

Child Study Portfolio:
Building Blocks of Greenpoint 3K, September-
December 2022

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RUNNING RECORDS

- Running Record: Physical Development
- Completed: Wednesday, September 21 at 9:15am
- Field Site: Building Blocks of Greenpoint, classroom 3 (3K)

Observation:

(4:02 pm) Eveline is telling me about her unicorn figurine and ring. She is taking her ring on and off of her own finger and putting in on the unicorn— its tail, its legs, and its wings. The ring is too large to stay on the unicorn, so she holds it on. “It wears it. It wears the ring. My sister gave it to me. It’s special.” Some students are playing with wooden blocks in the block center. Eveline wants to make her unicorn a house. “But I need to wait for the magnetic tiles.”

(4:05 pm) There is an opportunity to take out the magnetic tiles. James joins her. They construct a tower together by joining square magnetic tiles (about 2”x2”) into cubes stacked on top of each other. The unicorn and ring are on the bottom “floor” of the tower. “Now we need triangles for the roof!” James says. He leans the triangle tiles against each other as Eveline watches. James says “It’s trapped in the house!” about the unicorn and ring. “No!” Eveline says.

(4:09) Eveline says she’s going to construct a star. She places six triangular tiles into a hexagon. Carrie walks over to play with the tower. She sits on Eveline’s “star.” Eveline says “It’s broken!”

Carrie stands up. Eveline puts the star back together. She picks up the star. “I made a star. I fold it!” She folds the star and lays it back out flat.

Interpretation:

Eveline’s fine motor skills are appropriately. She is adept at manipulating small objects and does not hesitate to do so. She experiments with different ways of putting materials together and taking them apart. She is learning about shapes.

Opportunities:

The main opportunities I saw at any point do not relate to Eveline’s physical development, which seems to be on track or advanced for her age. However, I felt that socially, she could be encouraged to be a bit more assertive. James seemed to take over a leadership role in building the tower, despite it being Eveline’s idea and her toys they were playing with. While Eveline shows her own opinions on how things should be done, she doesn’t assert them strongly. (I also see an opportunity to talk to James about following another student’s lead when joining an activity the other student initiated.)

- Running Record of Social Development
- Observation completed: Wednesday, September 28, 2022, 1:25-6:00 pm
- Field Site: Building Blocks of Greenpoint, 3K

Observation:

(3:52 pm) During center time, Eveline is in the library. Stephen has walked over from a different center to ask the lead teacher a question, then says “I want to play in the sensory area!” James repeats him. Eveline also repeats them. All three students run to the sensory center. The lead teacher says “Wait. How many dots are there?” (referring to dots in each center that indicate how many students can be there at once). She points to two dots by the sign that says “Sensory Center.” The students pause. “Eveline, I think Stephen and James said they wanted to play there first, so you wait.” As Stephen and James begin to play, I ask Eveline to continue showing me the class book, which we had been doing earlier.

(3:54 pm) Before we begin to look at the book again, the lead teacher tells Eveline “Stephen left the sensory center. You can go in.” Eveline gets up and goes to the center, which is a water table. It has a bowl on a pivot that is parallel to the bottom of the bin and several materials in the water for scooping and spraying.

(3:55 pm) Eveline and James spray water. “Now I spray and now I mist it!” Eveline says. After a moment of misting, she says “We’re making blue water.” James repeats her, adding “Blue water is blue. That’s my favorite color,” and looks at me. Eveline looks at me and says “I like light blue but dark blue . . . my sister likes light blue but I like dark blue.”

(3:57 pm) They begin scooping the water into the bowl, one after the other. Eveline says “I scoop the water.” James repeats her. She then repeats him. This happens several times over about a minute.

Interpretation:

Eveline and James take turns seamlessly. They react to each other's actions and statements, but do not seem to actually be conversing with each other. They repeat each other often, but eye contact is not made with each other. The only person either child seems to speak *to* is me, even if they are telling me something that is building on or a repetition of what the other has just said or told me.

Opportunities:

There is an opportunity to help scaffold their development from this level of parallel play to a more interactive play. Asking Eveline questions about what James is doing and vice versa, and how they could coordinate their actions (e.g., "Eveline, while James is using the mixer, what would happen if you poured water over it?") could help encourage them to engage at a slightly higher level.

In addition to the opportunities for developing social skills, there are opportunities for cognitive scaffolding. I was focused on observing and didn't intervene much, but asking them more questions about what happened when they played with the water in a specific way, to predict what might happen if they did something differently, and/or why they thought these things happened could have helped them engage more thoughtfully with the sensory center.

- Running Record of Emotional Development
- Observation completed: Wednesday, September 28, 2022, 1:25-6:00 pm
- Field Site: Building Blocks of Greenpoint, 3K

Observation:

(4:15 pm) Students finish cleaning up their areas from center time in preparation for a read aloud. They gather on the rug, which has a pattern of interlocking vines with distinct leaves, about 1 1/2-2 feet long each. As some students are sitting and others are looking for a spot, the lead teacher says, "Find a leaf!" The students quickly sit on individual leaves. Eveline is in the second row (inasmuch as there are rows).

(4:17 pm) The lead teacher sits down with the book "How to Fill Your Bucket." As she reads, she makes comments about asks the class questions about what is seen in pictures and what happens in the plot of the story, such as "Who is Buster?" "Do you think Felix is having a GREAT day?" and "Does that make his bucket more full or more empty?" When no student immediately responds to a question (which are all initially presented to all students), she asks an individual student for their response. Eveline watches. She does not respond to any question posed to the class and is not asked any questions directly.

(4:23 pm) The students begins to shift forward, and some stand up on their knees. Eveline also stands on her knees and cranes to see around people in front of her.

(4:25 pm) The story ends with the protagonist (Felix) inviting his sister to join him in an activity from which he had previously excluded her, which adds water to both of their buckets. The

teacher asks the students how they like to make other people feel, good or bad. One student says “Bad!” A few students say good. Eveline does not respond.

Interpretation:

While the teacher does not directly ask Eveline any questions, Eveline also does not volunteer any answers when questions are asked to the whole class. She does not seem particularly “checked out”; she is watching intently and seems to be listening (she doesn’t fidget or look away), and she engages in other activities throughout the day with what I perceive as her usual level of enthusiasm. This leads me to think that while she is on schedule or advanced in many areas, she may have more room to grow in her emotional development.

