

Capstone project: Analysis of Child Development

ECE 110-093W-L

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Introduction

In this Capstone Project: Analysis of Child Development, we have examined the psychological and psychosocial foundations of early childhood. Through the observation summaries on physical development, social-emotional and language development and cognitive development, we have related these foundations and domains to education practice with young children birth to eight years of age.

Our work has also focused on the historical and contemporary theories of child development. In the three observation videos that featured an 11-month-old, a four-year-old and a 5-year-old child, we have reviewed early learning in relation to biological factors, child and family factors, program factors and social factors. The three videos as reported on in the observation summaries enabled us to reflect on the aspects of culture of the children observed as well as our own aspects of culture. We have learned how culture and society play a large factor in human development. By learning about human development, we have gained a better understanding of ourselves, our siblings, our own children and those we are teaching or will be teaching. We have learned to observe children without making judgements, assumptions and labeling them with inappropriate names or descriptions.

We have obtained the knowledge that learning begins in the womb before children are even born. Through our observations, we know that factors such as nature vs. nurture impact children's growth and development. In these seven papers, you will see how through our journey into the world of early childhood education, we have grown.

Part 1: Observation Summaries

A. Observation summary on Physical Development

Section 1: Infant/Toddler

This observation is based on Sunny, an 11-month-old Caucasian female. She has blonde hair and hazel eyes, a round face and a chubby torso. She has thin eyebrows and pink lips. She is wearing a sleeveless purple polka dot top with matching bloomers. She is also wearing white socks.

During the observation, Sunny was on the floor playing with toy teacups and cake. She picked up a teacup and handed it to her mom, who gave it back, and Sunny accidentally dropped it while switching it between hands. This showed her ability to grasp and pass objects using her fine motor skills. Her mom then set down two teacups and a plate of toy cakes nearby, and Sunny moved from sitting to crawling to go after one of the cakes, highlighting her gross motor development. As she played with the toy food, she licked and bit it, then placed a piece inside a teacup, showing further fine motor control through biting and placing objects into containers. Sunny was also rolling over on the rug, while holding the cake in her hand. In a later transition in the video, Sunny grabbed onto a toy stand to pull herself up. She ended up losing her balance and falling, and her mom stepped in to help steady her. This sequence demonstrated skills like balance, standing, and holding onto furniture for support.

Sunny demonstrates appropriate progress in both fine and gross motor areas. Her fine

motor skills are shown through her ability to grasp and transfer objects between hands and place toys into containers with control. Her gross motor skills are evident as she moves from sitting to crawling and pulls herself up while holding onto furniture for support. These actions indicate that Sunny is steadily building coordination, strength, and balance consistent with her age group, according to the NYS Early Learning Guidelines.

Section 2: Preschool Age Child

This observation focuses on Samantha, a 4-year-old Hispanic female preschooler. She is short, with brown eyes, brown hair tied in a ponytail with a pink hair tie, and tan skin. She is wearing a plain white shirt, gray tights, white socks, and pink and black sneakers.

The observation takes place in a preschool classroom. Samantha is playing with unit blocks alongside another child named Sara. She stands on a gray carpet with a white bucket on the far left, and on top of the carpet is a smaller green carpet featuring a racetrack design. In front of the children is a colorful block castle built by Sara. Behind Samantha, there is a wide shelf holding light brown blocks, dinosaurs in the lower right corner, and several clear containers filled with different objects. A red bucket sits on top of the shelf. The wall displays a number line and a long sheet of paper with written instructions. A sink and wall-mounted hand sanitizer dispenser are located at the back of the room. Other children and teachers are also visible in the background, along with a nonverbal individual positioned behind the camera.

During this observation, Samantha was actively building a block tower. She first stacked the blocks on the shelf to make them easier to access, but when they fell, she picked them up and continued her activity. She repeatedly walked back and forth to retrieve blocks, demonstrating control and coordination in her movements, an example of gross motor

development (NYSELG, p. 48). Samantha laughed and chatted with Sara as they watched the tower grow taller, showing positive social interaction.

As Samantha carefully placed each block, she used her hands and fingers to align and balance the pieces, indicating fine motor skill development (NYSELG, p. 48). When the tower became taller, she stretched upward and stood on her tiptoes to add more blocks, demonstrating balance, control, and strength in her large muscles (NYSELG, p. 44). Her hand-eye coordination was evident as she intentionally positioned each piece to prevent the tower from falling. When a teacher approached, Samantha expressed excitement and pride, exclaiming that she was the one who built the tower. Her enthusiasm increased as she continued building, though eventually the structure collapsed after she experimented with different block shapes. According to the New York State Early Learning Guidelines (New York State Council on Children and Families), preschool children around age four typically display growing control over their movements through balance, coordination, and purposeful motion.

Samantha clearly demonstrated these skills as she walked between the shelf and play area, carried blocks, and stretched upward to reach higher levels of her structure (NYSELG, p. 44).

