporting. These forums may dispel misinformation and create stronger relationships between professionals in both fields.

The training that was provided to the three participating schools seemed to bridge a gap between teachers and child protection workers. It is possible that the relationship that was developed between the trainer and the participants, even though it was a short encounter, may have influenced participants' attitudes towards reporting. The fact that 65.5% of the sample indicated that they were more likely to report following the training seems to indicate that this type of training provided something that school personnel were missing up until this point.

The ultimate goal of this research was to contribute to our understanding of how children at risk can be better served by the professionals with whom they come in contact on a daily basis, as well as by child protection agencies. This study suggests that training influences educators' knowledge, attitudes and intended reporting behaviours. Therefore, it is recommended that the child welfare system collaborate with the education system in the development of a comprehensive training program for educators during their academic training and in their ongoing training and development on the job.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
A

Part 1: Past Training Experience

Please circle your answers.

1. How much training did you receive regarding how to identify ***child abuse and neglect*** when you were in teacher's college?

None **Less than 1 hour** **1-3 hours** **4 hours or more**

2. How much training did you receive regarding ***reporting*** child abuse and neglect when you were in teacher's college?

None **Less than 1 hour** **1-3 hours** **4 hours or more**

3. How much training have you received regarding ***child abuse and neglect*** since you have started teaching? (Not including today's training).

None **Less than 1 hour** **1-3 hours** **4 hours or more**

4. How much training have you received regarding ***reporting*** child abuse and neglect since you have started teaching? (Not including today's training).

None **Less than 1 hour** **1-3 hours** **4 hours or more**

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being inadequate and 10 being more than adequate, how would you describe the training that you received in teacher's college? Please circle your response.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Inadequate More than Adequate

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being inadequate and 10 being more than adequate, how would you describe the training you have received since entering the teaching profession? Please circle your response.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Inadequate									More than Adequate

Part 2: Reporting Experience

1. Approximately how many times in your teaching career have you suspected that one of your students has been abused or neglected?

_____

2. Approximately how many times have you reported your suspicions to your principal/vice-principal/guidance department?

_____

3. How many times have you personally reported your suspicions to a Children's Aid Society?

_____

4. If the suspicion was reported to a Children's Aid Society, how much time passed between when you initially suspected child abuse or neglect and when the suspicion was reported? (If you have reported more than once, please answer this question for the past two times).

_____

_____

_____

5. a) Have you suspected child abuse but decided not to make a report to a Children's Aid Society or a school official? Yes ____, No ____

b) If yes, what impacted your decision not to report? _____

Part 3: Reporting Requirements

1. Are you aware that a child abuse reporting law exists in Ontario? Yes ___ No ___

2. What types of child abuse are supposed to be reported?

3. Who in a school setting is supposed to report child abuse?

4. In order to make a report of child abuse, how certain should the reporter be?

5. Under the legislation, if a person suspects abuse, what is the procedure for reporting?

6. When is a report of child abuse supposed to be made following the suspicion of abuse?

_____

_____

Part 4: Opinions About Child Abuse Reporting

1. I believe that the child abuse reporting law in Ontario is necessary.

Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Undecided** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

2. In my professional opinion, I can conceive of a case when I would ***not*** report suspected child abuse.

Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Undecided** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

If you agree or strongly agree, please give an example: _____

_____

_____

_____

3. To me it seems that the child abuse reporting law is insensitive to the possibility that reporting can cause more harm than good for the child.

Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Undecided** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

Please comment further: _____

_____

_____

4. People in my profession should ***not*** be required to report all cases of suspected child abuse.

Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Undecided** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

Please comment further: _____

_____

_____

5. I believe that the current reporting law/system in Ontario is effective in addressing cases of child abuse.

Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Undecided** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

Please feel free to add any information that you feel was not covered by the questions asked.