Opportunities:

In this situation, I would like to read the book with Eveline again in a smaller group or one-on-one, to see if she responds more proactively. If she is not more responsive on her own, I would specifically try to engage her, asking open-ended questions to find out if she grasps the concepts being discussed or if she needs more guidance in the subject. Questions I might ask with this book include: “How do you think the character feels when the mom snaps at him? When the teacher praises him?” “Why does he change the way he talks to his sister?” “What happens that makes your bucket less full? More full?” I will also seek out opportunities going forward to watch her behavior for signs of how emotionally responsive she is, and ask appropriate questions

to determine her level of emotional development and possibly help guide her in advancing her emotional skills.

- Running Record of Cognitive/linguistic development
- Observation completed: Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 1:25-6:00 pm
- Field Site: Building Blocks of Greenpoint, 3K

Observation:

(3:51 pm) Eveline is in the cozy corner. This area contains the library and the calming center, and is in the corner of the room farthest from the door. There is a small bookshelf with several class books, a dark green rug, a round basket with calming sensory toys, and a stack of plastic-covered, hollow foam foot stool-type objects that look like tree trunks.

Eveline has been playing with stress balls that change colors when squeezed. She notices that the stretchy green “snake” (she also calls this object a “caterpillar” and a “worm,” but “snake” is the word she uses most) has become available, which she has been wanting to play with. She begins to wrap it around the stress ball.

(3:54pm) Eveline holds up her stress ball, which has the green “snake” wrapped around it several times. “I’m making a bow,” she tells me. “I wrap the worm around it.”

(3:55pm) The “snake” has unraveled from the ball. Eveline begins to pull at the stress ball, using a pincer grasp. “I’m making a bunny.” She continues to play with the ball. “I only stretch it. I only keep it like that and then I tie it in a bow. A squishy bow.”

(3:57 pm) Eveline is pulling the green “snake” and its yellow counterpart together around her hand. She says, “I’m mixing the colors,” which is something a classmate had said earlier while doing the same thing.

(3:58 pm) Eveline returns to wrapping the green “snake” around the stress ball. “ I making another bow. I do it wrong.” I ask her why she did it wrong and say that I liked it. She doesn’t reply.

Interpretation:

With her manipulation of the objects, Eveline continues to show appropriately developed or advanced fine motor skills. She is also demonstrating symbolic thought by identifying attributes of an object (the shape of a bow) and saying that when she has turned a stress ball and rubber “snake” into that shape, she has “made a bow.” (Referring to the “snake” as different similarly-shaped animals is also an example of that.) When her object fell apart initially, she reconstructed it. (I believe it falling apart is what she meant by “wrong.”) This shows perseverance and a sense of competence— that she can achieve something even if she doesn’t do it to her satisfaction the first time.

Eveline did not interacting directly with peers to create play scenarios, but did talk with them when there was conflict over who would play with a toy, and used phrases he used and mimicked his actions. She speaks almost entirely in present tense and uses run-ons, sentence fragments, and standard-length sentences; this is all developmentally appropriate.

Opportunities:

One opportunity is that when she said she made the first bow “wrong,” I could have continued to try to figure out what she thought was “wrong” sooner. I didn’t like that she felt there was a “wrong” way to do what she was doing, and focused on that instead of trying to figure out what she was dissatisfied with. If I had had that information, I could have helped guide her about what she could have changed when trying again.

I would also like to continue to encourage more interactive play, though I didn’t feel this center was the appropriate place for it. She talks to her classmates and engages in play that is a little more interactive than strict parallel play, but is still not entirely built off of each other’s actions. I feel that she’s at a perfect developmental level to be guided into more interactive, cooperative play.

- Running Record of Social Development
- Observation completed: Wednesday, October 19, 2022, 1:25-6:00 pm

- Field Site: Building Blocks of Greenpoint, 3K

Observation:

3:13pm: The block center is along one of the room's shorter walls, in its center. It is about 8'x6'. The rug has an image of a tree with lots of leaves in different shades of green. In one corner, Eric is playing with foam blocks. Eveline is sitting on the rug next to him, brushing her doll's hair and singing a song.

Eveline sings: "I'm so lucky/I love my bedroom/I love everything/I'm so lucky."

"What's that?" Eric asks.

"It's my lucky song," Eveline replies.

"What's your *lucky song*?" Eric asks.

In response, Eveline again sings: "I'm so lucky/I love my bedroom/I love everything/I'm so lucky."

Interpretation:

Unfortunately, I was in a different area of the room when Eveline started singing and I wasn't able to figure out if there was a specific context that inspired her to sing about being lucky. As far

as I can tell, she made up both the lyrics and the melody of this song herself, which is typical creative behavior for a three-year-old. While the lyrics were about what I would expect from a three-year-old (a list of related concepts that don't particularly flow together), the melody seemed pretty advanced to me in its complexity.

When Eric asked what Eveline's lucky song was, I interpreted the question to be about the concept of a lucky song (i.e., what is *a* lucky song, rather than how does Eveline's lucky song go), however Eveline took it more literally and repeated her song to him. This and other things she's said and done indicate that she can be quite literal (e.g., not being open to different interpretations of a somewhat-abstract image of a tree trunk). Again, this is pretty typical for her age and development. As seen in her work sample, her literalness may also be beneficial in achieving precision.

Opportunities:

Since I didn't hear the context, I would have liked to know more about why she felt lucky and was singing the song. There was a flow to the play and conversation between the kids, so I am glad I didn't interrupt that, but following up later might have allowed me some insight into her thought processes.

(Not necessarily for Eveline's learning, but another opportunity would have been to try to record her [either in the moment or later] to send to her parents. I was impressed by the song and think if I were her parent that I would enjoy hearing it.)

DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW DRAFTS

Physical Presence and Gestures

Eveline is a little bit taller than many of her classmates (which might just be because she is one of the older students) and her build is average. She has a head of medium-brown curly hair, flecked with golden strands, that enhaloes her face. It is often in barrettes and occasionally pigtails; it stays in place but appears dynamic. Her dark brown eyes are very large in proportion to her face and truly seem to light up when she is excited, which is often. When she is upset or frustrated (what has made her react this way, from your observation?), her face will show that too, though not as intensely. Despite her expressiveness, she never seems overwhelmed by her emotions; her general demeanor and expressions are ones of calmness.

Eveline enthusiastically tells me what colors she's wearing almost every time I see her.

(What are her facial expressions during these exchanges?) She loves pretty colors; pink and purple, she often tells me, are her favorites. Her clothes are usually a dress and leggings, made of soft fabric in pastel colors, and sometimes have a floral pattern or animal print. Her classroom shoes are softly-sparkly pastel-purple crocs. She also likes to show me her jewelry— bauble-y plastic rings or birthstone earrings. (Given this, please tell us about entrances or exits to rooms and spaces. What movements accompany her colorful, engaged energy?)

