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ECE 110-L

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Commentary Paper

Kim is a five-year-old Asian female. She has fair skin with a yellow tone, almond eyes, a wide nose, and thin lips. She has a small oval head shape. Her hair is straight, mid-length, black bangs that stop right above her eyes. She appears to be the typical height and weight for a five-year-old female. She is wearing a red fleece sweater with Pikachu in the center of the sweater, under the character, there are two words in white letters. She has on light pink pants and sneakers that are white, red, and pink. Under her sweater, she is wearing a dark pink mid sleeve shirt on with white flowers on the front. I decided to choose Kim as my focus child because I learned the most about her through my observation, I got to witness her with her family, interacting with others and I learned about her culture.

During my observation of Kim, I learned a lot about her development. Kim demonstrated several cognitive skills when she was making a mountain out of the sand with her sister. She used creativity, use of tools and problem solving by piling the sand then using her hands to move the sand up to make the pointy top. She also demonstrated becoming aware of stimuli through senses when she was making the sand mountain, before she began making the sand mountain she was feeling the sand on her hands, when she got up she dusted her hands to get rid of the sand particles. The milestone Kim mastered is knowing about everyday things, like how to make the spinner move.

Kim demonstrates several language skills as well. When she says "I'm going to get some sticks okay" she uses a full-sentences which demonstrates expressive language. When her father told her to get off the spinner and she complied, she followed commands which demonstrate

receptive language. Kim was on the swings and her sister tried to spin her and she stood up so she wouldn't be able to spin her. She said she wanted her father to do it then called him over. Through these actions, she demonstrated vocalization, and the communication skills of getting attention appropriately, and body language and movements. The language milestones Kim mastered are speaking very clearly and being understood by most people.

She demonstrates appropriate behavior for context, social rules, and the prosocial behavior of following rules when she gets off the spinner to let another child have a turn. The social milestone she mastered is starting to develop a sense of morality. When Kim started to cry on the track ride trolley and asked her father to get her down, but later tries to do it again and makes it all the way across she demonstrates experiencing feelings, opinions of ability and weakness, and self-esteem. The milestone she mastered is identifying and managing emotions.

Throughout my observation Kim demonstrated several gross motor skills when she was playing in the park such as climbing, stepping, running, and leaping. Kim bending over to pick up the sticks and using her right hand and her pointer finger and thumb to grasp the object demonstrated reaching for objects, grasping objects, and using hands independent of the other. The milestone mastered is using one hand constantly for fine motor skills.

When she was playing in the sand and getting the sticks she also demonstrated vestibular, vision, and touching sensory processing. Lastly, Kim shows self-help skills by being able to identify when she can do something on her own or when she needs help doing something and brushing her hair out of her face. The milestone she demonstrated was taking off her sweater by herself.

Theorists play a big role in the way educators observe and learn about children. Erik Erikson established stages of emotional development that an individual goes through in their life.

In each stage, there is a struggle between two opposite emotions. Although he believed that five-year-olds should be in the initiative vs. guilt stage, from my observation I would say Kim is in the autonomy vs. shame and doubt stage. I believe she is in this stage because children at this stage are focused on developing a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence and that's what I witnessed when I observed Kim. When her sister tries to help her spin she says she wants to do it on her own, and when she was swinging she was swinging with her dad at first then she tried to do it on her own. Jean Piaget is one of the theorists often associated with early childhood development. Piaget believed that young children construct knowledge in the course of thinking about physical actions and that children are continually reorganizing their ideas about the world as they interact with people and objects. He believed that there are four stages of cognitive development. The stage Kim is in is the preoperational stage, she learns through play and her speech is egocentric.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is about how the environment in which a child grows up will shape and affect their development. Bronfenbrenner divides the environment into five levels: microsystem, mesosystems, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. During my observation, Kim is interacting with her microsystem which includes her family and the park she is playing in. Kohlberg's theory of moral development is a six-stage theory grouped into three higher-order levels of development. Children are believed to internalized culturally prescribed rules governing right and wrong behavior. I believe that Kim is in the conventional good girl/ boy stage because she made decisions based on what would please others. I did observe her do what her father asked, being able to share, and get along with her sister.

