

CLDDV 101

Anecdotal Observation Assignments

“Education of the mind without education of the heart is not education at all.” Aristotle

Goal - Observing Children

The goal of observation is to enhance your understanding of the major concepts and milestones of development through observation of real children rather than just reading or hearing about how children grow and develop. Child development refers to the kinds of changes that occur from conception through late adolescence. Physical (fine and gross/large motor), cognitive, emotional, social, self-help, and aesthetic development will be explored through these observations, providing a brief account of development as it occurs. In addition, using well-written anecdotal records teachers are better able to track a child's interests, how a child is getting along, learning, and progressing in a program, become the basis for planning developmentally appropriate curriculum to help the child build skills, and have documentation to support classroom assessments. Observations, recorded over time, and representative of all domains of development can present a comprehensive picture of a child's development .

Piaget's Concrete Operational Stage (2-7 years of age)

The preschool-aged children that you will be observing have entered into Piaget's preoperational stage of cognitive development. The key feature of children's thinking in this stage is symbolic representation. The child is now able to use a symbol, an object, or a word to stand for something else. The use of symbols can be clearly seen in the child's use of language; for example, the child can now represent objects in the environment with the appropriate word and can refer to past and future events. The use of symbols is also apparent in children's drawings, imitation, mental imagery, and symbolic play. For example, a preoperational child might be observed feeding her doll imaginary cereal or drawing a picture of the balloons at her last birthday party. Thinking in terms of symbols does permit more flexibility and planning in their problem solving.

Despite these increases in cognitive skills, the thought processes of preoperational children result in characteristic differences in reasoning. Because they do not use logical operations, their reasoning often seems flawed to adults. One of the most easily observed differences in how preoperational children reason at this age is the tendency to view the world from one's own perspective only, a phenomenon that Piaget termed egocentrism. Because of egocentric thinking, preoperational children may “hide” by covering their eyes or only parts of their bodies, believing that if they can't see the seeker than they, themselves, can't be seen.

Other preoperational reasoning errors result from thinking that is intuitive, rather than logical. For example, preschool children are incapable of conservation – they do not understand that certain properties of objects, such as volume or mass, do not change just because the superficial appearance of the object changes. Preoperational children are not only tied to their perceptions, they are also unable to de-center their thinking, or think about

more than one aspect of a problem at a time; \. Their thinking shows what Piaget called irreversibility – they are unable to reverse or mentally undo an action.

During this stage of development, children acquire new words at an astronomical rate. These rapid gains in children’s vocabulary are accompanied by mastery of more complex grammatical structures such as forming past tenses and plurals. As children acquire the grammatical rules of their language, a type of error called overregularization may occur in which children overuse the basic rules of language. For example, a 2 ½ or 3-year-old may say, “I bringed my puppy,” or “My feets are cold.” Children also become more likely to use correct syntax – that is, they become more aware of how words should be ordered to convey a particular meaning.

Children’s knowledge about gender and gender-role expectations develops very early. Preschoolers have a strong sense of gender identity, a sense of being male or female. Between the ages of 4 and 6, children develop gender constancy; the realization that gender stays the same regardless of how one looks or behaves. At this point, they may adopt very rigid standards for what they believe is appropriate male and female dress and behavior.

Preschool children are more likely to play with sex-appropriate toys; that is, boys are more likely to play with stereotypical “boy toys” – such as trucks; and girls are more likely to play with stereotypical “girl toys” – such as dolls and kitchen sets. Over the preschool years, gender segregation also increases, as children are more likely to play with same-sex peers rather than opposite-sex peers.

Preoperational children’s social interactions become increasingly reciprocal and coordinated, which is reflected in their play. Children’s play can be divided into four categories, ranging from least to most socially complex – nonsocial activity (onlooker and solitary), parallel play, associative play, and cooperative play. Around the age of 4 or 5 there is a developmental shift in the type of play in which children engage. Four and five year olds begin to demonstrate constructive play, drawing pictures or working on puzzles in pairs or groups, purposefully creating and constructing something together. Play also becomes more complex as children begin to experiment with both everyday and imaginary roles through pretend or dramatic play. This type of play involves advances in cognition, perspective taking, and communication skills.