Eveline's voice has a slightly raspy quality. (Please explain further.) Her tone is usually playful and upbeat. Sometimes it is higher pitched when she is upset or distressed (what has

| made her react this way, from your observation?). She rarely speaks so loudly that it is disruptive or too softly to be heard. She holds herself with confidence, bouncing or gliding from space to space (what are some of the spaces which she transitions to / from, in your classroom or indoor-outdoor?). Her movements generally appear purposeful and graceful (when she...please add on this context to link your rich comments to the context for your observation).

During center time, she often chooses to stay in the block area, adeptly using fine motor skills to create towers or flat patterns out of magnetic tiles. Much of her play is very physical: when she is a cat in dramatic play, for example, she is on the floor embodying that role with cat noises and the posture and slinky movements of a cat. Other times, she playfully roughhouses with friends over a prized spot on the rug or creates an impromptu figure with flexible materials.

When Eveline is working independently on a task involving fine motor abilities and strategizing, she becomes focused in a way that shows in her body language. Her movements become very efficient; her body is still and her eyes are trained on the object, while her arms, hands, and fingers work on the project. When she is playing socially with friends, however, she is very active, moving her whole body rambunctiously. Her face lights up and her engagement is louder, literally and metaphorically.

I have never seen Eveline struggle with a physical task. She can leap around the room during a movement activity, performing the motions that go along with a song, and she can successfully manipulate small objects to create a form she is envisioning. She is cognitively, linguistically, and socially astute, as well, but her physicality (along with her creativity) is an

area where she seems almost effortlessly gifted. (You may want to add on a closing that ties in all that you have represented here about her behavior pattern, sounds and emotions.)

Disposition and Temperament

Overall, Eveline has a fairly even-tempered demeanor, and does not usually express long-lasting changes in mood. She gets excited to talk about her life (especially her life at home), expresses pride at her accomplishments, and becomes frustrated in conflicts with her classmates. There has only been one time that I've seen Eveline in what could be described as a "bad mood" for an extended period of time. It was a day when she had taken an unusual amount of time waking up from nap, and I believe remained tired for quite a while afterwards. She showed this in her body language (shrugging in a squirmy way); by wanting cuddles from the lead teacher; by pouting and not smiling; and by avoiding eye contact. She especially showed this through her quietness: Eveline is usually quite talkative, but in this period of time, she hardly spoke at all. When I asked her questions immediately after she woke up and during snack time, she remained silent. Even when called on during story time, she declined to answer (this was immediately accepted by the teacher). Eventually, she had me help her retrieve a headband with a unicorn horn and ears (her "unicorn ears") from her cubby, at which point she began to exhibit the sort of behavior I was more used to seeing from her.

Eveline communicates her emotions primarily with her words and tone of voice. Her facial expression also changes somewhat: her brow might furrow when she's angry or confused, and she will smile and raise her eyebrows when she is happy. She does not usually say things like "I'm excited" or "I'm angry," but will speak quickly and in run-on sentences, and will repeat

a story in a loop when she's excited. When she's angry, her voice is higher-pitched and she is terser. When she is angry, she will stay that way until she is redirected or a situation resolves. Often she is upset that someone is using a toy she wants to play with, or that someone is demanding to use or physically trying to take a toy she is playing with. If this cannot be resolved through voluntary compromise, she has, in my experience, always been amenable to setting a timer and switching who is using the toy when it goes off. Once this solution is reached, she quickly returns to her play or turns to another task and appears calm.

Eveline expresses joy when transforming objects— when she squeezes a stress ball and it changes colors; when she hides a toy by wrapping it in her dress; when she wraps a stretchy rope around her wrist and calls it a bracelet. Any time that she completes a task she's set out to do, she enjoys sharing the finished product. She gets excited to show me items she's brought from home, such as rings or small toys, and to tell me stories about when her mom, dad, or sister got them for her. She tells many stories about her sister, showing excitement through her tone of voice and repetitive speech. Eveline is also expressively joyful when playing actively with her friends— she runs and laughs out loud, and shouts with a smile on her face. I haven't witnessed many situations in which something unexpected has occurred or she has been afraid. The closest approximation I can think of are times in which she has been somewhat out of her element— not the person most on top of whatever activity or content is being worked on, or the time that she was tired for an extended amount of time after nap time. The biggest change in her demeanor that is a through-line in these situations is that she becomes quiet. While she is also quiet when

deeply focused on a task, in the situations in which she is less comfortable she lacks the stillness she has during concentration, and her facial expression becomes more distant.

Connections with Others

In terms of observing Eveline's interactions with others, my timing in this classroom is interesting. I spend about an hour with the whole class after they wake up from nap and before the kids who leave during regular dismissal start to filter out. By 4:20, the late-stay kids from the other 3K classroom join ours for enrichment, and at 5:00, the two-year-old rooms join us as well, making a total of about 18 students for the last hour. There are about three or four kids who are usually in the class the whole time I am.

Eveline is not the leader in the classroom (as in, she does not typically suggest activities and is not usually the loudest student), but she is not a follower either. On my first day observing her, there was a gross motor activity in which the class was skipping around the room in a circle. The group went counterclockwise and Eveline went clockwise. The teacher said "Other way, Eveline," but Eveline did not react. To me, this serves as a metaphor for her general role and position in the class at times; she is happy to do what she wants on her own, regardless of what the larger group is doing. She is also equally happy to have others join her and sometimes to join others if asked. Four of the students in Eveline's class (including her) stay in the room the entire time I am there. Three of them are in at least their second (I think third) year in a class together at this daycare. They have been schoolmates and neighbors for essentially all of their lives. I notice this connection— which is almost sibling-like, with bickering and apparent comfort— the most. Other teachers tell me she is particularly close to another student (who has also been in the

same group for a couple years). However, this student leaves earlier and has been absent a few days that I've been there, so I haven't gotten to observe the connection between him and Eveline as closely.

Eveline mostly plays with these friends (or on her own), however she is also comfortable with other students as well. There are no students that I've noticed her avoiding, though she gets annoyed with her friends at times. Eveline typically communicates with peers verbally, using full sentences to tell people what she likes and does not like. For example, when she'd been playing make believe with a friend and the game had not been active for several minutes, the friend said "Eveline is the mama," to which she replied, "I not the mama! I just me!"

She both initiates and plays games others initiate, works independently and plays with others. I would say that she doesn't seek others out, per se, but is almost always willing to play with others when asked to join or when they join her. Eveline shares well and collaborates if the toy is sharable (e.g., magnetic tiles, train set), and not so much if she needs to cede an individual toy she's been playing with for a while. Though she is independent and content to play by herself, she generally matches others' emotions when playing with them. When she did something that upset a friend and he reacted strongly, his reaction upset her. "He not nice to me!" she said in a quiet but high-pitched tone.