The guidelines also indicate that four-year-olds are developing greater hand control and dexterity, enabling them to manipulate objects with precision (NYSELG, p. 48). Samantha demonstrated these fine motor abilities by grasping, stacking, and adjusting the blocks to maintain balance in her tower. These observed behaviors suggest that Samantha is successfully meeting the physical well-being and motor development milestones expected for her age.

Section 3: Young School Age Child

This observation is based on a 5-year-old Chinese female named Joanna. She has fair skin, long black hair with bangs, and a slim build. She is wearing a gray long-sleeved shirt with a yellow inside and a yellow Pokémon on the front. She is also wearing pink pants and red, pink, and white sneakers. She and her family speak Cantonese and English.

This observation takes place in a playground in Cuesta Park, in Mountain View, California. There are slides, swings, monkey bars, a spinner, and ladders. Some equipment is also on the ground, and the ground is covered in sand. There are park benches and a table. In the observation, Joanne, her twin sister Jasmine, her little brother Terrance, and her father are present.

During the observation, Joanna first began climbing the monkey bars with the gym rings. She went back and forth across the monkey bars several times, using her arms and hands to support her body and move from one bar to the next, demonstrating gross motor skills such as upper body strength and coordinated climbing (NYSELG, p. 45). She also allowed Jasmine to take turns on the equipment. Joanna and her sister then went on the spinner together and used their bodies to make the spinner move faster by shifting their weight and pushing with their legs, which shows balance and body control during active play (NYSELG, p. 45). Joanna then climbed up a ladder and swung side to side on the bars using both her arms and legs before sliding down the attached pole.

While doing this, she demonstrated fine motor processes including grasping and adjusting her grip as she moved along the equipment. She then walked over to the steps, climbed them, and jumped down before going back up the ladder to swing on the monkey bars again. Jumping down from the steps shows gross motor skills such as coordinated jumping and controlled

landing (NYSELG, p. 45). Toward the end of the observation, Joanna was seen running across the grass toward the sandlot, demonstrating locomotor skills and coordinated movements while running (NYSELG, p. 45).

Joanna appears to be reaching her physical milestones. According to the *New York State Early Learning Guidelines* developed by the New York State Council on Children and Families, children around age five are expected to demonstrate increasing control of their bodies, strength, coordination, balance, and hand-eye coordination. During the observation, Joanna demonstrated several of these milestones while using the playground equipment. She climbed the monkey bars and ladder, showing gross motor skills such as upper body strength and coordinated climbing (NYSELG, p. 45). She also balanced her body while swinging side to side on the bars and using the spinner with her sister, demonstrating body control and coordinated movement (NYSELG, p. 45). Additionally, Joanna ran across the grass and jumped from the steps, demonstrating locomotor skills and controlled movement (NYSELG, p. 45).

Joanna also demonstrated several fine motor milestones. She grasped and adjusted her grip on the monkey bars and gym rings, which shows hand strength and NYSELG, p. 49). She used hand-eye coordination while positioning her hands on the bars and moving across the playground equipment, showing control of the muscles in her hands and fingers (NYSELG, p. 49). These observations suggest that Joanna has mastered several physical well-being and motor development milestones.

Section 4: Conclusion

Through observing and analyzing the children's physical development, I gained a better understanding how much young children use their bodies to explore and interact with their environment. I noticed that many everyday activities, such as climbing, stacking blocks, crawling, or running, help children develop both gross and fine motor skills. Before completing this assignment, I did not realize how many different physical skills children use at once during play. Observing the children also helped me see how their movements connect to the milestone described in the *New York State Early Learning Guidelines*. The most interesting aspect of this assignment was watching how naturally children practice and strengthen these skills without even noticing. This assignment helped me appreciate how observation can help adults better understand children's growth and development.

B. Observation Summary on Social Emotional and Language Development

Section 1: Infant/Toddler

This observation is based on Sunny, an 11-month-old Caucasian female. She has blonde hair and hazel eyes, a round face, and a chubby torso. She has thin eyebrows and pink lips. She is wearing a sleeveless purple polka dot top with matching bloomers. She is also wearing white socks.

During the observation, Sunny was on the floor playing with toy teacups and cake. She picked up a teacup and handed it to her mom, who gave it back, and Sunny accidentally dropped it while switching it between hands. This showed her growing ability to explore objects and interact with a familiar adult. As she played with the toy food, she licked and bit it, then placed a piece inside a teacup, showing curiosity and purposeful play. Sunny was also rolling over on the rug while holding the cake in her hand. In a later transition in the video, Sunny grabbed onto a toy stand to pull herself up. She ended up losing her balance and falling, and her mom stepped in to help steady her.

Sunny demonstrates developmentally appropriate progress in social-emotional and language development. Her interaction with her mother shows that she is comfortable seeking support from a familiar caregiver and responding to her presence. She also appeared engaged and content during play, which suggests early social-emotional development through trust, attachment, and interest in shared interaction. In addition, Sunny's use of sounds, facial expressions, and attention to the toy food suggests early language development as she communicates through gestures and vocalizations typical for her age group. These behaviors indicate that Sunny is steadily building early communication and social-emotional skills consistent with her age according to the NYS Early Learning Guidelines.

