

Developmental Assessment Reflection paper

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Introduction

Assessing child development at different stages can be very important when understanding the physical, motor, social, emotional, language, and cognitive aspects of development. Child development has been explored by many philosophers and researchers and suggests that the theories behind child development are very important in furthering our understanding of this topic. An Introduction to Child Development states that development in the domains of biological, social, and cognitive development help explain the patterns of change in an individual from conception through the lifespan. Through my own experiences observing children in a childcare facility under the guidance of trained teachers, I was able to reflect on the biological, social, and cognitive development of an infant, a two-year-old, and a four-year-old.

The first child I observed in the childcare setting was an 11-month-old male named Parker, the second child I observed was a two-year-old female named Twila, and the final child I observed was a four-year-old female named Harper. The observations I conducted were very eye-opening to me. I think the environment in which I conducted my observation was very beneficial for me in making my observation and analysis of the different children at different stages in life. Observing in a child care setting allowed me to observe the child in a nature it is used to. The child was used to having different individuals in and out of the classroom as teachers change throughout the day. This allowed me to sit and observe the child in the most natural environment possible as it allowed me to see how the child interacted among their peers, with their teacher, and performed various different activities throughout the day.

My observation experience was a positive exercise. On the days I completed my observation I was welcomed by staff, provided a comfortable environment to be able to watch the children, as well as able to ask questions to reflect on my observations with the individual who was around the children on a daily basis. Being in this environment allowed me to see how Parker, Twilla, and Harper were able to interact with others and allowed me to see and reflect on their development.

Physical and Motor Development

Parker, Twila, and Harper all showed signs of physical development. The infant Parker who was nearing 11 months at the time of observation showed signs of excelled physical and motor development. For example, he was able to crawl around the room, pull himself up on objects, stand unsupported, and reach for different objects and toys. Twila showed signs of physical and motor development that were on track for a typical two-year-old. Twila was able to run, engage in exercise play, stand on her tiptoes, and open doors. She had all of these skills mastered. Harper, unlike Parker and Twila, seemed to be behind her peers physically. She struggled with fine motor skills with scissors, crayons, and markers were unable to hold the marker and write her own name, as well had difficulties when playing an exercise game to run, stop, then continue. The physical and Motor development of these three children were easy to observe in this environment as they were around other peers. It made it easier for me to truly assess the physical development of the child as they were surrounded by other children the same age as them. For example, Parker at almost 11 months of age reached more milestones physically than another infant in the room who was older and was not displaying the motor skills as him. The interactions that the children encountered helped promote their physical and motor

development. Lev Vygotsky states that children learn about their world through different physical interactions (Williams 2022). Learning through different experiences helps beyond physical development but as well through cognitive and social development.

Social and Emotional Development

Children thrive off of social interaction and can form different types of attachment. John Bowlby's theory of attachment explores the four different types of attachment: secure attachment, anxious-insecure attachment, avoidant-insecure attachment, and disorganized-insecure attachment (Davidson 2007). These types of attachment were able to be observed in my own observations. For example, Parker was not scared of any strangers and was not afraid to leave his mother. He willingly would go to anyone as Twilia cried when her mom dropped her off and was hesitant to walk towards her room. Parker showed signs of secure attachment as Twila showed signs of anxious-insecure attachment. Twila also presented with more emotions. She would whine more and cry when she would not get her way as well as boss her peers around. Harper would do the same. She would boss her peers around trying to gain control and respect from them. Parker was also social with his peers. I observed him crawling to his peers and babbling with them. All three children showed positive signs of social and emotional development.

Freud's Theory of personality and psychosexual stages also relates to the social and emotional development that I observed. For example, the ID, EGO, and SUPEREGO that I was able to observe were beneficial in allowing me to see how these children interacted with their peers. For example, as I stated before Harper would boss around her peers, Harper is exhibiting the ID, she wants instant gratification. When she bosses around her peers she wants them to

listen to her, she shows signs of demanding their respect as she would get angry towards her friends if they did not follow her lead. By her achieving this behavior I was able to assess her personality and her social interactions better. The patterns of these children and their social and emotional development can be tracked as we know children can start to form equations and relationships from a young age. Parker shows the need to be with others as do Twila and Harper. They thrive off of interaction with others.

Language Development

Language differs from birth to adulthood. For example, Parker's language varies differently from Twilla or Harper but all three are able to communicate effectively for the needs that they want. For example, I observed Parker cry for a bottle of milk, whine and pull on the snack cupboard, cry when he woke up to get let out of the crib, and many other forms of communication. Parker was also able to say words like uh-oh, Dada, and Mama, and his forms of communication were developing. Twila had more complex forms of language than Parker. Twila knows the meaning of words and can express those meanings. Harper can talk in full sentences and sentences with direct meaning. Vygotsky's theory of development also touches on language development. The article Theories of Language Development states, "This concept suggests that the child, from birth, is continually engaging in social interactions, which allows him to develop higher cognitive functions, namely language, and thought" (EDGY 2020). For example, Vygotsky says that interactions with others support language development, so when Parker, Twila, and Harper are interacting with their peers or their teachers like when doing circle time or even reading books they are developing a larger vocabulary and developing their own language. I found these aspects of language super interesting to observe. I really like how at each different

stage of development language can occur. Parker could communicate his own needs in the same way Harper could, just in a different way.

Cognitive Development

Watching children as young as infants are able to learn certain skills and develop cognitively has always been something interesting to me. Piaget's theory of cognitive development is a theory that I connected with a lot when reflecting on the observations I made about cognitive development. As children grow Piaget suggests that intelligence and cognitive function grows with them (Mcleao 2020). I love how this article phrased this because I was able to see this in my observation. Parker had a cognitive function, he was able to commence his needs, react to certain stimuli, intentionally select certain toys, and even show that objects have understanding. As Parker grows to be the same age as Twilia he will have functions like her. He will be able to distinguish between things that he likes or dislikes as Twila does, identify feelings like happiness and sadness, show interest, and even help. This cognitive development will even expand further by the time he gets to Harper's age when she is able to reason, understand concepts, notice patterns, and begin to count. As I was able to observe through these three children all of them were cognitively developed in the appetite stages that Piaget proposes. While I only was able to observe children in the sensorimotor and preoperational stage I know that these children with the guidance they are given and how they are developing now will continue to show signs of growth and cognitive development. I loved watching how the teachers made sure that the children were positively aiming toward cognitive development. They provided the right tools for them, for example allowing Harper to make the choice of activities

she wants to reflect her own interests. I think that this concept was the easiest to observe. I watched both Twila and Harper express their interests, choose what station they wanted to partake in, and learn about simple concepts that they could relate to me. Overall I really enjoyed observing these children's cognitive development.

Analysis and Conclusion

Based on my observations and reflection on their development I would suggest that these three children are on track for all types of development. All of these children had many of their skills mastered and only a few are still counting to learn. For example, Twila has shown interest in toilet training and is in the process of learning but this is not a skill that is mastered. This is still appropriate for her developmental age as well. I found that with the information I concluded and the information I was given I would confidently state that these children will continue to grow biologically, socially, and cognitively. I was able to notice that both females showed interest in activities that responded to their genders. For example, they both decided they wanted to play house and showed instincts of motherly tendencies. I was able to reflect on this as well as the teachers and child both told me that they had younger siblings and wanted to be like their mom and take care of others. This nurturing characteristic was common among Twila and Harper. Overall there were different characteristics that aided my observations and conclusion. With the help of theories like Piaget and Vygotsky as well I was able to be confident in my decisions. I was able to identify the differences in the development of children two years in age apart and reflect on the development and how they are all connected.

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