Eveline was excited by my presence when I was new to the classroom. She would tell me stories that were rambling and circular and show me items she was excited about. After the first few weeks, she became more comfortable with my presence. She still seems to enjoy talking to me and showing me things, but has a less-nervous energy when she does these things. Recently,

I observed her feeling unusually tired after nap, and was able to see her comfort level with the lead teacher. Since Eveline is usually very independent and self-sufficient, I rarely see her behaving in a way that shows me how she feels about different adults. However, on this occasion, she was a bit needier, and she demonstrated this through sitting directly next to the classroom teacher during a whole-group story time and cuddling up to her. This showed me a level of trust and vulnerability that she has with the teacher.

Strong Interests and Preferences

Eveline likes to make things and to participate in dramatic play. From what her classroom teacher has told me and what I've seen of her artwork, it is a content area in which she excels. However, until this week, I hadn't actually been in the classroom during a time when the art center is open or they were doing small-group art activities. This week, during my observation, I was able to briefly watch her coloring with crayons. She had drawn a gray outline of a shape (sort of egg-like) and was making marks inside of it. She was very focused on her drawing, holding her paper down with the hand she wasn't using to draw and looking intently at the page. She chose a variety of colors and drew patches of each color in similar shapes within the outline, filling it most of the way in.

She has explored many different centers during my observation of her (trying on costumes in dramatic play, building train sets and magnetic tile structures in the block center, playing at the sensory table), but she often ends up in the library/cozy-corner during extended stay. There, she and her friends have lively conversations (sometimes a little too lively for the particular center) and explore toys in the center's bin. She especially likes toys that she can

stretch and pull, and enjoys manipulating them into different forms, such as stretching a rubber rope around a stress ball to make a bow. (The rope is probably her favorite toy in the class. The green one, though, not the yellow one; she will wait for the green rope rather than play with the yellow one, frequently asking “Can I have it?” to the friend using the green rope. Sometimes she calls it a “snake” sometimes it’s a “worm.” Sometimes, there’s a debate between friends about which one it is. She likes to wrap the toy around her arm and say “I make a bracelet!” while extending her wrist out to show me.)

She has different objects she’s excited about on different days, but they often involve unicorns (for example, a unicorn figurine and a set of unicorn ears and horn). While she comes back to the same toys and themes for dramatic play (families with cats as members), she does seem to explore different centers somewhat evenly. I don’t think I’ve seen her in the dramatic play center. (I suggest removing this sentence – just as you have such vivid description of her play overall.)

Often, I see Eveline and friends engaged in dramatic play. This usually takes the form of the students telling each other what role to play or declaring their own roles. She then acts out her roles with sounds and movements, but not much dialogue or playing with props. This week, however, I was able to observe her in more focused dramatic play. The class dramatic play center primarily consists of a child-sized “kitchen.” For most of this, she chose to play on her own (without peer engagement). However, she explained to me in detail what she was doing (some of the explanation was spontaneous and some was after prompting). She clearly had a very in-depth and mostly-realistic understanding of what she was doing. She conversed while

“doing dishes” in a way that looked very natural and similar to a person actually watching dishes. She checked her “soup” in the oven, saying “It not done yet. Three more minutes.” When she pulled the soup out of the oven a few moments later, she held the pot over the sink and took one card (piece of soup) out of the pot, then immediately dropped it and yanked her hand away. I asked her if it was hot and she said “Yeah.” I was very impressed by how all of her actions resembled someone actually cooking in their kitchen.

It’s hard to say what activities Eveline resists because I am not really in the class during times that teachers are asking the students to do things that they might not enjoy. There are times that she does not want to participate in activities her friends are playing; for example, when she does not want to play a role a friend assigns her or when she does not want to play with others, she says “I not the mama; I just me,” or “I want to be alone.” When she didn’t feel like participating in circle time one day, she told the teacher and went to the calming center instead. However, these moments of resisting an activity seem mostly based on her internal mood to me, not on the activities themselves.

If there is a thread that runs through all of Eveline’s play, it is that she enjoys creating a product of something she imagines— sometimes that means creating a temporary structure, sometimes behaving in a way she has seen the person or animal she is portraying behave, and sometimes it means creating a picture through drawing or collage. To some extent, this is the definition of creative free play for children her age. The aspect of her play that seems to make it unique to her, however, is how grounded in realism it tends to be. Her dramatic play is not fantastical— her cats meow and crawl and she enacts adult behavior precisely; her art has the

shapes and colors of the images she's drawing, rather than being arbitrary marks on a page.

These indicate to me that she observes the world around her very closely and is incorporating those observations in her play.

Modes of Thinking and Learning

During whole group activities, Eveline tends to make meaning by listening. While she is outgoing and does not show difficulty talking to her peers or teachers at other times, she does not often volunteer answers or raise her hand during circle time or read-alouds. Her body stays mostly still and she watches the teacher throughout the activity, giving me the impression that she is absorbing the content of the meeting, but typically does not actively participate unless called on to do so. During center times, she enjoys construction or repurposing objects. By recreating the world she observes, she is able to gain understanding of it in a hands-on way.

Eveline works both alone and in groups, however my perception is that a lot of her deeper learning happens when she engages in an activity by herself. In these times, she is more focused on her task, which I perceive as meaning she is thinking about it more intensely. She is able to implement her actions more precisely. During times when she is playing with friends, of course, more social learning is happening. She is communicating her ideas and learning to identify her emotions. (Despite my initial impression that she didn't identify her feelings very much, Eveline is very good at saying what she wants in a situation, or at least saying what she doesn't want.)

Eveline seems to work toward a specific goal when she works with materials. When she wraps a stretchy rope around a stress ball, she is making a bow. In the block center, she wants to

build a tower as a home for her unicorn figurine. In the dramatic play center, she is making dinner and washing a specific set of dishes. Her artwork that she makes during activity time often shows a realistic image.

At first, I was having a hard time figuring out if Eveline's activities are planned ahead of time or if they're spontaneous. I don't have clear memories or many notes on how she begins an activity; I usually pay the most attention during the activity itself. My recollection is that she does not spend a lot of time setting up an activity or in prolonged thought before engaging in the activity. However, her play (particularly her solitary play) seems to unfold in a logical sequence of steps— first she builds a cube with magnetic tiles, for example, then builds on that cube with more tiles that build the tower upwards, until she gets to what she feels is the top, when she builds a triangular roof. This would indicate to me that there is an internal planning process happening, even if it is happening as she works.

