

Annmary Melgar

Professor Williams

ECE 110

12/16/25

### **Commentary Paper Final**

The focus child for this observation is a five-year-old girl observed at a playground with her twin sister and family members present. She was chosen because her observation provided clear examples across all developmental domains. During cooperative sand play with her twin, she demonstrated cognitive development by problem-solving and planning how to gather and place sand to help build a sandcastle. Her actions showed goal-directed thinking and reasoning, reflecting the decision-making abilities typical for her age.

Language development was evident in both receptive and expressive skills. She demonstrated receptive language by understanding the shared purpose of the activity and responding appropriately during play, following social cues and expectations. Expressively, she communicated through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors. While on the monkey bars, she cried to express discomfort, and later, she hugged her father and smiled, showing affection and emotional expression through gestures and facial expressions.

Social-emotional development was observed in her temperament and interactions. She exhibited a feisty, active temperament during physical challenges, was persistent, and engaged in

cooperative play with her twin. She also displayed emotional regulation and attachment by seeking comfort from her father when upset.

Physical development was evident in both gross and fine motor skills. She navigated the playground using balance, coordination, and upper body strength, while her fine motor skills were demonstrated as she grasped equipment and manipulated sand to build the sandcastle. Sensory processing was also observed through tactile engagement with sand and vestibular input from climbing the monkey bars. The child's ability to independently move across the playground and transition between activities, combined with help-seeking behaviors, reflected emerging skills in activities of daily living (ADLs).

The development of Zoé, an 11-month-old infant, and Johna, a preschool-aged child, showed both similarities and differences. Both children demonstrated social-emotional engagement through interactions with others. Zoé expressed emotions through laughing, crying, and babbling with her mother, while Johna smiled and interacted positively with a classmate. Each child showed intentional communication, with Zoé handing toys to her mother and Johna using verbal language with peers. Both also demonstrated an emerging sense of self appropriate to their developmental stage.

However, developmental differences aligned with age. Zoé relied heavily on nonverbal communication and caregiver support, while Johna displayed more advanced expressive language, independence, and understanding of social rules. Zoé required adult assistance to regulate emotions, whereas Johna demonstrated self-regulation and autonomy during peer interaction. Physically, Zoé's gross motor skills were starting to develop, while Johna showed coordinated movement and functional independence. These contrasts highlight how development

progresses differently across stages and emphasize the importance of age-appropriate expectations and support.

Observations occurred in three settings, a home environment, a school classroom, and a playground. Zoé was observed at home, a familiar and supportive environment that encouraged caregiver interaction and early communication. Johna was observed in a classroom with structured learning materials that promoted peer interaction, problem-solving, and language development. The five-year-old child was observed at a playground, an open and less structured setting that encouraged physical activity, sensory exploration, and social interaction.

While all settings were safe and provided age-appropriate materials, they differed in structure and expectations. The home environment supported attachment and language exposure, the classroom emphasized cognitive and social development, and the playground promoted physical and sensory growth. These differences influenced children's behavior and highlighted the role of setting in supporting development across various domains.

The focus child is an Asian female living in a bilingual household with her parents, twin sister, and younger brother, where Mandarin and English are spoken. Language is a significant cultural influence, as bilingualism enhances communication skills, cognitive flexibility, and social understanding. These experiences allow her to navigate different social contexts and develop problem-solving skills in collaborative situations.

Family structure also contributes to her development. Interactions with siblings, particularly her twin, encourage cooperation, sharing, and conflict resolution, supporting social-emotional growth. The presence of her parents provides stability and attachment, essential for emotional security. Her ethnicity influences behavioral norms and interactions with peers and adults,

shaping her sense of identity and guiding social behavior. Gender expectations within her cultural context may also influence her confidence, independence, and choice of activities. Understanding these cultural aspects enables educators to create responsive learning environments that respect and support her developmental needs.

As a Hispanic/Latina woman of Ecuadorian descent, my cultural background has shaped my experiences and approach to child development. Ethnicity has influenced my traditions, values, and identity, emphasizing respect, responsibility, and collaboration. Growing up bilingual in English and Spanish enhanced my communication skills and cultural awareness, allowing me to connect with diverse communities and better understand children from various backgrounds.

Family structure and community exposure also played significant roles. Living in different households taught adaptability and resilience, while family interactions reinforced cooperation and accountability. Growing up in the multicultural community of Bushwick, Brooklyn, fostered an appreciation for diversity and reinforced the importance of inclusive environments. Gender expectations influenced my responsibilities and social roles, while access to education helped build confidence and set academic goals. These cultural experiences inform how I observe, understand, and respond to children, guiding my practice to support development in inclusive and culturally responsive ways.

This observation project provided a meaningful opportunity to strengthen my understanding of child development and observation practices. Through careful observation, I gained insight into how behaviors reflect developmental skills across cognitive, social-emotional, language, physical, and sensory domains. Observing children of different ages highlighted the variations in development and emphasized that growth is not linear, but individual and context-dependent.

What stood out most was how each child expressed themselves in unique yet developmentally appropriate ways. These observations reinforced the importance of providing supportive, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environments. This experience will strongly influence my practice as an early childhood professional, preparing me with the skills to observe, support, and respond effectively to each child's developmental needs.