

Sample Commentary Paper

My focus for this commentary paper will be on Amy, the school aged child. Amy appears to be female about 5- 6 years old. Asian white skin, black hair that is medium length past the shoulders with bangs, slim in size. Wearing a red pullover sweater that has a Pikachu character on the front middle, white pants, and red and pink sneaker styled shoes. She removes her sweater and is wearing a purple/pink shirt that has hello kitty and little flowers all over. Amy and her family are at a playground. I selected Amy because I want to teach young school age children.

. Amy heads over to the playground set that is a dark red and green color. She tries the monkey bars but this one is easier. It has hand pieces for you to hold on to and glide your way to the other side. She played in the sand with her siblings. Then she is on the swing with her father. He is sitting and she is sitting on top of him. They are both facing out. She then uses the swing by twisting it and laying on it with her belly while it unravels itself. Amy is running throughout most of the video around the playground. She also uses her body to swing herself on the monkey bars to help move herself down the bars. Amy also demonstrates her ability to skip around. All these examples are gross motor skills. For fine motor skills Amy shows her ability to grasp the hand tools for the monkey bars. She also balances momentarily on one leg to bend over and remove one of her shoes to pour out sand and puts her shoe back on. While playing with the sand with her siblings she collects tiny pieces of tree branches and places them into the tiny sand mountain they built. According to the NY Early Learning Guidelines (2019) Physical Well-Being, Health and Motor Development domain, an educator might notice Amy displays pumps legs to swing (large motor skills subdomain, 6 years old) and displays grips and squeezes a paper punch or pliers (shows her ability to grip objects, small motor skills subdomain, 6 years old).

For social-emotional skills Amy is crying laughing while on the monkey bars because her grip is starting to give out and she's not sure she will make it to the other side. She is playing cooperatively with her sister. Under the NYS Early Learning Guidelines (2019) for Social and Emotional Development domain Amy showed some unrealistic positive overestimations of their own abilities (sense of self subdomain, 6 years old) and sought guidance from family members (relationships with adults, subdomain, 6 years old). When it comes to language and communication skills Amy uses words to express a cry for help. She also listens to her father when he tells her to come off the playset. Amy can understand two languages. Under the NYS Early Learning Guidelines (2019) for Communication, Language, and Literacy domain, Amy speaks clearly so others understand (speaking subdomain, 6 year old), emergent multilingual children gauge and then speak in the dominant language of communication used by the person with whom they are speaking (social communication subdomain, 5 years old).

When it comes to cognitive skills, Amy imitates her sister after her sister goes across the monkey bars, is creative when she builds with sand, and uses problem solving skills to make herself spin around and stop. Under the NYS Early Learning Guidelines (2019) for Cognitive Development, Amy lists materials needed for an experiment (investigating and exploring subdomain, 5-year-olds) and predicts an outcome based on previous effects they have observed (understanding cause and effect subdomain, 5 years old)

For comparison I would like to use Sophie from my infant-toddler observation. My first comparison is when Sophie is gripping on to her toys and when she is uses her thumb and index finger to grasp the tea pot cover to pull it on and off. Amy uses her grip at the playground to hold on to the monkey bars. She also uses her small motor skills when she's grasping twigs to put into the sand. Also, Sophie uses her eyes to communicate. She doesn't have words yet, so she smiles

when she knows she's done something correctly or looks worried as she's slipping in her jungle gym. Amy uses non-verbal communication when she looks worried when she's on the monkey bars because she's afraid of falling. I wanted to compare them because even though there is a bigger age gap between the two, these are important skills from a young age.

Having a large age gap also demonstrates a lot of differences, for instance when Sophie is worried all she can do is make eye contact and potentially cry. When Amy is worried, she can use her words to cry out for help. Sophie can not walk yet but Amy can. Sophie cannot use her body to swing and climb. Sophie is still very dependent on an adult where Amy can run around, decide to play with her siblings, run off to use the swing, and talk to other kids.