Eveline does not ask the constant stream of "why"s and "how"s that I expect form a young child— though maybe I'm seeing her at a time of day or in conditions in which she is not as vocally curious. As I've noted about her before, her play shows that she is a very observant person (it mimics the real world closely), so I believe that she is absorbing information around her, even if she is not asking questions out loud.

Many of the toys in the library center and cozy corner change form as a major part of their function. There are squeeze balls that change colors as well as shape when squeezed, ropes that stretch (she and other students notice that the color gets paler when the ropes are stretched), and Pop It fidget toys that have "bubbles" that can be poked in and out. Eveline enjoys making

these shapes change form and noting the new form they've taken ("It purple now," when she squeezes the stress ball, or "I make a bracelet," when she wraps the rope around her arm and wrist). Finding ways to transform objects and doing so repeatedly is a way that she experiments with the world around her.

I have been thinking a lot to figure out how Eveline applies her learning to modify her future activities. I don't know that I spend enough time in her classroom or if I have been with her long enough to notice these changes. One way I see her modify her behavior within a given activity is that when she repeats a story or action, she often adds to or changes slightly what she is doing or saying in each repetition. For example, on the third telling, a story about her sister coming downstairs while she (Eveline) is watching TV late at night came to include what Eveline was eating when her sister came downstairs.

In the bow-making activity that I described earlier and in other pieces, she was very intent on her work turning out the way she wanted it. I was initially concerned because after her first attempt, she said "I did it wrong"—I didn't want her to think there was a "wrong" way to play or experiment. However, what she meant was that she didn't achieve the end result that she wanted, and she would keep trying. She remade the bow two more times, attempting to find a way to keep the rope wrapped around it. (I don't remember if she was able to achieve this goal or if she eventually moved on to another activity. I don't think that she was able to tie the rope so that it stayed wrapped around the ball, but decided to keep holding it until she unwrapped it and moved on to another activity.)

Overall, it seems to me that a lot of Eveline's learning is internal. She does a lot of listening and observing, rather than question-asking, and a lot of her figuring-out seems to happen when she is engaged in solitary play. She engages in activities and tells stories repeatedly, which seems to help her expand on her play or storytelling. Something I think would be helpful to her modes of thinking would be encouraging her to engage in play that happens with friends in some of the seemingly more complex ways she engages in solitary activities.

DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW

Focus Question

How can I best support Eveline's emotional awareness and deepen her social play?

Introduction

Eveline is 3 years old. She attends the upper-3s class at Building Blocks of Greenpoint. She lives with her nuclear family, which consists of her father, mother, and older sister.

Physical Presence and Gesture

Eveline is a little bit taller than many of her classmates (which might just be because she is one of the older students) and her build is average. She has a head of medium-brown curly hair, flecked with golden strands, that enhaloes her face. It is often in barrettes and occasionally pigtails; it stays in place but appears dynamic. Her dark brown eyes are very large in proportion to her face and truly seem to light up when she is excited, which is often. When she is upset or frustrated, which happens when she is unhappy with how someone is talking to her or she is unable to do what she wants (use a toy or play in a space), her face will show that too, though not as intensely. Despite her expressiveness, she never seems overwhelmed by her emotions; her general demeanor and expressions are ones of calmness.

Eveline enthusiastically tells me what colors she's wearing almost every time I see her, looking at her clothes and smiling while she talks. She loves pretty colors; pink and purple, she often tells me, are her favorites. Her clothes are usually a dress and leggings, made of soft fabric in pastel colors, and sometimes have a floral pattern or animal print. Her classroom shoes are softly-sparkly pastel-purple crocs. She also likes to show me her jewelry— bauble-y plastic rings

or birthstone earrings. I don't often see her walk in and out of rooms, and haven't noticed anything unique about it.

Eveline's voice has a slightly raspy quality, at times almost cracking when she speaks. Her tone is usually playful and upbeat. Sometimes it is higher pitched when she is upset or distressed. She rarely speaks so loudly that it is disruptive or too softly to be heard. She holds herself with confidence, bouncing or gliding from one center to another or across the middle of the room. Her movements generally appear purposeful and graceful when she is engaging in movement activities, using fine motor skills, or just walking through the room.

During center time, she often chooses to stay in the block area, adeptly using fine motor skills to create towers or flat patterns out of magnetic tiles. Much of her play is very physical: when she is a cat in dramatic play, for example, she is on the floor embodying that role with cat noises and the posture and slinky movements of a cat. Other times, she playfully roughhouses with friends over a prized spot on the rug or creates an impromptu figure with flexible materials. When Eveline is working independently on a task involving fine motor abilities and strategizing, she becomes focused in a way that shows in her body language. Her movements become very efficient; her body is still and her eyes are trained on the object, while her arms, hands, and fingers work on the project. When she is playing socially with friends, however, she is very active, moving her whole body rambunctiously. Her face lights up and her engagement is louder, literally and metaphorically.

I have never seen Eveline struggle with a physical task. She can leap around the room during a movement activity, performing the motions that go along with a song, and she can successfully manipulate small objects to create a form she is envisioning. She is cognitively,

linguistically, and socially astute, as well, but her physicality (along with her creativity) is an area where she seems almost effortlessly gifted.

Disposition and Temperament

Overall, Eveline has a fairly even-tempered demeanor, and does not usually express long-lasting changes in mood. She gets excited to talk about her life (especially her life at home), expresses pride at her accomplishments, and becomes frustrated in conflicts with her classmates. There has only been one time that I've seen Eveline in what could be described as a "bad mood" for an extended period of time. It was a day when she had taken an unusual amount of time waking up from nap, and I believe remained tired for quite a while afterwards. She showed this in her body language (shrugging in a squirmy way); by wanting cuddles from the lead teacher; by pouting and not smiling; and by avoiding eye contact. She especially showed this through her quietness: Eveline is usually quite talkative, but in this period of time, she hardly spoke at all. When I asked her questions immediately after she woke up and during snack time, she remained silent. Even when called on during story time, she declined to answer (this was immediately accepted by the teacher). Eventually, she had me help her retrieve a headband with a unicorn horn and ears (her "unicorn ears") from her cubby, at which point she began to exhibit the sort of behavior I was more used to seeing from her.

Eveline communicates her emotions primarily with her words and tone of voice. Her facial expression also changes somewhat: her brow might furrow when she's angry or confused, and she will smile and raise her eyebrows when she is happy. She does not usually say things like "I'm excited" or "I'm angry," but will speak quickly and in run-on sentences, and will repeat a story in a loop when she's excited.

