Title: Caregiver Sensitivity to Infants' Sleep-Wake State Cycles in a Child Care Center

The core theoretical framework of this study is that caregiver sensitivity is thought of as being the most influential factor in positive child care experiences to the degree that infants may become empowered to enjoy competent relationships. Four case studies carried out with one caregiver and four, three to 7-month-old infants in an infant room at a child care center. Video-recordings were the main format for data collection and these were performed for four infants in a child care center on a weekly basis for 11-12 weeks. Findings of the qualitative descriptive and quantitative data analysis methods augment compelling evidence for the importance of sensitive care practices in synch with infants’ sleep-wake state changes in the context of child care. It is not appropriate to characterize caregiver sensitivity or to assume the quality aspects of infant child care independent of the infants’ sleep-wake states in which the infant-caregiver interaction is observed. Specific infant states – deep sleep, light sleep, drowsy, alert, fussy alert, and crying – were denoted as simplified, but significant physiological and behavioral states, each entailing different conditional meanings needed for different caretaking behaviors and responsiveness. It is hoped that the recurrent patterns of infants’ sleep-wake states, identified in the research as being powerful in the synchrony of infant-caregiver interactions, will stimulate professional caregivers’ awareness of the impact of their actions associated with infant states. Along with an integrated understanding of the development of infants’ sleep-wake states, systematic recording practices that focus on how to apply the knowledge and records into naturally occurring routines increases the likelihood of sensitive caretaking practices, which then facilitate the physical and mental development of the infants.