Section 2: Preschool Age Child

This observation focuses on Samantha, a 4-year-old Hispanic female preschooler. She is short, with brown eyes, brown hair tied in a ponytail with a pink hair tie, and tan skin. She is wearing a plain white shirt, gray tights, white socks, and pink and black sneakers. The observation takes place in a preschool classroom. Samantha is playing with unit blocks alongside another child named Sara. She stands on a gray carpet with a white bucket on the far left, and on top of the carpet is a smaller green carpet featuring a racetrack design. In front of the children is a colorful block castle built by Sara. Behind Samantha, there is a wide shelf holding light brown blocks, dinosaurs in the lower right corner, and several clear containers filled with different objects. A red bucket sits on top of the shelf. The wall displays a number line and a long sheet of paper with written instructions. A sink and wall-mounted hand sanitizer dispenser are located at the back of the room. Other children and teachers are also visible in the background, along with a nonverbal individual positioned behind the camera.

During this observation, Samantha was actively building a block tower. She first stacked the blocks on the shelf to make them easier to access, but when they fell, she picked them up and continued her activity. Samantha laughed and chatted with her peer as they watched the tower grow taller, showing positive social interaction and cooperation. She appeared excited while playing, especially when the teacher approached and she proudly stated that she was the one who built the tower. Her reaction showed confidence, pride, and joy in sharing her accomplishment with others.

Samantha also demonstrated language development throughout the observation. She communicated with her peer while playing, used words to express excitement, and explained her role in creating the tower. Her speech showed that she was able to use language for social interaction and self-expression. She listened and responded during play, which is an important part of language growth at this age. These behaviors suggest that Samantha develop appropriate communication skills as well as social-emotional skills through peer interaction and adult engagement. According to the New York State Early Learning Guidelines, preschool children around age four are expected to show growth in social interaction, emotional expression, and communication. Samantha demonstrated these skills as she played cooperatively, showed enthusiasm, and used language to share her ideas and feelings. Her behavior suggests that she is successfully meeting developmental milestones expected for her age.

Section 3: Young School Age Child

This observation is based on a 5-year-old Chinese female named Joanna. She has fair skin, long black hair with bangs, and a slim build. She is wearing a gray long-sleeve shirt with yellow inside and a yellow Pokémon on the front. She is also wearing pink pants and red, pink, and white sneakers. She and her family speak Cantonese and English.

This observation is taking place in a playground in Cuesta Park, in Mountain View, California. There are slides, swings, monkey bars, a spinner, and ladders. Some equipment is also on the ground, and the ground is covered in sand. There are park benches and a table. In the observation, Joanna, her twin sister Jasmine, her little brother Terrance, and her father are present.

During the observation, Joanna first began climbing the monkey bars with the gym rings. She went back and forth across the monkey bars several times, using her arms and hands to support her body and move from one bar to the next. She also allowed Jasmine to take turns on the equipment. Joanna and her sister then went on the spinner together and used their bodies to make the spinner move faster by shifting their weight and pushing with their legs. She then climbed up a ladder and swung side to side on the bars before sliding down the attached pole. Toward the end of the observation, Joanna was seen running across the grass toward the sandlot. Joanna also demonstrated strong social-emotional development during the observation. She shared equipment with her sister, waited for turns, and participated in cooperative play with her family. These behaviors showed patience, awareness of others, and positive sibling interaction. Her willingness to let Jasmine use the equipment and to play alongside her family suggested good emotional regulation and social awareness. Joanna also showed language development through her interactions with her family. She communicated while playing and responded to the people around her in both Cantonese and English. Her use of two languages reflects the language skills expected in a bilingual home environment and shows her ability to communicate across settings. These observations suggest that Joanna is developing language and social-emotional skills in age-appropriate ways.

Section 4:

Conclusion Through observing and analyzing the children's development, I gained a better understanding of how young children use play to grow socially, emotionally, and linguistically. I noticed that everyday interactions such as sharing, talking, expressing pride, and responding to others help children build important developmental skills. Before completing this assignment, I did not realize how much communication and emotional growth take place during ordinary play activities.

Observing the children also helped me see how their behavior connects to the milestones described in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines. The most interesting aspect of this assignment was watching how naturally children practice these skills without even noticing. This assignment helped me appreciate how observation can help adults better understand children's growth and development.

C. Observation on Cognitive Development

Section 1: Infant/Toddler

This observation is based on Sunny, an 11-month-old Caucasian female. She has blonde hair and hazel eyes, a round face, and a chubby torso. She has thin eyebrows and pink lips. She is wearing a sleeveless purple polka dot top with matching bloomers. She is also wearing white socks.

She is in a room with two adults who appear to be her parents, one playing with her and one recording. The room has wood floors, a brick fireplace, and a multicolored geometric rug in shades of green, red, brown, and cream. The space is filled with toys, including Winnie the Pooh stuffed bears, a Clifford the Big Red Dog plush, two Elmo toys, small plastic cars, a toy tea set, a toy piggy bank with plastic coins, three guitars, and a large jungle-themed plastic play-set with a monkey, a koala, and a spiral slide.