When she's angry, her voice is higher-pitched and she is terser; she will stay that way until she is redirected or a situation resolves. Often, she is upset that someone is using a toy she wants to play with, or that someone is demanding to use or physically trying to take a toy she is playing with. If this cannot be resolved through voluntary compromise, she has, in my experience, always been amenable to setting a timer and switching who is using the toy when it goes off. Once this solution is reached, she quickly returns to her play or turns to another task and appears calm.

Eveline expresses joy when transforming objects— when she squeezes a stress ball and it changes colors; when she hides a toy by wrapping it in her dress; when she wraps a stretchy rope around her wrist and calls it a bracelet. Any time that she completes a task she's set out to do, she enjoys sharing the finished product. She gets excited to show me items she's brought from home, such as rings or small toys, and to tell me stories about when her mom, dad, or sister got them for her. She tells many stories about her sister, showing excitement through her tone of voice and repetitive speech. Eveline is also expressively joyful when playing actively with her friends— she runs and laughs out loud, and shouts with a smile on her face.

I haven't witnessed many situations in which something unexpected has occurred or she has been afraid. The closest approximation I can think of are times in which she has been somewhat out of her element— not the person most on top of whatever activity or content is being worked on, or the time that she was tired for an extended amount of time after nap time. The biggest change in her demeanor that is a through-line in these situations is that she becomes quiet. While she is also quiet when deeply focused on a task, in the situations in which she is less

comfortable she lacks the stillness she has during concentration, and her facial expression becomes more distant.

Connections with Others

In terms of observing Eveline's interactions with others, my timing in this classroom is interesting. I spend about an hour with the whole class after they wake up from nap and before the kids who leave during regular dismissal start to filter out. By 4:20, the late-stay kids from the other 3K classroom join ours for enrichment, and at 5:00, the two-year-old rooms join us as well, making a total of about 18 students for the last hour. There are about three or four kids who are usually in the class the whole time I am.

Eveline is not the leader in the classroom (as in, she does not typically suggest activities and is not usually the loudest student), but she is not a follower either. On my first day observing her, there was a gross motor activity in which the class was skipping around the room in a circle. The group went counterclockwise and Eveline went clockwise. The teacher said "Other way, Eveline," but Eveline did not react. To me, this serves as a metaphor for her general role and position in the class at times; she is happy to do what she wants on her own, regardless of what the larger group is doing. She is also equally happy to have others join her and sometimes to join others if asked.

Four of the students in Eveline's class (including her) stay in the room the entire time I am there. Three of them are in at least their second (I think third) year in a class together at this daycare. They have been schoolmates and neighbors for essentially all of their lives. I notice this connection— which is almost sibling-like, with bickering and apparent comfort— the most. Other teachers tell me she is particularly close to another student (who has also been in the same

group for a couple years). However, this student leaves earlier and has been absent a few days that I've been there, so I haven't gotten to observe the connection between him and Eveline as closely.

Eveline mostly plays with these friends (or on her own), however she is also comfortable with other students as well. There are no students that I've noticed her avoiding, though she gets annoyed with her friends at times. Eveline typically communicates with peers verbally, using full sentences to tell people what she likes and does not like. For example, when she'd been playing make believe with a friend and the game had not been active for several minutes, the friend said "Eveline is the mama," to which she replied, "I not the mama! I just me!"

She both initiates and plays games others initiate. I would say that she doesn't seek others out, per se, but is almost always willing to play with others when asked to join in their dramatic play or when they join her, which often happens when she is playing with a popular toy like the magnetic tiles or in a popular center like the sensory bin or library. Eveline shares well and collaborates if the toy is sharable (e.g., magnetic tiles, train set), and not so much if she needs to cede an individual toy she's been playing with for a while. Though she is independent and content to play by herself, she generally matches others' emotions when playing with them. When she did something that upset a friend and he reacted strongly, his reaction upset her. "He not nice to me!" she said in a quiet but high-pitched tone.

Eveline was excited by my presence when I was new to the classroom. She would tell me stories that were rambling and circular and show me items she was excited about. After the first few weeks, she became more comfortable with my presence. She still seems to enjoy talking to me and showing me things, but has a less-nervous energy when she does these things. Recently, I

observed her feeling unusually tired after nap, and was able to see her comfort level with the lead teacher. Since Eveline is usually very independent and self-sufficient, I rarely see her behaving in a way that shows me how she feels about different adults. However, on this occasion, she was a bit needier, and she demonstrated this through sitting directly next to the classroom teacher during a whole-group story time and cuddling up to her. This showed me a level of trust and vulnerability that she has with the teacher.

Strong Interests and Preferences

Eveline likes to make things and to participate in dramatic play. From what her classroom teacher has told me and what I've seen of her artwork, it is a content area in which she excels. However, until this week, I hadn't actually been in the classroom during a time when the art center is open or they were doing small-group art activities. This week, during my observation, I was able to briefly watch her coloring with crayons. She had drawn a gray outline of a shape (sort of egg-like) and was making marks inside of it. She was very focused on her drawing, holding her paper down with the hand she wasn't using to draw and looking intently at the page. She chose a variety of colors and drew patches of each color in similar shapes within the outline, filling it most of the way in.

She has explored many different centers during my observation of her (trying on costumes in dramatic play, building train sets and magnetic tile structures in the block center, playing at the sensory table), but she often ends up in the library/cozy corner during extended stay. There, she and her friends have lively conversations (sometimes a little too lively for the particular center) and explore toys in the center's bin. She especially likes toys that she can stretch and pull, and

enjoys manipulating them into different forms, such as stretching a rubber rope around a stress ball to make a bow. (The rope is probably her favorite toy in the class. The green one, though, not the yellow one; she will wait for the green rope rather than play with the yellow one, frequently asking “Can I have it?” to the friend using the green rope. Sometimes she calls it a “snake” sometimes it’s a “worm.” Sometimes, there’s a debate between friends about which one it is. She likes to wrap the toy around her arm and say “I make a bracelet!” while extending her wrist out to show me.)

She has different objects she’s excited about on different days, but they often involve unicorns (for example, a unicorn figurine and a set of unicorn ears and horn). While she comes back to the same toys and themes for dramatic play (families with cats as members), she does seem to explore different centers somewhat evenly.

