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Developmental Assessment Reflection Paper:

Eleven months, Five, and Eight-year-old

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An Eleven month, Five, and Eight-Year-Old child

The observations I have observed with the various ages have provided insight into how each child has different experiences in play. For these observations, I attempted to observe children who range from infants to school-aged children. I wanted to gain experience with the various ages to understand how they differ in motor, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development. The assigned observations led me to ask why a child was choosing a specific activity to be engaged with. This allowed me to intertwine what I have learned about child development into action. Another exciting fact was how the children I observed were settled in various stages. For example, the five-year-old Margot is currently in the imaginative stage, where theoretical play is often present. What will be helpful for my future profession as a child life specialist is the various settings in which I observe the children. This includes playground, household, and public settings with adults, peers, siblings, and guardians. The children I observed were often beside their mothers during my observations, and activities were provided for me to observe how they interacted daily.

The child I observed was Eleven-month Myla, whom her mom often accompanied. Myla was attached to mom's hip and would not usually be put down to interact with the individuals at the wedding rehearsal. The next child was Margot, a five-year-old often involved in peer play. At the playground, she quickly made friends with new peers and engaged in parallel play. The last child I observed was eight-year-old Porter. He often kept to himself and engaged in solitary play when his brother would ask to play with him at their house. These observations allowed me to

gain insight into assessing behaviors in numerous settings. In these various settings, I could

practice the observational methods provided by Professor Vadgama.

Physical and Motor Development

Physical and motor development were exponentially different among the children I

observed. They each had limitations and exceptional development within each age. While

observing the children, I sought to observe various physical activities with them. The theory I

decided to acknowledge through my observations was Vygotskys theory. I often used this theory

when observing five-year-old Margot because of how she learned from others. Although Margot

was in the imagination stage, she usually learned from others. Miller (2016) states, "Children

actively seek out and respond to various social and physical contexts. These activities, in turn,

change children cognitively, subsequently changing the nature of their future activities." Because

this theory was present within my observation with Margot, she would watch her friends play

hopscotch and then join the activity with them. This is not only part of cognitive development

but is an additional part of physical development as well. According to Gibson's theory, "we do

not perceive stimuli or retinal images or sensations or even just things; what we perceive are

things that we can eat, or write with, or sit down on, or talk to" (Miller 2016). Margot can

observe her friends doing risky movements and is inclined to follow. The oldest, Porter, had

impressive hand and eye coordination while doing puzzles, Legos, and other outside activities

like riding a bike. Myla, the eleven-month-old, struggled with numerous physical activities. As

stated in my observation, she would walk four steps and then fall. However, when assistance was

present, she could walk farther. Based on Piaget's sensorimotor stage, she was still learning the

physical actions of the world and understanding their reflexes (Miller, 2016). However, if given

the proper setting and boundaries to learn her reflexes, her development could progress through each new achievement (Thelen, 2000). Reflecting on these observations, I learned that there is a learning pattern within each age group. Porter fell off his bike, Margot is still learning to catch a ball, and Margot is being taught to walk. It was interesting to see them learn these skills they will soon master.

<div align="center">Social/Emotional Development</div>

Each child focused on social/emotional development within the different age groups. For example, Porter focused on feelings, solitary play, or seeking approval from adults, while Mylas's development revolved around playing with others and separation anxiety from their parents. It is interesting to note a pattern between these learning ages and how they develop and cope with their emotions. Another pattern I noticed within my assigned observations was how each child would go to their mom's for assistance. Whether that is to help them cope with their emotions or to seek approval, I learned that there are a variety of instances where emotions can be practiced. With Margot, I observed her caring for her peers at the park when they were upset. I witnessed her grasp the emotions of the peer who was hurt. Based on the theories I learned this semester, Freud offers valuable insight into how several sources could stimulate emotional development within children. These include physical maturation, external frustrations, internal conflicts, personal inadequacies, and anxiety, which are often present within the various age groups. From my observations, I learned that each child processes their emotions differently. Since Porter is in the concrete operational period stage, he often struggled with communication and was learning to be independent. Because of this, he frequently sought approval from his mother when he completed activities. He may show distress when she is not paying attention.

Margot feels for her peers and wants to help them feel better. From observation, psychosocial love and belonging to role models or guardians are essential factors in a child's social and emotional development.

Language Development

In my language development observation, I focused on understanding how the children would talk to their peers, adults, or others who were part of my observation. According to Miller (2016), Vygotsky's theory regarding language development states, "It is important in that children's improved ability to use their own language to regulate their behavior would facilitate moving through the zone." With language, children can voice and advocate for themselves in an unfamiliar setting. My observation records noted that I should observe how they converse with adults, how long their sentences are, and whether they imitate sounds and use language to express emotions. In Margot's assigned observation at the park, since she is in the pre-operational stage of development, she did not speak in six-to-ten-word sentences. Often, I would find myself guessing what Margot was saying to her peers. Piaget's theory states that the characteristics of a child who resonates in this stage are egocentrism, which is where Margot falls to tailor their speech to meet the needs of a listener (Miller, 2016). However, she does an exceptional job attempting to form sentences at her age. However, Porter conversed on an adult level and used descriptive language with his brother and parents. It is interesting to notice that the children in these two observations are three years apart and exhibit different development abilities through language. Myla's language development with the 11-month-old differed vastly from the older children's. Myla was, unfortunately, in her learning stage of understanding and reciprocating language development. She was often unengaged and did not imitate sounds. In my

assigned observations, I concluded that guardians could play a huge role in educating a child on language and assisting them in their development.

Cognitive Development

In my last assigned observation regarding cognitive development, numerous differences were present. It was interesting to notice that each developmental age represented different aspects of thinking through actions. According to Piaget's theory, he proposed "cognitive growth is much like embryological growth: an organized structure becomes more and more differentiated, and complex, over time" (Miller, 2016). Between my observations, I learned what the children's mastery levels should be and where their limitations may be. Based on Myla being present in the sensorimotor stage, she should be developing behaviors like hearing, grasping, and numerous other reflexes; however, based on my observation, she is learning to engage with others through waving "bye-bye" or responding to guardians when told no. While Myla lacked milestones with hearing and responding to others, she mastered gesturing to objects that she wanted to obtain.

On the other hand, based on an 8-year-old observation assessment, Porter's ideal development is engaging in research-based projects and using the reasoning for the "why, how, what" of why things happen. Although he did not use a calendar, he often did basic research on ocean facts. This supports Piaget's theory, "They deal with what "is" rather than what "could be." The final step is to apply the operations to purely verbal or logical statements and to the possible as well as the actual" (Miller, 2016). Lastly, Margot's development in cognition needed to be improved due to her not mastering measurement or knowing the names of coins. Although she lacked cognitive development, she mastered understanding what whole and half were based on

her sandwich at the park. Overall, this observation allowed me to understand the specifics of cognitive development that need to be mastered at their age.

<div align="center">Analysis and Conclusions</div>

Based on the observations of the three children, I could assume that they may need assistance from their guardians or role models to assist in their development. However, based on their overall development in each category, they all showed mastery in social and emotional development. If I had to change my observation, I would want to observe one of the children in a school setting. Because I only observed the children at home, the playground, and the banquet hall, I needed the opportunity to observe their cognitive development. For example, in my observation with Margot, I could not fulfill her cognitive development section due to the lack of resources on the playground that I could use to observe her knowledge of measurements. Overall, the assigned observations benefited my development and understanding of how children of various ages could differ in their cognitive, social, emotional, motor, and language development.

References

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https://doi.org/10.1080/016502500750037937