



ECE 311: CHILD PORTFOLIO

By Maria Alvarez.

Social Emotional Descriptive Review

Name of Child (Initials or Alias): Grey

Observation 1

Date: 10/18/2025

Setting: St Lukes School(Go Project)

Grey is an African American 6 year old from Manhattan. My first time meeting Grey, he was scared to come inside the classroom, staying next to mom in the hallway. The social worker of Go Project talked to mom and she went back after saying, "bye, see you later." Grey still wanted to stay in the hallway crying and upset because wanted to go home, he kept saying, "I want to go, I don't want to be here." After a talk with the social worker, he came into the classroom. He was shy, did not want to be approached and kept crying. Some of his friends from his regular class were there as well, so he started to let loose and talk to them. He would talk about 6-7(popular reference) and about his vacations, saying "I went to Disneyland and I saw iguanas. I have a pet iguana." When it was time for math testing, Grey was honestly displeased and said, "this is too easy, can I skip it? It's boring." It took Grey 10 extra mins to do the work.

Observation 2

Date: 11/1/2025

Setting: St. Lukes School (Go Project)

There was some math testing for 1D, Grey did not like the idea of going up the stairs. He kept saying “ugh,ugh” He did not want to go, but he had to go so he voiced his opinion on the way up the stairs. “This is boring, I don’t like it.” When we got to the classroom, he sat down and almost immediately complained about the headphones provided. He said they were too small and refused to do the test. Every adult who tried to help him and almost cried. The situation was a bit frustrating so I decided to step out of it for a little while. He kept being upset, but he also voiced discontentment, he said why he didn’t like the headphones, and demonstrated how they fell off his ears. He was offered other headphones and those didn’t work, but upon seeing his friends already done with the test, he put on the headphones he didn’t previously like and did the test. After the test, he was reading a book about reptiles and seemed eager to talk about his iguana.

Observation 3

Date: 11/8/2025

Setting: St. Lukes School(Go Project)

Grey came in upset and with a big frown on his face. I asked him “what happened?” He replied, “I got bitten by a dog on my way here.” I tried to make him feel better by showing empathy but he kept adding on to his story, “I also brought my pet iguana today.” He didn’t bring his iguana, but he seemed in a better mood when he talked about it, so I engaged. He told me, “I actually don’t have an iguana in my backpack, but I have my lunch and my shadow.” I replied, “Shadow?” and he excitedly showed me his shadow peluche. It was a sweet-ish moment. Later on, in the classroom he kept getting his plush out of his bag and distracting both himself and his peers Max and Pal. I told him to put it away, which he refused and said, “no.” So I took it and promised to give it back once he was fully engaged with the material. He was sad, mad and almost crying but he listened this time and wow! He did so much work, asked so many great questions about the sun and even read a book with his peers.

Descriptive Review

Grey is a bright and expressive child with a vivid imagination and a strong sense of individuality. During the first observation, he displayed difficulty separating from his mother and adjusting to a new environment, which is common for children his age when faced with unfamiliar routines or people. His tears and hesitation showed how strongly he feels emotions, but also how, with

reassurance and connection to peers, he can regulate himself and re-engage. Once he saw familiar classmates, his demeanor changed. He laughed, talked, and expressed pride in sharing stories about his vacations and his iguana. This shift highlights how social connection helps him regain emotional balance.

In later observations, Grey continued to express his feelings openly. When he disliked something, such as the math test or the headphones, he communicated his discomfort clearly and assertively. Although his reactions were sometimes intense, they also demonstrated self-awareness and the ability to verbalize important skills for emotional growth. His frustration moments were often followed by recovery, especially when adults acknowledged his feelings and gave him space to decide. For instance, once he saw his friends completing their tests, he chose to self-regulate and participate on his own terms. This shows emerging self-control and motivation that stems from both peer influence and a desire to belong.