Often, I see Eveline and friends engaged in dramatic play. This usually takes the form of the students telling each other what role to play or declaring their own roles. She then acts out her roles with sounds and movements, but not much dialogue or playing with props. This week, however, I was able to observe her in more focused dramatic play. The class dramatic play center primarily consists of a child-sized “kitchen.” For most of this, she chose to play on her own (without peer engagement). However, she explained to me in detail what she was doing (some of the explanation was spontaneous and some was after prompting). She clearly had a very in-depth and mostly-realistic understanding of what she was doing. She conversed while “doing dishes” in a way that looked very natural and similar to a person actually watching dishes. She checked her

“soup” in the oven, saying “It not done yet. Three more minutes.” When she pulled the soup out of the oven a few moments later, she held the pot over the sink and took one card (a morsel of something in her soup) out of the pot, then immediately dropped it and yanked her hand away. I asked her if it was hot and she said “Yeah.” I was very impressed by how all of her actions resembled someone actually cooking in their kitchen.

It’s hard to say what activities Eveline resists because I am not really in the class during times that teachers are asking the students to do things that they might not enjoy. There are times that she does not want to participate in activities her friends are playing; for example, when she does not want to play a role a friend assigns her or when she does not want to play with others, she says “I not the mama; I just me,” or “I want to be alone.” When she didn’t feel like participating in circle time one day, she told the teacher and went to the calming center instead. However, these moments of resisting an activity seem mostly based on her internal mood to me, not on the activities themselves.

If there is a thread that runs through all of Eveline’s play, it is that she enjoys creating a product of something she imagines— sometimes that means creating a temporary structure, sometimes behaving in a way she has seen the person or animal she is portraying behave, and sometimes it means creating a picture through drawing or collage. To some extent, this is the definition of creative free play for children her age. The aspect of her play that seems to make it unique to her, however, is how grounded in realism it tends to be. Her dramatic play is not fantastical— her cats meow and crawl and she enacts adult behavior precisely; her art has the

shapes and colors of the images she's drawing, rather than being arbitrary marks on a page.

These indicate to me that she observes the world around her very closely and is incorporating those observations in her play.

Modes of Thinking and Learning

During whole group activities, Eveline tends to make meaning by listening. While she is outgoing and does not show difficulty talking to her peers or teachers at other times, she does not often volunteer answers or raise her hand during circle time or read-alouds. Her body stays mostly still and she watches the teacher throughout the activity, giving me the impression that she is absorbing the content of the meeting, but typically does not actively participate unless called on to do so. During center times, she enjoys construction or repurposing objects. By recreating the world she observes, she is able to gain understanding of it in a hands-on way.

Eveline works both alone and in groups, however my perception is that a lot of her deeper learning happens when she engages in an activity by herself. In these times, such as when she is looking intently at her paper and choosing which crayons to color with, she is more focused on her task, which I perceive as meaning she is thinking about it more intensely. She is able to implement her actions more precisely. During times when she is playing with friends, of course, more social learning is happening. She is communicating her ideas (saying what character she wants to play or doesn't, and what character others should play) and learning to identify her emotions. (Despite my initial impression that she didn't identify her feelings very much, Eveline is very good at saying what she wants in a situation, or at least saying what she doesn't want.)

Eveline seems to work toward a specific goal when she works with materials. When she wraps a stretchy rope around a stress ball, she is making a bow. In the block center, she wants to build a tower as a home for her unicorn figurine. In the dramatic play center, she is making dinner and washing a specific set of dishes. Her artwork that she makes during activity time often shows a realistic image.

At first, I was having a hard time figuring out if Eveline's activities are planned ahead of time or if they're spontaneous. I don't have clear memories or many notes on how she begins an activity; I usually pay the most attention during the activity itself. My recollection is that she does not spend a lot of time setting up an activity or in prolonged thought before engaging in it. However, her play (particularly her solitary play) seems to unfold in a logical sequence of steps — first she builds a cube with magnetic tiles, for example, then builds on that cube with more tiles that build the tower upwards, until she gets to what she feels is the top, when she builds a triangular roof. This would indicate to me that there is an internal planning process happening, even if it is happening as she works.

Eveline does not ask the constant stream of "why"s and "how"s that I expect from a young child— though maybe I'm seeing her at a time of day or in conditions in which she is not as vocally curious. As I've noted about her before, her play shows that she is a very observant person (it mimics the real world closely), so I believe that she is absorbing information around her, even if she is not asking questions out loud.

Many of the toys in the library center and cozy corner change form as a major part of their function. There are squeeze balls that change colors as well as shape when squeezed, ropes that stretch (she and other students notice that the color gets paler when they are stretched), and Pop It fidget toys that have “bubbles” that can be poked in and out. Eveline enjoys making these shapes change form and noting the new form they’ve taken (“It purple now,” when she squeezes the stress ball, or “I make a bracelet,” when she wraps the rope around her arm and wrist). Finding ways to transform objects and doing so repeatedly is a way that she experiments with the world around her.

I have been thinking a lot to figure out how Eveline applies her learning to modify her future activities. I don’t know that I spend enough time in her classroom or if I have been with her long enough to notice these changes. One way I see her modify her behavior within a given activity is that when she repeats a story or action, she often adds to or changes slightly what she is doing or saying in each repetition. For example, on the third telling, a story about her sister coming downstairs while she (Eveline) is watching TV late at night came to include what Eveline was eating when her sister came downstairs.

