

Sample Observation Summary: Infant-Toddler Observation

Nick is a toddler who has fair skin, light eyes and blond medium length hair. Nick is average height and still has not lost all of his baby fat. He is wearing a blue short sleeve polo, with three unbuttoned buttons. He has tan khaki pants and white sneakers with white socks. We are outside on a beautiful sunny day. We are in the backyard of a daycare filled with toys and lots of equipment for activities. On the left there are wooden toys, such as a wooden airplane, wooden truck, and wooden toy cars. There are also plastic toy cars, trucks as well as a red ball. To the right of the wall there is a large wooden picnic table, with some tracks and toy trains. When we continue going right there is another smaller picnic table and an activity table with water, some empty bottles, cups, shovels and toys. I also see small yellow and red shopping carts all around the play area and have spotted two see-saws, a wooden one and a plastic grey one. There is a large piano in the center, and easels with artwork. In front of the water activity table is a large firetruck playground and the floor is filled with fine stone sand. In this area there are slides and climbing equipment. I also see plenty of shovels and buckets to play with on the sand. Finally, to the side there is an area with dirt and woodchips on the ground. This area has trunks of trees on the ground to climb and jump from. It also has a small plastic playground with a slide and is surrounded by a grey low wall. This outdoor space is occupied with toddlers of similar ages and a couple or caretakers looking after the children while they play and explore.

We begin the observation with Nick playing with wooden and plastic cars and trucks on the far left against the wall. I am watching him attentively, but he does not notice or interact with me. I do not say anything to him, I simply observe. He is very engaged with the rolling of the wheels against his hand, until he notices a bright red ball. He immediately tries to take a bite of

the red ball like taking a bite out of an apple. He notices a woman caretaker and interacts with her by handing her the red ball. He looks entertained when she throws it up in the air. He does not communicate verbally with me or the other woman. Once she hands it over, he continues to play with the red ball.

Through the observation Nick ran around to different stations and played independently with multiple things. He began by playing with wooden and plastic cars and trucks. He then played with the water activity table, which was full of plastic bottles and other water friendly toys. Next he ran to the firetruck playground, which he climbed. Finally, he ran towards the mud and woodchips area on the side where he observed other children and ran towards the tree trunks on the ground. During the whole observation Nick did not interact with any children. He did however interact with two adults including myself. Overall, Nick's facial expression throughout the observation was neutral, with a couple of smiles.

#### Vignette #1

Nick is kneeling on a grey mat playing with the red ball. He holds the ball with both hands above his head, then lowers the ball behind his neck by bending both elbows. Nick tries to raise the red ball over his head but loses grip of the ball and drops it behind him. He turns around, looks behind him, then picks it up with his right hand. Nick raises the ball and begins to twirl it with both hands. He claps the ball with his right hand while holding it in the left hand in front of him. Nick twirls the ball a couple more times but then decides to get up by getting to his knees, putting both hands on his right knee, and pushing himself up to stand, then off with his left foot. He walks over to the large wooden picnic table with the red ball on both his hands and holding it to his mouth. Nick stops to watch a boy with a red jersey playing with trains and tracks. Nick puts the red ball down from his mouth as he attentively watches the other boy. He

puts it in his mouth once again, attempting to bite into it like an apple, and twirling it around his mouth with his hands. Someone yells, it catches Nick's attention and he runs towards the sound.

### Vignette #2

Nick is standing over the water activity table, holding the red ball he found earlier. He extends his body and left hand to place the red ball down. He grabs the long white shovel and fills it with water. After filling it with water, he tilts it back and lets the water fall down his hand. He proceeds to do this a couple times, each time letting the water fall in different directions. A lady with a black skirt runs past him fast and Nick looks up at her. He looks down at the shovel and water and continues to pick water up and tilt it in different directions so that the water falls off the shovel. He was alerted by something behind him causing him to look back quickly. He then continues to look at the water table in front of him and discovers a white measuring cup. He picks up the measuring cup with his right hand, while still holding on to the long white shovel with his left. He attempts to fill both the measuring cup and the shovel with water. He lifts both items out of the water only to discover that only the measuring cup is filled with water. He drops the long white shovel and transfers the white measuring cup to his left hand. Once again, he fills the measuring cup with water and tilts it back so water falls to his hand. A little girl with long black hair and a white shirt approaches the table. Nick looks at the girl's hands and observes what she is playing with for about a second. He looks back down at what he is playing with.

