# ‘I’ve never been to one of these sessions before: Critical discourse analysis of ‘hard to reach’ parent and health visitor clinic encounters.

Kathy Mumby-Croft
PhD Fellow
CRIPACC
University of Hertfordshire

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

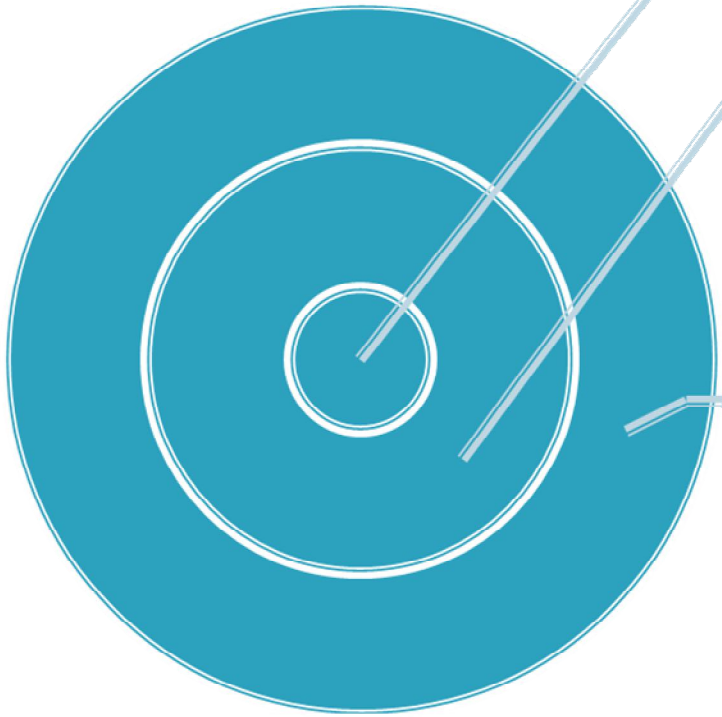
Funded by The Health Foundation, supervisors Prof. S Kendall and Prof. F. Brooks

- **Aim** of the presentation is to offer preliminary findings in relation to the context and processes involved in partnership-in-practice in relation to ‘hard to reach’ parents.

# Research Method

- This paper is concerned with one aspect of the study, the audio recording and observation of parent and health visitor interaction
- Ethnographic observation
- Audio recording of 27 HV-parent encounters, transcribed verbatim

# Discourse analysis (Gee 2005)



Language
'bits' little 'd'

Interaction between the Health visitor's Discourse and the mother/father's Discourse

Wider societal discourses
Motherhood, Health

# Findings

- Co construction of the consultation
- Some parents were ‘easy to reach’
- Some were ‘hard to reach’

# Discourse of Mothers

# Discourse of the Clinic

# Co construction

# ‘Easy to reach’

- ‘Easy to reach’
- Health visitor as a sounding board
- Health visitor to discuss stages of development

# ‘Easy to reach’

- Appeared to hold similar values to the health visitor in relation to child rearing.
- In the wider context appeared to have more resources
- How were they viewing the encounter ?

# ‘Easy to reach’

- Health visitor as a person who can advise

“I’ll be guided by you”

Indicates trust in the health visitor

# ‘Hard to reach’

- ‘Hard to reach’
- Health visitor appears to be an authority figure
- Health visitor appears to impose stages of development

# ‘hard to reach’

- Different values-concerned with the day to day demands of family life
- Wanting the baby to ‘fit in with the rest of the family’
- Fewer resources/less choice

# ‘Hard to reach’

Who is under surveillance?

# ‘has own agenda’

## Whose agenda?

# Discussion

- ‘easy to reach’ mothers appear to view health visiting as a resource

- When health visitors appear as authority figures or their work involves a degree of surveillance, then it appears much harder to promote health.