

Capstone Project

ECE 308

Study of Child Development & Observation Techniques

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Observation Techniques

I have been able to observe children of many ages throughout my time majoring in Early Childhood Education. This past semester I have been able to gain knowledge on the various observation techniques used in this field while also obtaining strategies that I can use in my future classes as well as my career when the time comes. For this project, I used descriptive reviews and objective observations to depict the developmental domains of the toddlers I observed through videos. I used various observation techniques to complete this task such as a developmental checklist, an anecdotal record, and a running record while creating descriptive reviews for each. A developmental checklist is a chart that consists of skills and behaviors that most kids can demonstrate by a certain age. The purpose of this observation is to have a guide to see whether a child is exceeding or behind in their development based on their age. An anecdotal record is a detailed descriptive narrative recorded after a specific behavior or interaction occurs in the daily activities that children participate in. The purpose of this observation is to allow teachers to plan, inform, and give insight of any developmental obstacles a child may come to face. A running record is a chronological recording that is written while you are observing the child in a social situation. The purpose of a running record is to be able to observe how a child operates in a social environment or setting. Completing descriptive reviews as well for each technique allowed me to abstract and transcribe what I observed during each observation.

Physical Development

Developmental Checklist

| Fine Motor Development | Yes or No |
|--|------------------|
| Controlled release. | Yes |
| Holds an object in one hand. | Yes |
| Using one hand consistently for most activities. | Yes |
| Transfers objects from one hand to the other. | Yes |
| Reaching for and grasping objects. | Yes |

| Gross Motor Development | Yes or No |
|---|------------------|
| Catches body from falling. | No |
| Transitioning into different positions. | Yes |
| Crawling, sitting, or walking independently. | Yes |
| Walking smoothly. | Yes |
| Walking up and down steps. | Yes |
| Climbing onto/down from furniture without assistance. | Yes |
| Walking up & down stairs while alternating feet. | Yes. |

Descriptive Review

In the video, “Toddler Observation video pictures”, the child I chose to observe was the little boy with blonde hair. In the video, the child is wearing a light blue shirt, khaki pants, and white and black sneakers. Throughout the video the child is continuously seen climbing up and down the stairs while also going down the slide. He uses his gross and fine motor skills to complete these tasks. He can also be seen smiling or laughing a few times which shows he is enjoying doing this with his classmates. For a short period of time, the child can be seen playing with blocks until his focus goes back towards the slide.

Social/Emotional Development

Anecdotal Record

In the video, the caregiver is seen holding Janelle in her arms. Janelle points to something which makes the caregiver take her closer. Janelle says “oranges” and the caregiver repeats what she says to her. Janelle is then seen laying her head on the caregiver’s shoulder while nodding to what's being said to her. Janelle nods to most of what the caregiver says to her without using words but still shows me that she may understand what is being said to her. The caregiver seems to ask Janelle about a toy and Janelle responds by saying “outside”. The caregiver carries Janelle outside while still speaking to her. Once they find the toy, the caregiver continues to ask her questions about the toy which Janelle nods to. After this, Janelle communicates that she wants to read a book in which the caregiver takes her to do. Throughout the video, Janelle doesn’t seem to be feeling well which may explain why she continuously nodded at the caregiver instead of verbally speaking.

Descriptive Review

The child has pale skin, dark brown hair, and is wearing a pink and white dress. They can be seen with a purple pacifier in her mouth as well. The child is constantly asked questions by her caregiver about what she wants to do and how she's feeling. Throughout the video the child doesn't use many words, but she does nod her head in response. This shows me that she still understands what she is hearing although she doesn't verbally respond. The child seems still throughout the video.

Cognitive Development

Anecdotal Record

The child I chose for my observation is the focus child for the video. The room she's in is organized and there's numerous materials the child can utilize. The toddler is sitting with her caregiver on the floor in the corner of the space. There is a toy in front of them which they use throughout the video. The child gets up from the floor to put a ball into the toy and watches as it rolls around all the way to the bottom. The balls make different sounds so the child switches between sizes. The child is seen following one step commands and using one specific hand throughout the video. These observations tell me she can be between the ages of 18 months to 2 years old.

Descriptive Review

In the video, the focus child is a little girl with straight black hair. She is wearing a gray shirt with black polka dots, blue pants, and she is barefoot. Throughout the video her focus is on the toy and her caregiver. From observing her behavior, I can tell that she has a sense of cause and effect. She understands that when she drops the ball down, it will roll down and make noises. I also observed that she could tell the difference between the sounds each ball makes as it goes down.

