
A Paper On Children Observation At The Center For Young Children

Description of Childcare Center

For my children observation paper, I went to the Center for Young Children. The center's hours of operation are 7:30 A.M to 5:30 P.M. I attended the center on November 7th, 2019, from 9 A.M. to 11 A.M. The center provides childhood programs for children from the ages of three to six.

The specific room I observed was called the "Red Room," which was one of three preschool-aged rooms. Within the classroom there was approximately 16 children, ages three or four, as well as three teachers and two undergraduate student-aids. The first thing I noticed about the demographics of the group was that most individuals were white. In fact, every person in the room was white besides four of the children. Further, the only language spoken was English. The specific child I observed was a four-year-old Asian girl named Jubi.

The room appeared to be broken into sections based on activity, referred to as "centers" by the teachers. In the middle of the room was a carpet with the childrens' pictures for assigned seating; to the left was building blocks and an art easel; to the right there was a play area and cubbies, and closest to me were tables set up for drawing and snack-time. The room was colorful and decorated with the students' arts and crafts, as well as an additional classmate named "Marshmallow," who was the Zebra Finch class pet.

At the beginning of every day, the children start with "free choice" before their morning meeting, allowing for the class to stay occupied while everyone arrived. Free choice seemed to mostly consist of drawing, reading, blocks, and for some, a morning snack of Cheerios.

Child Development Observation

Physical Development

One of the first things Jubi exhibited that stood out to me was her ability to draw, which she spent most of her time doing. This indicates that her fine motor skills are progressing. These skills are defined as the movements we make with the small muscles of the hands, in addition to hand eye coordination. These actions demonstrate that her physical development is advancing and that she is able to control the small muscle groups that give her the capability to not only

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hold a marker steadily, but also to draw. Within the next few years, specifically around the ages of five to seven, her fine motor skills will be much improved.

Social/Emotional Development

Another form of child development Jubi exhibited was her social/emotional development. At Jubi's age, a child is growing a stronger sense of self as someone who is active in a social world full of others. Throughout my child observation, Jubi seemed to be very independent, more so than most of her classmates. I first observed her independence when her father dropped her off. She immediately seemed ready to join the class, even wiping away her father's goodbye kisses from her cheek. But as he was leaving, she ran to give him a final hug. By returning for a final hug while simultaneously being ready to explore by herself, Jubi displayed secure-attachment with her father. Her father acted as a comforting and secure figure, which is a sign of secure attachment, according to John Bowlby.

From the time she arrived to when I left, Jubi appeared to entertain herself, seemingly unphased on what activities the other children were participating in. This increased initiative and self-efficacy shows a greater sense of self-reliance that will only increase with age. This also correlates back to Jubi's father being her secure base allowing her to explore without him being present.

Cognitive Development

Jubi arrived in the morning with a stuffed panda, which she left in her cubby while she played. Throughout my observation, Jubi seemed to return to her cubby to check on her panda and even appeared to whisper to it. Preschoolers have a hard time differentiating between living and inanimate objects; this confusion often leads them to attribute life to non-living things, which is called animism. The fact that her panda was still in the back of her mind during a chaotic class is not surprising to me. After this age period, Jubi's reasoning will become more complex and therefore her confusion between living and non-living things will lessen.

Evaluation

Program Activities and Curriculum in Childcare Center

The first activity that took place was the classroom's morning meeting, where one teacher led the class in song then began her lesson. The Red Room is currently learning about trains, and I was told they will continue to do so for the next couple of months. The activity included one student coming up to a picture of a train, naming a part, and then the whole class learning how

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to spell and pronounce that part. From this activity, the children could skillfully learn more words and pronunciations by listing the parts. This concept of listening to the teacher's pronunciation and spelling helps the children practice their use of phonology, semantics, and pragmatics in early language development. Then, by using their fingers to spell out words, the children were able to better recognize the correct way to produce, understand, and spell language.

Another activity that caught my attention was that all of the children created a page in a "birthday book" for one of their fellow peers. Before the student whose birthday it was arrived, all of the students took turns at the drawing tables and made their own page to add to the book. This activity was impressive because I was able to see all of the children come together to create something special for someone else. In the end, Jubi and her classmates were proud and excited to deliver the book to their friend. This activity of cohesively coming together as a group is called collectivism.

Adult Child Interactions in Childcare Center

Many students drew trains to add to their "train book" at the art table. After Jubi finished her work, she was extremely proud of her drawings; she went around showing her work to one of her teachers. The teacher responded to Jubi with a big smile, admiring her book. These acts of sharing positive emotions with attachment figures are the examples of affective sharing. By having her teacher reciprocate positive emotions to her work, Jubi received positive encouragement. She will continue to hold affective sharing with future assignments to her teachers because of interactions like these.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Childcare Center

While observing the center, I noticed several positive aspects of the program. One strong aspect is the freedom given to the children. I enjoyed how the children were given free reign to choose what they wanted to do with their time. Not every child shares the same interests so it is very important to allow children to explore their likes and dislikes. This belief in the ability to influence our own functioning to achieve goals, according to Albert Bandura, is called self-efficacy.

Another strength of the center I enjoyed seeing was how much reading was implemented throughout the class, and even more so, how much the children seemed excited to read. Research indicates that reading to children does in fact matter and make a difference. Increased exposure to literacy outcomes including reading skills show great benefits in a child's early cognitive development.

However, the CYC definitely has room for improvement. My first recommendation would be to

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have the teachers and aides more equally distribute their attention. I noticed some of the teachers staying stationary in one activity or remaining with one group of children rather than bouncing around from group to group. At multiple points during my children observation I noticed children laying down or sitting alone seemingly sad, needing attention, or perhaps direction. The instructors should try to more evenly disperse their time spent with the children so that the children's needs are equally fulfilled. In this situation, some of the children might be lacking sensitive care: the extent to which their needs and feelings are fulfilled.

Another recommendation I have is for there to be less large group instruction. While the children were able to choose what they wanted to do in their “free time” (draw, blocks, etc.), the lesson on trains was pretty much teacher-directed and in a large group. Although I was only there for one lesson, I imagine most of the lessons that occur in class are organized in the same way. To optimize preschoolers learning cognitive development the CYC should encourage more hands on discovery in smaller groups.

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