Sunny is energetic and engaged throughout the video, showing several cognitive skills. She responds to her mother's voice and face with smiles, demonstrating social recognition and comfort. She also tries to insert the large plastic coins into the piggy bank, showing that she understands where the coins belong and can act on that understanding. The New York State Early Learning Guidelines support these observations. Under cognitive development for ages 8 to 16 months, the milestone for understanding stability and change describes children testing physical objects by patting, banging, reaching inside, and sitting on them (NYSELG, p. 131). Sunny does this when she bangs the teacup and teapot on the floor, lifts the teapot lid, and reaches inside.

The memory and history milestone for the same age range describes children imitating actions they have seen before, such as blowing on hot food after watching a caregiver do it (NYSELG, p.139). Sunny reflects this when she picks up the toy cake and brings it to her mouth like she's eating. She has learned behavior from watching others eat and from being fed herself.

The second observation is of a preschool-aged girl named Sara. She has brown skin and dark braided hair. She is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt covered in bright pink shapes, a light blue short-sleeve shirt layered over it that is partially buttoned with an open collar, hot pink track pants with white drawstrings and dark purple side stripes, and black and white low-top sneakers. Sara is in a classroom, sitting on a large black rug with a smaller green rug on top that appears to have racetracks and neon yellow numbers on it. Behind her is a wooden cubby shelf filled with plastic bins of toys and building blocks. To her right is a white wall with a number line, posters, and a bulletin board decorated with blue paper balloons and student photos. She is pulling blocks from a white postal service bin and playing with a colored block set made up of cylinders, rectangles, triangles, and arched unit blocks in yellow, blue, green, and red. Sara speaks clearly and confidently throughout the video. After finishing her structure, she tells her teacher what she has built, calling it a castle, and points it out. She also demonstrates spatial awareness and problem-solving as she stacks the blocks, showing an understanding of balance, stability, and positioning. Two NYSELG cognitive development milestones apply here. First, Sara shows an understanding of cause and effect by watching her classmate Samantha stack blocks and predicting with visible anticipation that too many blocks will cause them to fall, identifying how one object or condition can affect another (NYSELG, p. 148). Second, she demonstrates engineering problem-solving by constructing a structure she envisioned using the materials available to her, which aligns with the milestone of using blocks or boxes to build

bridges and other creations (NYSELG, p. 152).

The third observation is of a five-year-old Chinese American girl named Joanna, who speaks both Cantonese and English. She is wearing a light grey quarter-zip sweater with a large Pikachu patch, a baby pink long-sleeve shirt underneath, blush pink sweatpants, and red, pink, and white sneakers. She has fair skin, straight thick black hair cut to mid-length with bangs. The video is filmed at Cuesta Park in Mountain View, California during what appears to be autumn. Joanna is at the playground with her twin sister Jasmine, her younger brother Terrance, their father who is recording, and another man. The playground is partly concrete and partly sand, with monkey bars, slides, a roller slide, swings, and open space for running. The equipment is dark red and forest green.

Throughout the video Joanna shows cognitive development through language and problem-solving. She moves between Cantonese and English naturally when speaking with her father. Bilingualism is often described as a mental workout because fluency in more than one language is linked to stronger cognitive development overall. Joanna spends much of the video playing with Jasmine, running, climbing, and jumping. She crosses two different sets of monkeybars multiple times, finding different ways to get across each time, which reflects both critical thinking and problem-solving. She also counts the bars as she goes across them, which aligns with the NYSELG milestone of counting objects and keeping track of what has and has not been counted (NYSELG, p. 160). When Jasmine struggles and gets stuck on the ladder, Joanna notices and calls out to their father to help her, showing she understands cause and effect and can predict a likely outcome based on what she has observed, which reflects the milestone of predicting outcomes based on previously observed effects (NYSELG, p. 148).

After observing children across three different age groups, it became clear how important it is to track cognitive development milestones at each stage of growth. One of the most interesting aspects was seeing how the same developmental area can look completely different depending on the child's age. For example, understanding stability and change in infants shows up as physical exploration of objects, while in older children it eventually connects to grasping abstract concepts like life and death. Paying attention to where a child falls within these milestones are essential to supporting their development and making sure they are progressing appropriately for their age.

Part 2: Reflections on Culture

I have been surrounded by culture throughout my life. It is a big part of me, a 20-year-old woman of Jamaican heritage born in America. I am the oldest of 4 siblings and helped raise them. I speak English and Jamaican Patois; though it is sometimes not recognized as a language since it's an English-based Creole with West African influences. It is however the native language in Jamaica and I'm very proud that I speak it. I was born in Florida but was sent to Jamaica during my parents' separation. There I was raised as a Christian since I was 4 years old. I learned to pray and have faith in God which is cultural custom in Jamaica. It became a part of who I was and couldn't fathom that there were people in the world didn't believe in God at all. I wasn't even aware that there were different religions. At 9 years old, my mother would eventually pay for my flight back to the U.S. and moving in with her for the first time, she forced me into an extremely rigid version of Christianity. My beliefs got stricter but became far more hypocritical. Eventually, I'd face my own cognitive dissonance and left the faith all together.