In the third observation, Grey's imaginative storytelling and attachment to his plush "Shadow" revealed how he uses creativity as an emotional coping tool. Saying he "got bitten by a dog" or that he had his "shadow" with him may have been ways of expressing anxiety or seeking comfort. His attachment object provided emotional security, allowing him to feel safe and calm enough to participate in class. When given gentle boundaries: such as keeping Shadow put away until work was done, Grey was able to cooperate and then focus meaningfully on learning activities.

Overall, Grey demonstrates strong emotional expression and empathy but continues to develop skills in emotional regulation, flexibility, and following directions in moments of frustration. He benefits from adults who validate his feelings, offer clear choices, and connect new tasks to his personal interests.

According to The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework (2003), Grey shows progress in the domains of “Expressing feelings and needs” and “Developing self-regulation.” He is also developing in “Cooperating and forming positive relationships with peers and adults.” With continued support, predictable routines, and responsive teaching, Grey is likely to strengthen his ability to manage emotions, transition smoothly, and thrive in social settings.

Descriptive Review: Language and Literacy

Child's name: Max

Setting: St Luke's School (Go Project)

Observation:

Max was reading a book about weather with great fluency. He asked about some words like humidity and moisture, his exact words were, “what is humidity?” I answered his question and he asked me another question, he asked, “Is humidity something I can see?” I answered he seemed to connect the dots. He later shared with the teacher about what he learned from his reading, using descriptive words and full sentences. He said, “I learned that humidity is moisture in the air and that it can make your hair frizzy.” He then proceeded to have a side conversation about a party he was attending after Go School.

Child’s name: Grey and Max

Grey and Max were reading a book about reptiles and their habitats. Both of them took turns reading and when hard words like “habitat” came, they turned to me and asked for help. When they learned how to pronounce the word, they carried on reading about the reptiles. Grey said, “I have a pet iguana.” connecting his reading to his pet. Max seemed intrigued and asked about the color, about the shape and size, and even about the behavior of the pet. Grey just responded, “yes, I do have a pet iguana at home,” then changed the subject.

Descriptive Review:

Max's behaviors demonstrate emerging strengths in vocabulary development, comprehension, and oral expression. He showed awareness of when meaning breaks down and used questioning as a strategy for understanding — a key literacy behavior in primary grades.

His ability to articulate the concept in his own words aligns with DAP guidance that teachers should engage children in “sustained conversations with multiple conversational turns, complex ideas, and rich vocabulary” (NAEYC, p. 308). Max's language shows a shift from simply decoding words to developing conceptual understanding. His clear retelling also reflects the DAP recommendation that teachers encourage children to “respond to stories and information and talk about what they heard to build comprehension” (NAEYC, p. 308). Overall, Max is demonstrating strong language skills, curiosity, and the ability to integrate new vocabulary into meaningful conversation.

Descriptive Review: Cognitive

Child's name: Max

Site and time: St Lukes School(Go Project), around 10:30am

Observation:

Max and his peers are reading about weather and what happens inside a cloud when it rains. He reads about moisture, humidity and the different kinds of rain(drizzling, rainstorm, showers). As a group, he, his peers and I talk about what we learn and he asks, “what exactly is humidity?” and I responded to him, “humidity is the moisture in the air.” He seems pleased with my answer and asks me another question, “is humidity something I can see?” and I answered, “humidity is what makes your hair frizzy, and slightly wet looking.” He says that he understands and when the teacher asked for a fact, he raised his hand, and shared, “I learned that humidity is moisture in the hair, it makes your hair frizzy and today there’s a lot of humidity in the air.” He was right about the humidity, it had been raining half an hour before.

Descriptive Review: Physical Development

Child’s name: Max

Site and Time: St. Luke's School(Go Project), around 10am-11:30am

Observation:

Max was asking when he was going home and I explained to him the routine of how our day usually goes, and asked him if he knew how to tell time. He answered, “no.” So, I decided to give him something measurable time wise and said, “when both the big and small hands on the clock land at 12, then you can go home.” he said, “okay.” After a while, he started to read a book about longitude and latitude. He asked me, “why do some of these have + and a - signs?” I told him that it was different hours and that down the middle of Earth, there was a line with a 0 called the “prime meridian and that depending on if you’re left(one hour less) or right(one hour more) you share a different hour.” I provided more examples and he seemed to be actively listening to them. He then asked me about the “15:00” on the clock, and I told him about military time and how after noon(12pm) some people start counting until 24.” He told me that he goes to school at 8:20am as a way to connect what I told him with his routine. He then proceeded to show me some basic understanding on a much harder complicated topic.