While there are individual differences in development, most children develop typically. Some children, however, may show significant maturational delays or differences – these children are often identified with developmental disabilities. While many developmental disabilities are identified based on delays or differences from what we know of typical development, and different labels are used to describe the patterns of difference. It is important to remember, however, that a child with a disability is first and foremost a child, and that all children are typical in many ways. So instead of saying ‘disabled child’, it is more appropriate and respectful to state ‘a child with a disability.’

Writing Skills

- If you struggle with your writing skills, there are several resources including enrolling in CLDDV-48, securing a mentor through the Mentor Program (see instructor for

- referral), utilizing MJC's writing lab or tutoring center, or working with a skilled high-school or college student or peers to review your assignments before they are due.
- The following pointers will help your success in writing effective and informative observational reports.
 - Use the spell and grammar check functions in your computer's writing program.
 - Carefully review versions of commonly used words such as **they're** (they are), **their** (their shoes), and **there** (There are the missing shoes.)
 - Carefully review words such as *then* and *than*
 - **Then** connotes the relationship between actions, such as, "We will learn about anecdotal records and **then** running records."
 - **Than** connotes a comparative measurement, such as, "Amanda is taller **than** Dylan."
 - The over use of the word "**then**" is another area to consider. Try to limit your use of it in your observational reports as it is often used excessively.
 - Learn the correct format for quotations. Anytime you are reporting what the child said, you must use the standard quotation format. Example: Kevin could not reach the ball. He said, "**Teacher will you get the ball for me?**"
 - When children are using tricycles, the word that describes how their feet work is **pedal**. Examples: He pedaled. She pedaled. He was pedaling.
 - Write your anecdotal observational reports in past tense. This means your verbs will often end in "ed". Examples: Julia **played** with the trains. Kevin **walked** from the blocks to the carpet area. Keifer **asked** the teacher, "May I have my turn now?"

How to record your observation:

Directions

- Observations must occur in a licensed preschool center-based program. Licensed children's centers are programs that operate either preschool and/or full-day childcare services for children between 30 months and 5 years of age. They are licensed by the State of California, Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing and receive site visits and inspections on a regular basis.
- The following are **NOT** acceptable as observation sites: family child care homes, faith based nursery programs, family events, park visits, or play dates. Past experience has demonstrated that these observations are not effective for the purpose of this course.
- Select a program that is willing to work cooperatively with you and provide the necessary information such as the child's birth date. It is appropriate to give a fictitious name to the child to keep the child's name anonymous.
- Find a position where you can observe without interfering or interacting with the activities of the classroom. Come prepared with your paper and writing implements so that you do not bother the staff. A clipboard or supportive binder is appropriate, so that you can write "on your lap." Keep a low profile.
- **Computer Generated Work/Word Processed Work/Paper Headings:** All papers must be word processed (typewritten), with no less than a 12 font, space and a half.

In addition, each paper submitted is required to be labeled with the information below in the **top left hand** corner of the first page. Please number each page and staple all pages together.

- **Papers will be graded as follows:**
 - Required Information – 10%
 - Conforms to format provided – 10%
 - Written content, answers assignment – 50%
 - Writing (grammar, spelling, syntax, structure, etc.) – 30%
- **Developmental Domains/required to focus on for each observation**
 - Anecdote #1-Physical Development/Large Motor Skills (i.e. pedaling a tricycle, hopping, skipping, swinging))
 - Anecdote #2-Aesthetic Development/creativity (i.e. painting a picture, building a block structure)
 - Anecdote #3-Cognitive Development (i.e. math, science, memory, cause/effect, following directions)
 - Anecdote #4-Social and Emotional Development (i.e. a social interaction between the child you select and one other child; you may NOT record an observation between a child and an adult.) Please record the conversation between the two children. This anecdote may be slightly longer than your first three anecdotal observations.