My mother and father are both Jamaican, born and raise. I lived in Jamaica from when I was 4-9 years old with my brother's family, so I didn't have any memory of my parents since they had separated when I was 4. I lived with my mother from 2015 until 2025. From elementary school to my first semester in college, we survived on government programs like SNAP since my mother didn't make enough as a single mother to take care of (excluding my first brother) 3 kids. It was very hard for her to go from job to job just to take care of us, and I will forever be thankful. She didn't have many people to ask for help, so she did most things by herself. She played the cards she was dealt with. When it came to my father, I didn't know him at all. I only heard little things about him, but they were very vague. I knew that he was a part of an exterminating team, remarried and had 2 beautiful young girls. I am now in contact with him and

his side of the family, so I'm learning more about him!

My school life was normal. I started going to school while I was in Jamaica from kindergarten to primary school. My mom wanted to bring me back to the U.S, so I was put on a plane and brought here. I enrolled in an elementary school when I was 10 years old and it was a struggle. It was hard to fit in and adjust to a culture I was not familiar with. Time went by and I can say that I feel very comfortable where I am. In high school, I got to befriend and engage with people from different backgrounds and learn more of the world through them. This part of my school life was so important, and I don't know who I would be if I hadn't experienced the relationships I had at the time.

When it comes to sexuality, I would say I'm straight. I was bi-curious in high school and had a faint interest in women. However, nothing came of it since I was Christian and feared the reactions from my mom and our family friends. They made it very clear that homosexuality was a sin and that anyone was gay and didn't repent and change their ways, they would burn in hell. Knowing that this view of people with different sexualities and genders are wrong and harmful, I don't respect or abide by such an obscene belief at all. I currently am not interested in the same sex, but I strongly support and love the ones that are.

When it comes to Joanna, the young 5-year-old girl I observed, we both have both similarities and differences. She is a bilingual Chinese American who speaks both English and Cantonese. She has a twin sister named Jasmine and a younger brother named Terrance. They all speak English along with their father that speaks both Cantonese and English. They seem to be a

very close family that love each other. Me and Joanna both are similar on the bases of language since we speak 2 of them. In the video, we see Joanna playing in the park while her father is monitoring her sister and Terrance. Her family dynamic compared to mine is very different because Joanna and her seem super close and seems to cherish their time together, while my relationship with family isn't comparable in that sense. It's more neutral and complicated. While Joanna plays, it does remind me of how I used to be when I was younger. I loved playing with friends at school and playing light sports. But I was more of an indoor person as well. Joanna is school aged and is most likely to operate the same way while in the classroom.

Power and privilege have a big impact on how culture shapes a child's development and education. Not every child starts out with the same access to resources and opportunities. Things like socioeconomic status and gender can open doors for some children while closing them to others, and some children face systemic barriers that others never have to deal with. As a future infant/toddler caregiver, I acknowledge this. I want to create a space where every child feels comfortable, valued, and cared for. I want to encourage them to be curious, support their learning, and advocate for them when needed. Culture influences how we see the world and how we connect with others, and that includes how we experience education.

Part 3: Reflecting on your Observations: Commentary Paper

For this Commentary paper, I have chosen to focus on Joanna, a 5-year-old bilingual Chinese-American girl living in California. Joanna is observed in Cuesta Park and her home, along with her twin sister Jasmine and her brother Terrance. Through my observations of her behavior, I learned more about her in her different areas of development, those being the following.

a. Developmental Skills & Processes

Cognition: Joanna displayed her developmental skills and processes in cognition repeatedly while in the playground. There are two different types of monkey bars, and she figures out how to get across both in unique and different ways, demonstrating her problem-solving skills. Joanna is also bilingual. Bilingualism is referred to as a “mental gym.” Being fluent in more than one language is associated with higher cognitive development. Joanna also displays her symbolic and creative thinking. When in the sand pit, Joanna makes a sand castle with her sister Jasmine. She uses small tree branches and creatively shapes the sand, displaying her creative thinking.

Language: Joanna displays her developmental skills and processes through her expressive language, receptive language, and communication skills. Joanna uses expressive language when her sister is having problems getting across the monkey bars. She sees that her sister needs help and tells her father, so Jasmine can get the help she needs. Joanna displays her communication skills through code switching. She switches between English and Cantonese when conversing with her father. Joanna is also receptive. She listens to, receives, and follows instructions. When she and her twin sister Jasmine are in the playground, they spin together on a free-standing spinner, and their father instructs them to put their heads closer together so it can spin faster, and she follows those instructions.

Social: Joanna demonstrates her social skills through her strong sense of self and independence, as well as her ability to cooperate with others. Joanna and Jasmine are in a sand pit and create a pile of sand. Joanna demonstrates her independence in taking the initiative to create this without the instruction from an outside influence, like a parent or teacher. Joanna is also not creating this structure alone. They take turns adding more sand to the pile and helping one another collect sand for the pile. Joanna demonstrates her cooperative play, sharing, and turn-taking skills when interacting with her sister.

