

Capstone Project for ECE 308

Study of Child Development and Observation Techniques

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Observation Techniques

There are 3 reasons why early childhood educators use observation and documentation. First, it helps teachers gather information from each child, and understand what children are feeling and thinking. Second, teachers know that each child has a unique way of learning so when teachers observe deeply they can know what are the appropriate materials to use in the classroom and what activities they can plan to offer each child according to their needs. Finally, Teachers can use documentation to show parents their child's development and process. Also, documentation helps teachers to assess themselves and think about whether they need to make any changes to their work. Observe a child means to see beyond what I see because it will help me to know more about the child's fears, needs, dreams, and weaknesses, what they would like to learn and, as a teacher, I can provide them with a helpful curriculum and a better way to slowly build their strengths, abilities, and skills.

The techniques I used are:

- Developmental Checklist
- Running Record
- Anecdotal Record

Physical Development - Gross and Fine Motor Checklist

GROSS MOTOR

- Walks smoothly and turns corners (YES)
- Begins running (YES)
- Can pull or carry a toy while walking (YES)
- Climbs onto/down from furniture without assistance (YES)
- Walks up and down steps with support (I'm not sure)
- Picks up toys from the floor without falling over (YES)

FINE MOTOR

- Strings four large beads (I'm not sure)
- Turns single pages of a book (YES)
- Snips with scissors (I'm not sure)
- Holds crayon with thumb and fingers (not fist) (YES)

- Uses one hand consistently in most activities (YES)
- Imitates circular, vertical, and horizontal strokes (YES)
- Paints with some wrist action, make dots, lines, circular strokes (YES)
- Rolls, pounds, squeezes and pulls playdough (YES)
- Eats without assistance (YES)

Dutchess enjoyed walking around the classroom, when I first saw her she was walking in the dramatic play area, so the teacher called her twice to play with the blocks on the carpet. When she was playing with her classmates, I heard her voice saying "that's blue" and when the teacher asked her "how many blue blocks do you have" she said counting and pointing with her fingers "1, 2, 3" she also repeated what the teacher said "It's a big tower" and "it's heavy to lift." She's very smart. When the teacher was doing a Brigrance test, Dutchess completed everything. The teacher told Dutchess to look at her and repeat what she was doing, so Dutchess jumped on both feet, walked backward, and finally struggled to stand on one foot, but the teacher kept doing it until she succeeded. At nap time, she was walking around the classroom crying, so the teacher put her in the crib because she was not letting others sleep, so Dutchess got angry and started throwing her shoes. When the teacher showed her the stickers with happy and sad faces, she calmed down.

Descriptive Review

Does Dutchess reach all their gross and fine motor development milestones? She was able to walk steadily, follow simple instructions, copy actions and words, she used 2-word phrases. The majority of milestones have been met, she is very smart and active.

Social/Emotional Development

During free play, Dutchess ran to play in the dramatic area with two of her peers. Dutchess was pretending to cook pizza and chicken, I was sitting next to the kitchen observing them play, so she came up to me and said "you want chicken?" I said yes, so she took a chicken and gave it to me on a yellow plate and "milk" in a red cup. She has been learning this from the daycare routine when it's lunchtime. She asked her friends if they were hungry, one of them said yes, then she took a small slice of pizza and gave it to Souliman on a blue plate, and also "milk" in a green cup. She is learning to share.

Descriptive Review

She gets excited with other children, she shows more independence while pretending to cook, she copies others, especially adults because as I said in the observation she has been learning to serve lunch and gave her friends a cup of milk and chicken, all this from the daycare routine when it's lunchtime.

Cognitive Development

An anecdotal record of my focus child Dutchess. On Friday morning, the teacher usually does the circle time, so we sat on the blue carpet with the young children. The teacher put Dutchess on her lap, while she sang with the children. The teacher played a peekaboo game. It was like a shape's pictures and names, so she gave one to each child with the answer and she kept the others with the questions, so she began to ask them "I have the purple rectangle, who has this one?" Dutchess looked at hers, then looked at the one the teacher was showing, she realized it was the same, and then she yelled "Meee" with a smiling face. She could recognize shapes and colors.

Descriptive Review

She can recognize shapes and colors, she can follow instructions, and she demonstrates to find things even when they are hidden. She demonstrated problem-solving when the teacher showed the picture and asked them who had it? So, Dutchess realized it was the same, and then she yelled she had that one.

Language Development

Dutchess's most attractive activity is playing and building with blocks, she uses the blocks to build and create what is in her imagination, she showed everyone what she built and told me that the blocks were "ice cream", she also pretended to build a microphone because she started singing with a tall tower of the blocks. When she was participating in the block activities, I asked her what color was the block she was using and she said "green" and then I asked her how many blocks she was using and she counted "1, 2, and 3". When we took her outside to her playground she looked for her favorite red fire truck. Sometimes she lets one of her classmates be in the car, that's the way she shares the car. When it is reading time, she spends a lot of time reading and turning pages. When the teacher asked the children to share what their books were about, she was the first to raise her hand and share. According to her, her book was about babies. She explained to us where the baby's nose, eyes, ears, and tongue were.

Descriptive Review

She can point to things or pictures when they are named, she says sentences with 2 to 3 words, she repeats words overheard in conversation, so when she heard one of her friends saying ice cream she said her block was ice cream, and she was able to points to things in a book when it was reading time.

Conclusion

I acquired a lot of knowledge during this time observing Dutchess, of what is interesting and motivating to her either alone or in a group. Each child is unique and each one responds differently to activities and experiences, so teachers have an important task because they have to observe deeply and work on each child's weaknesses and skills. Without such observations, it would be an impossible task to ensure that the planned activities of the setting, the environment, and the methods were meeting the individual needs of each child. Observation is a way to connect with each child and build a trusting relationship, feeling safe and cared for.

Part 2

- Why did you choose this child initially? What is unique about this child?

I chose Dutchess initially because when I first walked into the classroom, her personality caught me, she came up to me, I said hello and she responded, then she continued to play with her classmates. Her personality is unique, during the time I went to the daycare, she always made me smile. Every time she noticed that one of her classmates was doing something inappropriate, she began to tell them or the teacher like "we can't play with food", most of the time she repeated words that she heard in conversations.

- What changes did you notice in the child's development over the course of the semester?

Use the child's work to back this up.

One of the biggest changes I noticed in the child's development over the course of the semester was her language development, during the first weeks she was able to say short sentences, now she says 3 to 4-word sentences, she talks well enough for strangers to understand what she said most of the time.

- How would you use this developmental information about your child to set up the physical, interpersonal, and temporal environment?

I would use this developmental information about my child to set up an appropriate physical environment as the type of space design, materials, and organization communicate to the child what is acceptable which means wide-open spaces invite children to run and play loud no matter

what. The classroom should be created for healthy development in all domains, so I will intentionally plan the temporal environment following my observations and documentation of each child and the classroom in general, providing them with materials to inspire learning, discovery, creativity, and problem-solving.

- What did you learn most from your experience in the class and from observing this child?

What I did learn most from my experience in the classroom is that teachers need to know the difference between individualized instruction, which means working with the needs of each child, and differentiated instruction, which means working for the group as a whole, this is important in a classroom setting because each child learns at their own pace, they may learn best on their own or in groups. Teachers should take notes and observe throughout the day to create expectations and goals for each child and the group as a whole. In addition, I learn that it is important to show respect for the different cultures, rituals, beliefs, and customs of each family.