Descriptive Review:

Watching Max really showed me how kids learn when they feel safe enough to ask questions and explore their curiosity. NAEYC mentions that “children use language to express ideas, ask questions, solve problems, and collaborate with others in constructing understanding” (NAEYC, 2020, p. 14), and that is exactly what Max was doing all morning. Every time he asked me something new, whether it was “What exactly is humidity?” or “Why do some longitude lines

have + and – signs?” He was using language as his main tool to make sense of the world around him. He wasn’t just collecting random facts; he was trying to understand how things connect. After I explained humidity, he immediately linked it to the rainy weather outside. When we talked about military time, he made it personal by saying he goes to school at 8:20 AM. This lines up with another NAEYC statement: “Children learn best through active engagement, investigation, and opportunities to make meaningful connections” (NAEYC, 2020, p. 7). That’s exactly what Max did. He explored ideas, asked follow-up questions, and tied new concepts to things he already knew. You could literally see him putting the pieces together in real time. He learns by thinking out loud, by making connections, and by staying curious even when something is confusing at first. Watching him made it clear how powerful inquiry and real examples are for helping children build cognitive understanding.

Observation:

During writing time, Max sat at the table with his notebook open. He held his pencil with a solid grip and took his time forming each letter. He wasn’t rushing at all. If a letter came out sideways or too big, he erased it and rewrote it until it looked the way he wanted. He leaned in close to the paper while writing and used his other hand to keep the notebook steady. Max didn’t seem very interested in drawing, but he spent extra time making sure his words looked neat and “just right.”

Observation:

When the class was writing sentences together, Max took his time copying the words from the board. He gripped his pencil correctly and moved it slowly across the page. Every few seconds, he lifted his pencil to check if the letters were straight and spaced out. If something didn't look right to him, he erased only that part, not the whole word and fixed it. He stayed focused the whole time but didn't add drawings or decorations. He was mainly interested in making the writing look neat.

Max's careful writing habits show strong fine-motor development. The way he controls the pencil, makes small adjustments, and erases tiny details shows that he has good hand strength and coordination. Even though he's not into drawing, his focus on making neat, well-formed letters is helping him build the same fine-motor skills he would get from art activities. His persistence and precision show he is developing both physical control and pride in his work.

COMMENTARY PAPER

Throughout this semester, I've learned so much about myself and about my profession. At first, I was hesitant and honestly scared I might disappoint myself or the children I would meet at the GO Project, since I had never taught first graders before. But it turns out that, much like younger children, first graders love to feel appreciated. They want to know when they're doing well, when they might need help, and they love learning more about the world around them. They're

also surprisingly knowledgeable about popular phrases and everyday language, which made our conversations even more fun. Working with Grey and Max truly felt like an honor. I loved watching them read, improve their literacy skills, and proudly announce their math answers like “ $9 + 0 = 9$.” Through them, I also learned what an engaging curriculum really needs — and how a curriculum that isn’t flexible can quickly lose children’s interest. I could see moments when their curiosity wasn’t fully tapped into because of how structured the program was. Still, we found ways to make learning meaningful, whether it was exploring time, talking about moisture and humidity, or finding little pockets of joy inside the lessons. Moving forward, I want to keep everything I’ve learned close, especially understanding just how independent six-year-olds really are. I hope to keep growing in how I support and challenge their thinking, so that their natural curiosity becomes something they confidently apply to anything they want to explore in life.

Thank you for the opportunity!

Reference Page:

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2020). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8* (Position Statement). NAEYC.

The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework (2003)