Anecdote:

- Write verbs in past tense.
- Select **ONE** preschool-aged child who is 3, 4, or 5 years of age. The child you select is the focus in your anecdote. Follow the child as s/he moves, if necessary. Quickly record in sequence all activity and try to quote, word for word, the child's speech. It is not necessary to quote a teacher's comments; just summarize teacher comments. Your very first sentence in the anecdote needs to identify that the child who is the primary focus.
- Observe and document in writing a developmentally significant event; keep written documentation for later use when typing so that you are not pulling from memory.
- A developmentally significant event is representative of the child's particular age and stage of development. Typically, a significant event in the child's day is something that you would share with the parent/caregiver at the end of the day while discussing the child's growth and development.
- Be specific and date each anecdote.
- Times – note beginning time of significant moment.
- The anecdote is one short story, which is organized around a beginning, middle and end of a story. Some anecdotes may be 15 minutes long (i.e. several sentences) especially when documenting social interactions and conversations but most will be 2-3 minutes long (i.e. 5-7 sentences.)
- Avoid giving your opinions or making inferences about things like,
 - Goodness or badness (instead of saying that the child's behavior was bad, state that when the other child grabbed the puzzle, the child reached over and hit)

- Intentions (instead of saying that the child was waiting for the teacher to notice him, state without saying a word, the child was quietly standing next to his teacher)
- Feelings/Emotions (instead of saying child is mad, state child is stomping feet, etc.)

Skill Building:

- Write verbs in present tense
- Include two specific skills that the child is learning as from the documented significant event.
- Write two complete sentences and identify the domain area (i.e. aesthetic development; cognitive development/how one thinks and processes information including language, pre-math concepts, problem solving, cause and effect, memory; emotional development; physical development/fine motor; physical development/ large motor; self-help skills; social development.)

Subjective Summary:

- Verbs will be written in a mixture of tenses as you share what she did in the past in order to explain her current skill base
- You, the observer, share your professional opinion about what you observed during the developmentally significant moment.
- You, the observer, share your professional recommendation for future curriculum activities.
- Stay away from words such a good and great and also stay away from labeling and diagnosing behavior such as attention-deficit or autism.)

Sample Anecdotal Assignment

(Set up your assignment using this same format; the sample format in the syllabus is not correct. You are welcome to copy and paste this sample into your own word document and then replace the existing information with your information.)

CLDDV 101

Last name, first name: Smith, Laurie

Title of Assignment: Anecdotal Observation #1

Due Date: Monday, January 25, 2010

Date Turned In: Monday, February 1, 2010 (late) or Monday, January 25, 2010 (on time)

Name of preschool:

Address of preschool:

Name of head teacher:

Date of visit:

Time of significant event:

Number of adults present:

Number of children present:

Name of child: Angelica

Birth date of child:

Age of child including years and months: 4 years and 8 months

Focused on the following developmental domain:

Objective Anecdote: While outside during free choice, Angelica walked over to Daisy and asked, "Do you want to go swing?" Daisy responded with a big smile on her face, and then they ran to the swings. With the help of a teacher giving them each some starter pushes, they both began to pump. Angelica had a big smile on her face as she began to pump. She looked at Daisy and said, "Look. I'm up so high!" Daisy responded by saying, "Me too." They continued swinging on the swings for a few more minutes before moving to another activity.

Skill Building: In terms of Angelica's physical development/large motor skills, she is developing balance and strengthening the large muscles in her arms and legs as she pumps on the swing. A second skill that Angelica is building is in the area of social development. The emergence of prosocial behavior is observed as she respectfully invites the other child to swing and then continues to interact with her in a positive manner during this interaction.

