

Case Study: Hailey Brown

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Introduction

Hailey Brown is a five-year-old African-American girl. She attends Atlanta Trilingual Academy Monday through Friday from seven in the morning until four in the afternoon. Hailey is enrolled in the Kindergarten program. She receives direct guided instruction in the languages English, Spanish, and Mandarin.

Culture

Hailey lives at home with her mother, a three-year-old younger brother, and their dog. Hailey is a sweet, energetic, friendly, and hard-working girl. Everything from helping other children or adults communicate, to how she feels through her expressions, she truly is a special child. Hailey enjoys anything that has to do with art. If she is not doing her school work, she is drawing or coloring something. She struggles with focus and memorization. I chose to do my case study on Hailey because, as her Teacher, I am interested in learning more about child development. Furthermore, I want to understand her way of thinking.

Cognitive Development

In my cognitive checklist, I noticed that Hailey does not meet most of the criteria for the development for her age. As mentioned, she struggles with focus and memorization, which negatively affects her academically. For example, during our one hour Reading class, we are working on learning letter sounds and connecting sounds in order to create sight words. If I teach a new letter sound, minutes later she will forget. If I start working with another student and leave her with a task to complete, she automatically loses focus. For these reasons, she does not demonstrate awareness of connections between prior and new knowledge.

I also noticed that Hailey likes to ask many questions. Whether it has to do with playing a game, during story time or asking in general, she will ask and it shows that she has curiosity and

initiative. At times it gets a little hard for her to focus because she has a lot of energy, so listening and following directions are challenging for her.

Physical Development

In my domain checklists of physical development and health, she showed evidence of engaging in various physical fitness activities. According to developmental checklists, a five-year-old child should be running, hopping, climbing, and should be able to stand on one foot for a few seconds. This age should utilize their fine motor skills (play and self-help) skills to copy letters, numbers and draw shapes. They should also use their gross motor skills (big body and movement) skills to jump over objects and skip.

Hailey meets most of the developmental skills for a five-year-old. She likes to dance, jump, run, and play a variety of games. She likes to play “Simon Says” and loves to play “Tag” with her classmates. She also demonstrates independence and personal care by telling the teacher that she does certain things independently. For example, if I give her an assignment we have not worked on before, she will try, although she might not know what to do. She also demonstrates awareness and understanding of safety rules, although she might not always follow through. She communicates to the teacher when another child is bullying or being mean to another. For example, one of the other children did not want to play with her during recess. Hailey told another teacher and me what happened because her feelings were hurt, and she was crying.

Language

Prior to attending Atlanta Trilingual Academy, Hailey was not enrolled in a preschool nor was she enrolled in another school, which contributed to her delay or lack of language skills. She attended a daycare up until now when she was five almost six years old. I’ve noticed that in regards to her oral communication, Hailey is still learning how to use basic vocabulary.

However, by five-years old, children should know that sounds make up words. Further, they should know how to identify words that begin with the same sounds and they should start rhyming some words. One thing I started doing with Hailey is pairing her with classmates that I know will help her expand her vocabulary and explain certain things that perhaps she does not understand while I am teaching. I've noticed that this approach is very helpful because I can see progression.

In terms of word identification, Hailey should understand that “Sally sold seashells” are words that begin with the same letter sound. However, this is an issue for her and her inability to tell me the first letter of a word or how to sound out a word. In the early childhood age, children need consistency and a set routine. Routines make a child’s environment more predictable, and it helps a child feel secure. For Hailey, practicing something at home consistently versus just practicing at school will help her tremendously.

Social/Emotional

Within the social and emotional checklists, strong social and emotional foundations starting in early childhood can influence positive behavior and attitude for the future. Hailey recognizes that she is a unique individual. She has the characteristics of a child that knows she could do something, and she likes to be praised for it. For example, when she dances, she likes to be the center of attention, or when she does something new or a cool trick, she likes to show it off. The children in my classroom often like to freeze dance, and so when they are playing, I usually tell them to copy one another's dance moves. I do this so that everyone can feel special and included. Hailey loves to be praised, and she loves when her classmates follow her moves.

Hailey always tells other students, “copy me, look at me.” One thing Hailey is excellent at is appropriately naming her emotions. For example, sometimes during class, I would ask her

and other children how they were feeling at that moment, and she can describe how she is feeling and what has caused her to feel that way. Her feelings and emotions align with her facial expressions and her explanation. She continues to develop positive relationships with adults and her peers as well. She gets along very well with anyone she comes around because she is generally a cheerful child. She knows to seek guidance from adults if she has an issue unless she feels like she can solve it.

Conclusion

This experience with Hailey was meaningful to me for many reasons. For one, it taught me the significance of observations, not only as a study but for human purposes. The power of observation helps educators understand the strengths and needs of every child. During this observation, I was able to get to know Hailey better in areas concerning knowledge, needs, skills, interests, and overall learning style. From this observation, I can determine what is needed to support that child further. Secondly, observing this child has taught me patience and that not every child learns at the same pace.

In general, Hailey has proven to be an amazing little girl with a bright future ahead of her. She frequently takes the role of being a leader. She is kind, funny and extremely energetic, as well as smart and witty. Besides that, she also shows to be a respectful, caring and strong little girl as she continues to develop. Overall, this observation has taught me that being a caregiver, or an educator is not easy, but it is beautiful when you see children transform and with time and persistence become the person that they're meant to be.