Emotional: Joanna displays her emotional skills and processes as well. She has an easy or flexible temperament. She demonstrates empathy when she sees her sister having difficulties going across the monkey bars. Not only does she feel empathy, but she takes an extra step to help her sister out. Joanna is also confident in her abilities to complete tasks and wants her sister to be able to do the same. She expresses her emotions of eagerness to her sister and the desire to teach her sister how to complete a movement across the playground. She tells her to follow her and watch as she completes the movement so she can teach her sister. She is aware of her emotions and desires and understands how to clearly express them.

Physical: Joanna displays both her Gross motor and Fine motor skills. Joanna runs, climbs up ladders, slides down poles, and swings across monkey bars. Demonstrating her skills in balance, climbing, swinging, and the overall use of her gross motor skills and large muscle movements. When in the area with sand, she balances her body, takes her shoe off, pours the sand out of her shoe, and puts her shoe back on. She also plays in the sand with her sister, creating a mountain of sand while pouring and molding. All examples of fine motor skills and development.

Sensory Processing: Joanna displays her sensory processing skills through her ability to engage with and tolerate different textures. She touches and plays with sand, showing her ease and comfort with different textures and tactile processing. Joanna also displays sensory-seeking behavior when she spins and is in constant movement.

Activities of daily living: Joanna is shown in two different settings in the video. Her home and the park. Joanna is seen eating at the beginning of the video, which is an activity of daily living. More than once, Joanna also takes her shoes off and places them back on, also an activity of daily living.

b. Comparison of Development

Similarities: Sara and Sunny share both similarities and differences in their overall development. Although they are in different age ranges, they both share similarities cognitively, physically, and socially-emotionally. Sunny is an infant, and Sara is preschool-aged, but they both engage in problem-solving skills and creativity. In the classroom, Sara independently creates her own structure out of multi-colored building blocks and, once done, assists her friend Samantha in building a tall stack of blocks. Sara demonstrates her problem-solving abilities, ability to use both gross and fine motor skills, understanding of cause and effect, strong sense of self, ability to cooperate well with others, ability to communicate well, and ability to think creatively and execute tasks the way she wants. Sunny, although an infant, demonstrates similar skills. Sunny understands cause and effect when playing with her piggy bank and tea cup set. She demonstrates independence and a sense of self when attempting to place a plastic coin in the piggy bank by herself. Although she cannot communicate in full sentences, she engages in conversation with her mother through sounds, movement, and body language. In a social-

emotional sense, both Sunny and Sara demonstrate their self-assurance as well as their ability to cooperate with others.

Differences: Sunny and Sara are in different age groups, so they differ in physical aspects. Sara has developed in her gross and fine motor skills, while Sunny has developed mainly in her gross motor skills and is still developing in her fine motor skills. Sunny crawls, can do assisted standing, and uses her large muscles. Sara can walk around, run, grab objects, and move objects. With language, Sara can communicate clearly and in full sentences, while Sunny is receptive but can only communicate in sounds and gestures. They also engage cognitively with problems in different ways. Sunny solves problems with trial and error. If the coin didn't go in the piggy bank slot the first time, that is how she learns and thinks. But Sara solves problems differently. When building her structure, she solves her problems in a way that Sunny could not use logic and understanding from previous experiences.

- c. Setting Comparison: All three children observed are found in different settings. Sunny (infant) is in a room with wood tiles, a brick fireplace, and is sitting on a multi-colored geometric rug with shades of green, red, brown, and cream. The room is filled with toys for her, and the fireplace is stacked with stuffed animals. Sara (Preschooler) is in a classroom. Sara is sitting on a large black rug. Behind her is a large wooden structure, composed of cubby shelves that are filled with plastic bins that contain toys and wooden building blocks. To the right of her is a wall that has a number line, posters, and a cork bulletin board. And Joanna (young school-age) is in Cuesta Park in Mountain View,

California. This takes place during what looks like autumn. There are trees everywhere, park benches, and a playground for the children. The settings are both similar and different. They are all distinct and different settings. Sunny is in what appears to be a living room or playroom in her home. Sara is in a classroom, and Joanna is in a playground. All are different, but all encourage learning through play. In all three settings, the children are comfortable, can play freely, and develop through playing. For Sunny, she is surrounded by toys and adults that she trusts and feels safe around. She is able to play and develop cognitively, socially, and emotionally in an environment that she is comfortable in. She expresses joy and entertainment because of the environment she is in and is therefore able to grow and learn. Sara is in a classroom. She is around other children who are learning and playing just like her, and teachers that she sees on a consistent basis. An environment like this that fosters comfort with the child is what influences a child's behavior and encourages growth. Sara displays confidence, independence, and strong social-emotional skills. This is because of her environment and the others that inhabit this same environment.

c. The Child's Aspect of Culture

1. Race/Ethnicity: Joanna is Chinese- American. For many, where we come from impacts the way we develop, and I assume the same applies to her. Her culture may influence her values and the way she views those around her. Chinese culture values respect toward elders, collectivism, and hard work. These can influence the way she goes about challenges in life and the way she interacts with people in a social setting.