My Infant/Toddler observation was done on Sophie. The observation took place in the living room. She was sitting on a fuchsia, white, and grey rug. There was a fireplace behind Sophie with tons of stuffed animals and a car toy. Next to the fireplace was a guitar. In front of Sophie is an interactive teapot set, an interactive piggy bank, a pretend cake set, and a stuffed kitty. Camera shifts and there's a basket filled with toys and stuffed animals behind Sophie. There was a white knit crochet blanket. Later Sophie is placed at a standing activity center by an adult caregiver. It's an interactive standing center that is jungled themed. It's green and has animals on it. My preschool age child observation was done on Jenny. Jenny is in a classroom setting. She starts off in a pretend play dress up area. There are hooks with outfits hanging. There are containers with accessories. There is a full-length mirror and a round table. She then wanders over to a table that has a pretend cash register. She walks over to the teachers table and is standing with other classmates. The classroom is very packed with play options for the children. My young school age child observation was done on Amy. Amy appears to be female about 5- 6 years old. Amy and her family are at a playground. She starts off on this spinning activity. It's a

squiggly pole with a black circle bottom to stand on so that you can hold the pole and swing around. This part of the playground is covered in sand. There's a half rock wall behind her. There's a small boy with a bucket next to her. She heads over to the playground set that is a dark red and green color. She went back to playing in the sand with her siblings. Then she is on the swing with her father. She is playing with the sand with her siblings.

The settings were similar in the sense that it was a familiar and comfortable environment for the children to be in. It did not seem like their first time in these settings. They were different because the infant toddler took place in a home, the preschool age child took place in school, and the young school age child took place in a park. For Sophie her environment impacted her behavior by offering her comfort which hopefully made her feel less shy. Jenny's environment was at school and that impacted the way she played with her classmates and the kind of games they played. Amy's environment was in a playground and that may have impacted on the amount of energy she had and to be freer in how she expressed herself.

There are some cultural aspects that might have affected the way Amy has developed. Amy's family composition seems to be composed of her mother, father, twin sister, and a younger sibling. Having a twin is a unique experience that means Amy has to be her own self. Amy is female and her family comes from an Asian country. There may be expectations of Amy as a female from an Asian country. Amy speaks more than one language. That will help her when she grows older. Amy's father is playing with her and that shows me that he may be an involved parent and cares for Amy.

Looking at how these cultural aspects shaped Amy, I would like to reflect on some of the cultural aspects that shaped my life. I am a second-generation Puerto Rican female and grew up in Brooklyn, NY. I lived at home with my mother and father (he was disabled). We were lower

middle class and I attended catholic school from first- twelfth grade because it was a better option at the time than public school. I attended predominantly white schools except for middle school where it was predominantly Hispanic. Today I am married with a son. We are a middle-class family. My husband attended catholic school too growing up. Now that we are parents and adults, we realize that even though we may have different ideas of what spirituality means to us, our education gave us a moral compass of how to treat people which we find important to instill in our son. Growing up with a disabled father let us bond and create so many memories that I am grateful for because my father is no longer here today. Attending my predominantly Hispanic middle school really showed me the difference in education I received in the “white” schools. The “white” schools had more funding so there were more activities and opportunities. When I got to middle school, it was the first time I was in a classroom where many of my friends looked like me.

When it comes to observing young children and analyzing their skills, I have noticed that from the moment they are born until about 5 (there’s still so much to learn beyond that age) the most amount of development is happening. Every stage sets the child up for the next growth milestone. It has impacted my career path because observing each of the age groups I can better gauge which one seems the most interesting to me. The most interesting aspect of this assignment was learning how much is entailed with each skill set. Children learn so much and expand their knowledge in such a short amount of time.

References

NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (2019). *NYS Early Learning Guidelines: A Child Development Resource for Educators of Children Ages Birth Through Eight*. New York Works for Children. <https://www.ccf.ny.gov/files/5216/0407/9617/ELG-2020.pdf>