_____

_____

_____

_____

END OF PART A

QUESTIONNAIRE
B

Part 1: Reporting Requirements

1. What types of child abuse are supposed to be reported?

_____

_____

2. Who is supposed to report child abuse?

_____

_____

3. In order to make a report of child abuse, how certain should the reporter be?

_____

_____

4. Under the legislation, if a person suspects abuse, what is the procedure for reporting?

_____

_____

5. When is a report of child abuse supposed to be made following the suspicion of abuse?

_____

_____

Part 2: Opinions About Child Abuse Reporting

1. I believe that the child abuse reporting law in Ontario is necessary.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

2. In my professional opinion, I can conceive of a case when I would ***not*** report suspected child abuse.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

If you agree or strongly agree please give an example (if you wish) :

_____

_____

_____

3. To me it seems that the child abuse reporting law is insensitive to the possibility that reporting can cause more harm than good for the child.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

Please comment further: _____

_____

_____

4. People in my profession should ***not*** be required to report all cases of suspected child abuse.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

Please comment further: _____

_____

5. I believe that the current reporting law/system in Ontario is effective in addressing cases of child abuse.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

Part 3: Today's Training

1. Today's training has provided information that is new to me regarding child abuse and neglect.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

2. Today's training has provided information that is new to me regarding reporting requirements.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

3. Circle the statement that best describes the impact of the training you have received today.

a) I am more likely to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Aid Society.

b) I am less likely to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Aid Society.

c) This training will have no impact on my reporting behaviours.

4. a) I would like to receive more training.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

b) If so, what would you like to learn more about?

_____

Part 4: Demographic Information

1. How many years have you been teaching? _____
2. What year did you graduate with your teaching degree? _____
3. What is the highest degree you have attained? _____
4. Are you male or female? M ____ F____
5. How old are you? _____
6. What is your ethnicity? _____
7. What grade(s) have you taught? _____

Please feel free to add any information that you feel was not covered by the questions asked.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

END OF PART B

Please hand your questionnaire to the researcher.

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

(Printed on Wilfrid Laurier University, Faculty of Social Work Letterhead)

The impact of training on teachers' reporting of child abuse and neglect

Principal Researcher: Carrie Smith, Student, Wilfrid Laurier University

Research Supervisor: Dr. Carol Stalker, Wilfrid Laurier University

Dear Participant:

My name is Carrie Smith and you have been asked to participate in a study that is being completed as part of the requirements for my Master's of Social Work degree at Wilfrid Laurier University. There are two purposes of this study. The first purpose is to understand teachers' experiences regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect. The second purpose is to assess the impact of the training that will be provided today.

PROCEDURE

Today you will be asked to complete a questionnaire before and after listening to a presentation regarding child abuse. This questionnaire will ask questions about child abuse and reporting. The first questionnaire will require approximately twenty minutes to complete and the second questionnaire will require approximately ten minutes to complete. By completing the questionnaire you agree to take part in this study.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

You will not be asked to give your name nor the school where you teach and you will not be personally identified in any discussion or written report. We also ask that you not provide any identifying information about a child about whom you may have suspected abuse or neglect. If you were to provide identifying information about such a child we would be obligated to notify the appropriate authority.

The researcher will be collecting information regarding the demographics of all teachers who are employed by [*name of school board omitted in order to protect participants' identities*] (ie. gender, ethnicity). This information will be used to describe whether or not those who participate are representative of the larger population accurately. There will be 50 to 75 participants in total. Findings from my study will be reported in my thesis and may also be published in a journal article. Findings may also be presented to members of your school board and to the Children's Aid Society *[name of Children's Aid Society omitted in order to protect the identity of participants]*.

Parts A and B of the questionnaires have been numbered in order to ensure that the information you provide before and after the training is assessed accurately. These numbers will not identify you in any way, as your name will not be attached to them. Only I and Dr. Stalker will have direct access to the completed questionnaires. The questionnaires will be stored in a locked cabinet for six months and will then be

destroyed. To further assure your anonymity, demographic information you provide will be stored separately from the rest of the questionnaire.

RISKS/BENEFITS

There are minimal risks associated with this project as no one will be able to identify you or your responses to the questionnaire. One possible risk that has been identified is feeling regret about actions you have or have not taken in the past regarding a suspicion of child abuse or neglect. If you have any concerns regarding a child or would like further information, resources available to you have been listed at the end of this form. The potential benefits of this study to society include providing a better understanding of the reporting experiences of teachers and how the process can be improved. This study has been approved by a representative from [*name of school board omitted in order to protect the identity of participants*].