Language: Joanna speaks both Cantonese and English. Not only does this influence the way she interacts socially with her family and others, but it also impacts her cognitive development. As said, bilingualism is associated with high cognition, so her bilingualism definitely pushes her cognitive growth and also improves her communication skills overall.

2. Gender: Joanna is a 5-year-old girl. There are certain gender expectations placed on girls and boys. These gender expectations may influence the ways she engages with play as a young person and life in general. Joanna is a young, independent girl full of life and excitement. Gender expectations and new gender norms may help her grow and nurture her independence and vivaciousness, or they may place unhealthy norms and expectations on her.
 3. Family composition: Joanna has her mother, father, twin sister Jasmine, and younger brother Terrance. They appear to be an active and engaging family. Going on outings together and being nurturing, loving, and actively involved in each other's lives. Being a part of a family and environment like this can foster independence, confidence, and overall self-assurance.
- e. Your aspects of culture:
- Gender: When it comes to sexuality and gender, I would say I'm straight. I was bi-curious in high school and had a faint interest in women. However, nothing came of it since I was Christian and feared the reactions from my mom and our family friends. They made it very clear that homosexuality was a sin and that anyone was gay and didn't repent and change their ways, they would burn in hell. Knowing that this view of people

with different sexualities is wrong and harmful, I don't respect or abide by such an obscene belief at all. I currently am not interested in the same sex, but I strongly support and love the ones that are.

Language/ Ethnicity: I speak English and Jamaican Patois; though it is sometimes not recognized as a language since it's an English-based creole with West African influences.

It is however the native language in Jamaica and I'm very proud that I speak it.

Religion: I was born in Florida but was sent to Jamaica during my parents' separation. There I was raised as a Christian since I was 4 years old. I learned to pray and have faith in God which is cultural custom in Jamaica. It became a part of who I was and couldn't fathom that there were people in the world didn't believe in God at all. I wasn't even aware that there were different religions. At 9 years old, my mother would eventually pay for my flight back to the U.S. and moving in with her for the first time, she forced me into an extremely rigid version of Christianity. My beliefs got stricter but became far more hypocritical. Eventually, I'd face my own cognitive dissonance and left the faith all together.

Family composition/ Socio-economic status: I lived with my mother from 2015 till 2025. From elementary school to my first semester in college, we survived on government programs like SNAP since my mother didn't make enough as a single mother to take care of (excluding my first brother) 3 kids. It was very hard for her to go from job to job just to take care of us, and I will forever be thankful. She didn't have many people to ask for help, so she did most things by herself. She played the cards she was dealt with.

Conclusion: I learned so much while engaging with this project and the observations. I became more intentional and aware in observing the different aspects of a child's development, how their environment impacts them, and how their development will impact them into adulthood. Learning all this also caused me to reflect on my own experiences and how my culture and the environments I grew up in affected my development and the way I move through life. What struck me the most was learning how there is not one part of development in a child that isn't extremely significant. Every factor plays a huge part in a child's life, and as educators, it is our job to help foster good development and encourage healthy growth. My desire is that, as an educator, I am able to do this for children. To be a safe space and create a comfortable environment where a child can grow into their best self and be confident and comfortable with who they are.

Part 4: Domain Project



1. Introduction

Today, we will be presenting on the activities of daily living domain. We observed three different children across different age ranges. Sunny (infant), Sara (Preschool age), and Jasmine (young school age). We will be speaking about the Activities of Daily Living that they display.

2. Explanation of the domain

Activities of Daily Living (ADL) are everyday tasks a person does to be able to function independently. In this case, it's the tasks that the children we observed were completing. These tasks include basic skills such as eating, using the bathroom, dressing, and participating in daily routines and school routines. We chose this domain because ADL is an intersection of multiple developmental domains. In everyday life, we use our cognitive skills, motor skills, communication skills, and social-emotional skills. This domain focuses on how children develop independence and manage everyday tasks on their own. Children develop the ability to complete daily tasks through the use of cognitive, motor, and social skills. Children learn routines, how to better interact with others, and problem-solving. Something as simple as cleaning up after an activity, helping a friend, or eating their lunch shows growth in ADLs. This domain is significant to a child's development because it helps children increase confidence, independence, and general capability on a day-to-day basis.

3. Comparison of Children

a. Sunny- Infant

In Sunny's observation, she is seen displaying multiple skills. Sunny uses her gross and fine motor skills, her hand-eye coordination, and sensory exploration, all while playing. She observes colors, touches objects, holds and moves objects, places her toy cakes into her plastic tea cup,

and copies her mother pretending to eat the toy cake. She attempts to place her toy coins into her piggy bank, and she is seen smiling and responding to her mother during play with sounds and body language, showing growth in social-emotional development as well as her cognition. These early skills that she is using will later on support more independent everyday skills like feeding herself, dressing herself, and interacting with others.