### Vignette #3

Nick is standing over the activity table filled with water. He discovers a pair of scooper scissors at the far end of the table. They are white scissors with small shallow bowls at the end used for scooping things up. He holds one arm of the scissors in his right hand and the other arm in his left hand. Nick tries to pick up some water with the scooper scissors, by bringing the

scissors arms together, but quickly puts it in his mouth while he looks at me. Nick smiles and lifts the scooper scissors towards me. He walks to me holding the scissors tightly together. He trips on the leg of the table and I say “whoops”. He manages to catch himself by extending his right arm to grab hold of the activity table with his right hand, still holding the scissors with his left hand. Nick stands up straight and walks towards me holding out the scooper scissors and with a smile on his face. As he is coming towards me, I ask him “what do you have?” and he lets out a babbling noise that sounds like ‘oo’. I say, “oh the bunny scissors, the bunny grippers, can you pick something up?”. Nick does not answer me but grabs the round end of the Scooper Scissors and attempts to close them together with force. I say “not yet, later” as he walks back to the table with water. Nick drops the scissors, and dunks both hand into the water and brings his hands up to his opened mouth. Nick licks his hands and runs them down his neck. He continues to lick both hands multiple times and begins to play with his tongue. He picks up a long white shovel and dips the end into the water. He then picks it back up and looks at the water with a smile on his face and lets out a babbling sound like “aah”. He watches the water drip down from the handle of the shovel and sticks out his tongue. He gazes at me with a smile while he walks around the table.

#### Vignette #4

Nick runs fast towards the firetruck playground leading with his left leg and flailing his hands to the side. Once he reaches the sand he slows down and begins to walk. He is looking in all directions. A red bowl catches his attention, but he becomes distracted as a blond-haired boy named Max who runs past him screaming. He runs after Max mimicking his scream “AAH”. He climbs into the firetruck crawling his way in. Nick pushes up on a black bench with his left hand in order to stand up. He looks over the fire truck wall to see Max who is running in circles and

screaming. Nick swings out of the firetruck, feet first while holding onto the seat, and begins running. He falls on the sand and picks himself up and to a seated position. Nick is looking around, I ask Nick “where did he go? Where is Max?”. Nick answers with a long babble. Nick then transitions to a kneeling position, puts his right leg up, places both hands on his right leg, and pushes himself off with both his hands and begins to run, but falls again. This time he repeats the process quickly, gets up and continues to run.

The observation ends when Nick finds a log on the ground. He crawls on top of the log, stands up, and jumps up and then down and off. He then walks over to another large log on the ground, crawls onto it, stands up jumps off it, then quickly runs away. Nick knows I was observing him because of our interaction, but he does not respond to the observation ending. He runs away toward the firetruck playground and does not look back to see if I am following him.

I enjoyed observing Nick. Nick explored different toys, like the wheels of the trucks and cars, the red ball, or the water table. He used his hands to move things and occasionally put things in his mouth as a tool of discovery. I did not notice Nick interact with many children. For the most part, Nick was playing on his own. Something that struck me while writing this paper is that I noticed that he uses both hands to hold things, but I believe his dominant side might be his left side. I noticed that he used his left hand to pick up water with a measuring cup and shovel, or to push himself from surfaces. He also led with his left foot when running sometimes. Some new insights I have about this age is that they are constantly active and exploring. Observing Nick allowed me to practice my observation skills and gave me good insight into the behaviors and traits exhibited by children of his age group, which I am learning about in my Early Childhood Education class.