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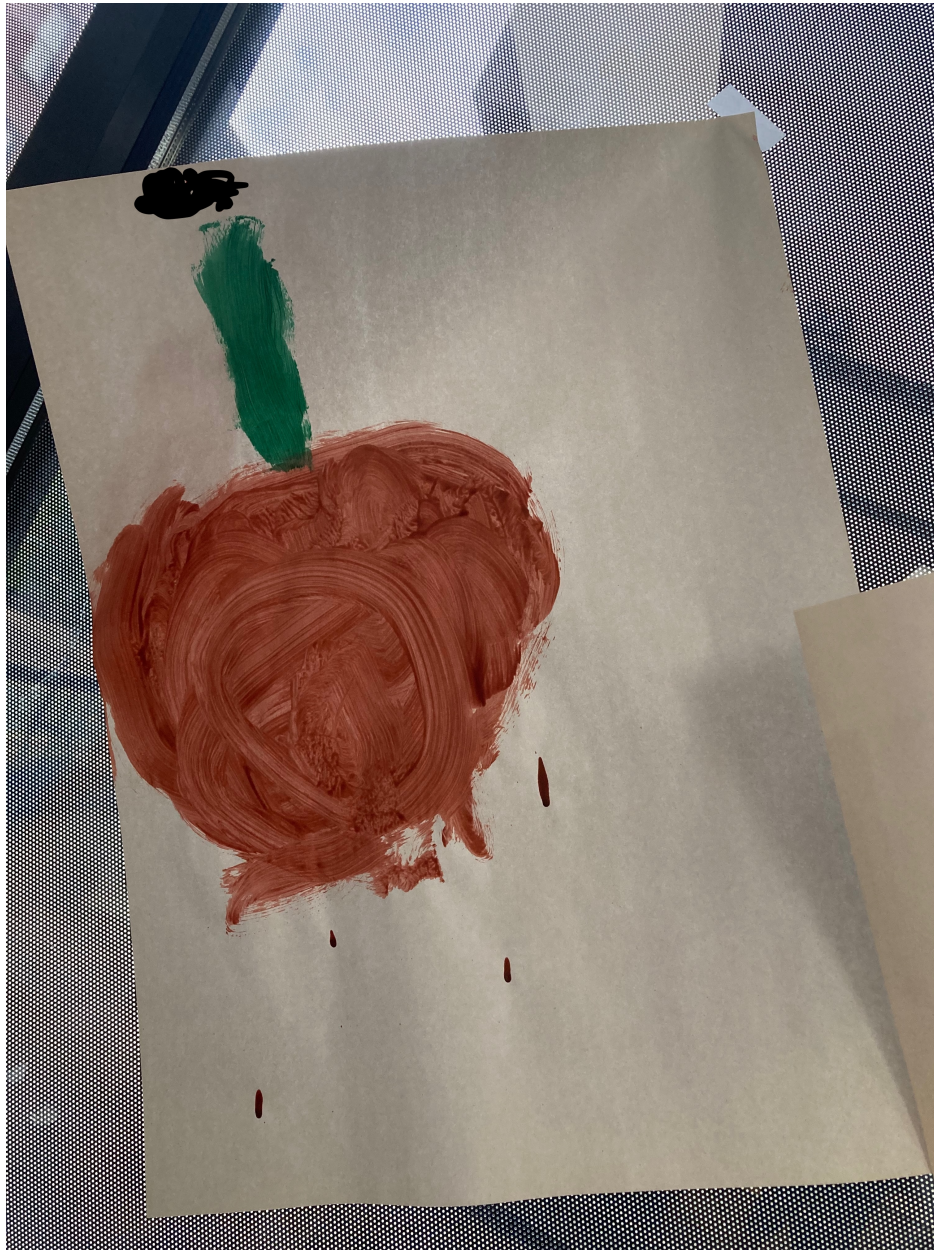
keep the rope wrapped around it. (I don't remember if she was able to achieve this goal or if she eventually moved on to another activity. I don't think that she was able to tie the rope so that it stayed wrapped around the ball, but decided to keep holding it until she unwrapped it and moved on to another activity.)

Overall, it seems to me that a lot of Eveline's learning is internal. She does a lot of listening and observing, rather than question-asking, and a lot of her figuring-out seems to happen when she is engaged in solitary play. She engages in activities and tells stories repeatedly, which seems to help her expand on her play or storytelling. Something I think would be helpful to her modes of thinking would be encouraging her to engage in play that happens with friends in some of the seemingly more complex ways she engages in solitary activities.

Conclusion

Eveline is a very focused child and she performs tasks with precision. Her accurate representations of the world around her (through her visual artwork and dramatic play) make it clear that she is a keen observer. This observation is also reflective, and she knows when she needs space to regulate her emotions. She is being supported in this, while being encouraged to manage her feelings in ways that allow her to participate in class activities when appropriate. She would benefit from support in using her focus and observational skills to deepen and expand her play with friends. I would love to know more about her literacy and numeracy skills, particularly her understanding of literature. Eveline's confidence, reflectiveness, and observation of the world are amazing tools to carry through a lifetime of learning.

WORK SAMPLES



I chose this painting of a pumpkin because it shows Eveline's precision in her artwork. The teacher selected the colors, but Eveline chose which color to use where, and painted shapes and positioning that accurately represent a pumpkin.



This is a photo of Eveline making a bracelet out of one of her favorite toys. I chose it because this is something she does repeatedly and takes a lot of enjoyment from, and I feel like that enjoyment really comes through in this picture.



This is a photo of the first time I personally saw Eveline draw. I chose it because I think her face and posture, and the way her hand holds down her paper really show her concentration on her work.

COMMENTARY

I initially chose Eveline for practical reasons: she was the oldest of the children who are in the 3K classroom for the duration of the time I am there. On the first day, perhaps noticing that I was paying special attention to her, she began talking to me with little introduction. She showed me her unicorn figurine and went into extensive detail about how she got it, who gave it to her, and what she was doing with it. In addition to Eveline, I've developed a connection with a couple of the other students who stay for the extended day, as well; what I would say makes her unique in comparison with them is her quiet reflectiveness.

I struggle to know what changes are developmental progress in Eveline, what are behaviors I simply didn't have a chance to see earlier (or the knowledge of her to notice), and what are changes in her behavior that have happened because she's gotten more used to me. One thing I've noticed as time has gone on is that she identifies her emotional needs in a way that I didn't observe in the first several weeks. At first, I didn't see many examples of her expressing her emotions, verbally or otherwise. However, she has been more emotional in the afternoon over the past several weeks, and she is able to request affection or alone time, as needed based on these feelings. Another change is that she has become more calm in her discussions with me. I attribute this to her becoming more comfortable with me, more than to an overall change in her development.

One thing I would recommend to future teachers is scaffolding her dramatic play with friends. Their play is fun but repetitive. I believe it could become more in-depth with some adult guidance to encourage more complex thinking, through asking open-ended questions. As they develop more detailed play, encouraging turning it into a theater activity could continue to deepen their play.

Eveline enjoys making things with her hands, transforming objects, and engaging in creative pursuits. She also likes pointing out and describing her accessories, so I think that a jewelry-making activity would be fun for her to develop her creativity in a focused and enjoyable way.

One time where I see Eveline engaging less than usual is whole-group read aloud in the afternoon. I would like to know how she would (or does) respond to one-on-one reading time at a different time of day. It would provide an opportunity to see if she is more engaged and would give a better picture of her level of understanding and literacy.

One thing that this experience confirmed for me was my choice to work with preschoolers rather than infant/toddlers. I love the one-year-olds I'm with now, and enjoy teaching and playing with them a lot, but the three-year-olds are able to engage with the material, each other, and their teachers in ways that I love watching. I'm a fairly language-oriented person, and being able to converse with students, hear their ideas about the world and their lives, and hear their thoughts while engaging in activities (especially reading books) with them is something I value greatly. Another learning experience I've had has been watching the lead teacher. She has a different teaching style than comes naturally to me. Something that I would like to pick up from her is the ability to speak

calmly and authoritatively to the students when they are behaving in a way that is unsafe or not conducive to the class activity.