A theory of language development that I connected with is the behaviorist theory based on B.F Skinner. The behavioral perspective postulates that everything we do is dictated by our

environment and that our behavior is a response to external stimuli through operant conditioning, the process through which behavior changes with positive and negative reinforcement. This connects to my observation because Kim is responding to her sister and father. When they talk or respond to Kim they give her positive reinforcement to talk more.

Several aspects of culture have impacted me including age, education, language, and family composition. Age impacted me. My parents had me when they were older, they are generation X and I am generation Z. This impacted the way I was raised because my parents are old school and strict. Education is another aspect that impacted me because my parents did not finish middle school, but they urged me to finish school and attend college so that I can get a good education. My mother is from Venezuela and my father is from Puerto Rico, their first language is Spanish, so as a child I was spoken to in English at school and Spanish at home. This impacted my language development, because I know two languages I sometimes know certain words in one language and can't remember the work in the other language. Lastly, the family composition aspect influenced my social and emotional skills because I come from a big family. Having a big family made me very social and able to establish relationships well.

Some of Kim's aspects of culture are also language, family composition, ethnicity/nationality, and race. Kim is Asian, she might be Asian-American but I believe her father might be from China because he has an accent. She may face discrimination or struggle with being her family values being different from US society's values. I observed her father speaking to her in Chinese but she always replies in English. I think she understands Chinese. From what I observed her family is composed of her, her twin sister, younger brother, and her father. These aspects will mainly impact Kim's language development, cognitive development, and social-emotional development. Her knowing two languages will impact her language development and

cognitive development. Her relationship with her father and her siblings will impact her social-emotional development. Her race, language, and ethnicity will impact every part of development because they are aspects of her culture, and culture impacts all domains.

Ashley is an infant Caucasian female around 9-12 months old. Her language development is different from Kim's because she cannot yet use full sentences, instead she babbles and imitates sounds. What's similar about their language development is that they both can vocalize, make eye contact, and express themselves through facial expressions and body language and movements. Ashley and Kim's cognitive skills are similar in that they both engage in decision making, reasoning, perception, knowledge, creativity. Their cognitive skills differ in the way they can make decisions, reason, perceive, gain knowledge, be creative. Also, Kim has memory and specific skills that Ashley has not developed yet. The social-emotional skills Ashley has mastered are being able to share and to enjoy doing things over and over again. Kim also has mastered the skill of enjoying doing things over and over again along with the skills to being able to share, being more likely to agree with rules, start developing a sense of morality, and identify and manage emotions. For physical development, Ashley and Kim are both able to transition and grasp objects. Kim is also able to walk, run, step on her own which Ashley is not yet able to do. They are both able to use their five senses to explore the world around them. Ashley does not have many self-help skills yet, she is mostly dependent on adults to help her with her needs. Kim can do much more on her own such as identifying when she is hot, taking her sweater off by herself, and knowing when she needs help. They are similar in self-help skills because they both need adults to help them at times.

I observed Ashley at her home with her mother and father present. I observed Kim at the park with her sister, younger brother, and father. Ashley probably behaved as she normally was

because she was home with her parents and she mimics the behavior of her parents. Kim probably behaved a little differently then she would at home because her environment changed, she has more open space and a park where she can run around and play in. Ashley being at home she was able to work on developing fine motor skills while Kim was able to work on developing her gross motor skills.

I enjoyed being an observer because I feel I am more observative of the things around me than I was before. As an observer, I learned how to be objective and not subjective. I used what I learned in this class to observe physical development, social-emotional development, and language development in infant-toddlers, pre-school age children, and young school-age children. Observing children in different age ranges helped me understand how children develop during the early stages of life. What struck me throughout my observations is how quickly children develop in their early years of childhood. This experience gave me the ability to become a better observer so that I can document my student's development.