Language Development

Running Record

0:00 – Noelle is seen standing at an easel with a classmate and their caregiver.

0:05– The caregiver asks, “Your face?” and Noelle repeats the word “face” while continuing to color.

0:17 – The caregiver asks, “What color represents your face?” Noelle doesn’t answer but she replies “Me” in an excited manner.

0:25 – Noelle says “Mommy” and the caregiver asks, “Which one is mommy?” While pointing to the drawing.

0:38 – Noelle turns her attention to the back of the classroom. Even though her focus is on something else now, she continues to color.

0:40 – The caregiver was asking her classmate if he saw his mommy, Noelle responds “No no mom” since she didn’t see her mother either.

0:55 – Noelle is now sitting on the caregiver's lap and points her leg out and says “Look at my socks”

1:04 – The caregiver asks, “What color are your socks?”. Noelle tries to say the word “Pink” but instead she pronounces it as “Awpink”

1:12 – The caregiver asks Noelle who dressed her this morning and Noelle says “Mommy”

1:20 – Noelle is seen trying to say something to the caregiver, but it comes out as gibberish and is hard to understand what she is saying.

1:25 – Noelle is saying “Maria” and other people names like “Matricia” and “Makai”

1:35 – The caregiver asks if Makai is Noelle brother and she responds with a simple “Yeah”

1:40 – The caregiver proceeds to ask about her brother's whereabouts and what he is doing. Noelle responds by saying “At home.” and repeats what she hears her classmate say, “He plays at home.”

2:06 – The caregiver asks Noelle what she does when she gets home, and Noelle says “I play with mommy”

2:17 - The caregiver then asks Noelle what they play, and Noelle takes a few seconds to responds but says “Um play in mommy’s car”

2:27 – While the caregiver is talking to the classmate, Noelle interrupts and says, “I get in the car with mommy.”

2:32 – Noelle is asked where she goes in the car and she says “With Caiden”

Descriptive Review

My focus child for this video was Noelle. In this video, Noelle is wearing a white long sleeve shirt with different colored polka dots, purple leggings, and her hair in a ponytail. Throughout the video the caregiver is seen asking Noelle numerous questions. The caregiver kept her focus on what Noelle was telling her. Noelle was able to expand her responses with the help of the caregiver. Noelle stayed engaged in the conversation the whole time. Although Noelle struggled with a few words and sentences, her language overall is good. I was able to observe that Noelle knows and understands pronouns and descriptive words. She was able to use plurals and identify colors while answering simple questions. From these observations, Noelle can be 2 turning 3 years old.

Conclusion

By observing each developmental domain, I understand that they all coincide with each other. Even though they are all unique and focus on different aspects, one domain can be impacted by another. For example, the language development of a child can affect their social/emotional development. Therefore, it's important to observe all development domains rather than focus on a specific one. Through observation and description teachers can start to understand the way and the pace of how children develop. Observations allow teachers to see where a child has strengths and where they may be having some challenges. Descriptive reviews can guide teachers in how to plan activities that can aid in promoting development and help their students to reach their full potential.

Commentary

From my observations, I've learned that each child moves at their own pace. Some children can develop at a fast pace while others may struggle in certain areas which is why teachers should change up the material for each child so everyone learns at their own velocity and doesn't get overwhelmed. Individualized instruction is important because it focuses on the needs of each child.

Observation is a key component in this field but is also very difficult to do. It's easy to feel confident in what you're seeing but it's also hard to interpret what can be happening without being biased or creating your own visual. I had trouble with not becoming subjective. It was challenging to distinguish what I saw and my interpretation of what I was seeing.

Environments that are productive, attentive and encouraging are an essential factor in children's learning and development. From my observation of toddlers, I know that children utilize what's around them. Some aspects that I would consider when setting up my classroom environment are the pace, order, and length of routines and activities that take place during the day and the overall design and layout of my classroom, including its learning centers, materials, and furniture. All these things need to be age appropriate and right for each child.

From being in the class and observing development through videos, I've learned skills that are important for toddler care. You learn about the strengths, weaknesses, skills, abilities, of children through constant observation, and you acquire any difficulties there might be. You know when and how to intervene when it comes to supporting children. You discover ways to improve daily routines while also collecting information about the children in your care.