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant or if you have any further questions about the study, you may contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Carol Stalker at (519) 884-0710 ext. 2026. This project has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board at Wilfrid Laurier University. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

Following the completion of this study, results will be provided to the administrators of all schools that participate and you may access this information through the principal at your school. This information will be available by October 2005. A report will also be provided to the Children's Aid Society [*name of Children's Aid Society omitted in order to protect the identity of participants*].

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw from the study before the questionnaires are collected you may keep the questionnaire or destroy it. You have the right to omit any question(s) you choose.

RESOURCES

If you would like further information about reporting child abuse and neglect you can call one of the following local child protection agencies:
The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex - 455-9000; The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County - 539-6176; Family and Children's Services of Elgin County - 631-1492.

Other resources you may find useful are as follows:

Crosson-Tower, C. (2002). *When children are abused: An educator's guide to intervention*. U.S.; Massachusetts: College Division.

Child and Family Services Act. Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990, C. 11.

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies Website: www.oacas.org

Thank you for your willingness to voluntarily participate in this research project.

APPENDIX C
(Printed on Wilfrid Laurier University, Faculty of Social Work Letterhead)

Dear Participant:

My name is Carrie Smith and when you attend the training on (date), I will invite you to participate in a study that is being completed as part of the requirements for my Master's of Social Work degree. There are two purposes of this study. The first purpose is to understand teachers' experiences regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect. The second purpose is to assess the impact of the training that will be provided in April.

PROCEDURE

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire before and after listening to a presentation regarding child abuse. This questionnaire will ask questions about child abuse and reporting. The first questionnaire will require approximately twenty minutes to complete and the second questionnaire will require approximately ten minutes to complete. By completing the questionnaire you agree to take part in this study. You may withdraw from the study at any time. You are not obligated to take part in the study and if you refuse to participate there will be no negative consequences.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

You will not be asked to give your name or identify the school where you teach and you will not be personally identified in any discussion or written report. This letter is being distributed by (name of representative at the school board). I will not have access to your name or to the names of any of the teachers who attend the training. I am interested only in your opinions and experiences, not your identity. This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at Wilfrid Laurier University as well as by a representative from your school board.

I look forward to seeing you in April.

Sincerely,

Carrie Smith

APPENDIX D

SYNOPSIS OF PURPOSE OF STUDY – READ ALOUD TO PARTICIPANTS

My name is Carrie Smith and I am completing my thesis as a part of the requirements for my Master's of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University. As you will read in the consent form provided, my research has to do with teachers' experiences with their duty to report child abuse and neglect and the impact of training. My study has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at Wilfrid Laurier University, as well as by a representative from your school board.

Today you will be asked to complete Part A of a questionnaire prior to receiving the training seminar. There are some questions that you may wonder whether or not you should answer honestly. Please be assured that you will not be identified in any way throughout this process. I will not be asking for your name and you will not be asked to sign the consent form. Your completion of the questionnaire implies your informed consent. My role is to understand your experiences, not to enforce any protocols or legislation. My ultimate goal is to learn how to improve the system and your input is very important to me. When you look at your questionnaire you will notice that there are numbers on the top right corners. These numbers are not connected to your name and will not identify you in any way. They will be used only to connect your answers to Part A with your answers to Part B.

After the training session you will be asked to complete Part B of the questionnaire. I would like to give you the opportunity to review the consent form at this time. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Should you choose not to participate in order for your decision to remain confidential I suggest you 'doodle' on the

questionnaire and hand it in to me when the completed questionnaires are collected.

Thank you very much for your time.

APPENDIX E

SUMMARY OF TRAINING SEMINAR

TOPICS COVERED

- Purpose of the Child and Family Services Act
- Duty to Report
- What are "reasonable grounds to suspect?"
- Special Responsibilities of Professionals
- Failure to Report: Consequences
- Professional Confidentiality
- Protection from Liability
- Receipt of Referral: What information is required from the referral source?
- A Child is Need of Protection Where…
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Discipline vs. Punishment
- Injury Skin Map: Common sites of Inflicted vs. Accidental Injury
- Investigation Steps
- Consult: 24 Hour Service