b. Sara- Preschooler

In Sara's observation, she is seen building a structure out of colorful building blocks. After she finishes, she goes on to help her classmate Samantha build her structure by passing her the blocks she needs. Sara uses her problem-solving skills, figuring out how to balance and connect the blocks. She uses her fine motor skills and spatial awareness, helping her to understand the size, shape, and position of the blocks, all while stacking and placing the blocks carefully. And lastly, she uses her organizational skills as well as her communication and social skills when helping her classmate Samantha build her structure. These show her cognitive development, physical development, and social-emotional development all growing through simple day-to-day activities. These skills and daily activities help Sara complete daily tasks like working with others, following routines, organizing material, and becoming more independent in activities at home and school.

c. Jasmine- School age

In Jasmine's observation, she is seen in two different settings. In the beginning of the video, she is seen at home eating with her family. And for the rest of the video, she is seen in a playground with her father, twin sister Joanna, and her little brother Terrance. In the beginning of the video, she is seen eating and displaying her self-feeding skills. Throughout the rest of the video, Jasmine is in the park playing with her family. She uses her gross motor skills when climbing

and running. She uses her communication and cognitive skills when switching between Cantonese and English and when communicating with her father that she needs help. She uses her risk assessment and decision-making when playing and deciding what she feels she can and cannot do based on safety. And at the end of the video, she communicates that she is hot and takes her sweater off, practicing self-regulation, communication, and self-dressing. These abilities support independence in movement, safe navigation in daily life, and overall independence and self-care through self-feeding and self-dressing.

d. Comparing all three children

While all three children are of different age ranges and are seen in different environments, they all display development in activities of daily living. While Sunny and Sara display their activities of daily living through skills like organization, motor skills, and social-emotional skills, Jasmine has more variety in the skills she displays because of her differences in setting and situation. Sunny and Sara were in a playroom and a classroom, so there was no self-care displayed through self-feeding or dressing, but they still displayed their independence and growth through their daily activities. But for Jasmine, while she is seen displaying the same kind of skills as Sunny and Sara, she is also seen self-feeding and self-dressing. These different examples from the children, their ages, and their environments help us to see how activities of daily living aren't condensed to just one specific activity. It is an intersection of multiple domains where development is propelled in more than one way. Their examples show us how activities of daily living isn't displayed in only a domestic setting but can be displayed anywhere with any age range, and development and growth will still be taking place. The ADL domain overlaps with cognitive, motor, social-emotional, sensory, and language development.

4. Explanation of skills & processes

For infants like Sunny, ages 9-12 months, at this stage, they are developing sensory exploration and hand-eye coordination. She observes, touches, and manipulates objects during play, which builds the physical and cognitive foundation she will need for self-care tasks like feeding herself and eventually dressing. Another skill she is developing is imitation. When she copies her mother, pretending to eat the toy cake, she is practicing one of the earliest ways children learn daily routines by watching and repeating what caregivers do. This imitative behavior is how infants begin connecting actions to their everyday meaning. Preschool-aged children like Sara, they are developing problem-solving and organizational skills. She figures out how to balance and connect blocks, which mirrors the kind of thinking children use when managing materials, following routines, and completing tasks at home and school. She is also developing social and communication skills by helping her classmate, Samantha. Passing blocks, reading what someone needs, and cooperating toward a shared goal are all processes that support functioning well in group settings and daily school life. Young school-aged children like Jasmine, they are developing self-regulation and self-care. She recognizes that she is hot, communicates that need, and removes her sweater on her own, showing she can monitor her body and respond independently. She is also developing risk assessment and decision-making. On the playground, she actively evaluates what she feels safe doing, which is a critical process for navigating daily life with growing independence. These two skills together reflect a child who is becoming capable of managing herself across different environments and situations. For ages 9-12 months, teachers should keep in mind that during this time, the child will be learning early independence in little ways. Because of their age, it is the caretaker's primary job to lead, but the child can and will want to participate in little ways. It is important to foster this because this is where growth and development happen. The children will engage in assisted participation and exploration.

Teachers can encourage self-feeding and let infants participate in consistent routines. For preschool ages 3-5, children are going to want to be independent. They learn through watching others, participating hands-on, and having guided independence. To help ADLs' development, teachers can break tasks into little steps, give them choices when completing daily activities to foster independence, model certain behaviors, and encourage learning from peers. Young school-aged children, they are more capable of independence on a day-to-day basis. They begin to understand that ADLs are important for organization, health, and everyday living. Teachers can support this by encouraging responsibility, supporting routine building, and being there for support instead of direct help all the time to encourage that daily independence.

6. Conclusion

Through observing Sunny, Sara, and Jasmine, we were able to see how activities of daily living develop across different ages and environments. Each child gave us a different picture of what this domain looks like in action. Sunny showed us how the earliest play experiences build the foundation for future independence. Sara showed us how preschool-aged children grow through classroom routines and helping others. And Jasmine showed us how school-age children begin managing themselves across real-life situations with greater independence and self-awareness.

For teachers and caregivers, the takeaway is that ADL development happens everywhere and at every age. It does not require a special activity or a specific setting. It happens at the lunch table, on the playground, in the classroom, and at home. When we recognize those everyday moments as opportunities for growth, we are better equipped to support children in becoming more independent, capable, and confident in their daily lives.

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