Subjective Summary:

After observing Angelica swing, it is believed that she has well-developed physical coordination in the area of her large motor skills as she is able to sustain pumping on the swing with just a little help from the teacher getting her started. In addition, Angelica appears to play well with other children as noted when she not only respectfully invited

another child to swing, but also continued to initiate a conversation with the other child while swinging.

In the area of curriculum development, Angelica is encouraged to continue to be provided with opportunities to socialize with other children. Also, she would continue to progress with activities that allow her to work on her large motor skills not only with swings but also with other experiences such as pedaling a tricycle or hopping on one foot.

(If she was not able to swing yet as a four years and eight months, you might say: She is encouraged to continue to practice swinging with the support of a teacher who can break down the steps as she teaches her how to pump. If she was only three years old, you might say: She is encouraged to continue to have positive experiences on the swing with the help of a teacher putting her on the swing and pushing her. As she grows older, a teacher can break down the steps as she teaches her how to pump.)

Use this chart to help you locate skills that the child is developing.

The Creative Curriculum Goals and Objectives at a Glance

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Sense of Self

- Shows ability to adjust to new situations.
- Demonstrate appropriate trust in adults.
- Recognizes own feelings and manages them appropriately.
- Stands up for rights.

Responsibility for Self and Others

- Demonstrates self-direction and independence.
- Takes responsibility for own well being.
- Respects and cares for classroom environment and materials.
- Follows classroom routines.
- Follows classroom rules.

Prosocial Behavior

- Plays well with other children.
- Recognizes the feelings of others and responds appropriately.
- Shares and respects the rights of others.
- Uses thinking skills to resolve conflicts.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Learning and Problem Solving

- Observes objects and events with curiosity.
- Approaches problems flexibly
- Shows persistence in approaching tasks.
- Explores cause and effect.
- Applies knowledge or experience to a new context.

Logical Thinking

- Classifies objects.
- Compares/measures.
- Arranges objects in a series (i.e. sequence/set.)
- Recognizes patterns and can repeat them.
- Shows awareness of time concepts and sequence.
- Uses one-to-one correspondence.
- Uses numbers and counting.

Representation and Symbolic Thinking

- Takes on pretend roles and situations.
- Makes believe with others.
- Makes and interprets representations (i.e. be a symbol for.)

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

Gross Motor

- Demonstrates basic locomotor skills (i.e. running, jumping, hopping, galloping.)
- Shows balance while moving.
- Climbs up and down.
- Pedals and steers a tricycle (or other wheeled vehicle.)
- Demonstrates throwing, kicking, and catching skills.

Fine Motor

- Controls small muscles in hands.
- Coordinates eye-hand movement.
- Uses tools for writing and drawing.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT:

Listening and Speaking

- Hears and discriminates the sounds of language.
- Expresses self using words and expanded sentences.
- Understands and follows oral directions.
- Answers questions.
- Asks questions.
- Actively participates in conversations.

Reading and Writing

- Enjoys and values reading.
- Demonstrates understanding of print concepts.
- Demonstrates knowledge of alphabet.
- Uses emerging reading skills to make meaning from print.
- Comprehends and interprets meaning from books and other texts.
- Understands the purpose of writing.
- Writes letters and words.

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Use the following ideas to help you locate more skills that the child is developing. The developmental domain area (i.e. physical development, cognitive development, etc.) is not identified; therefore, you will need to identify the domain area when selecting skills from below.

What Children Learn from Play

WHEN I EASEL PAINT I LEARN:

- to develop imagination and creativity.
- hand-eye coordination.
- to distinguish and purposely create shapes.
- to express feelings and ideas.
- that ideas have value.
- relationships of space and size.
- concepts of symmetry, balance, and design.

WHEN I CUT WITH SCISSORS I LEARN:

- to control the small muscles in my hand.
- concepts of shape, size, color, and location.
- to exercise imagination and creativity.

WHEN I SCRIBBLE AND DRAW I LEARN:

- to hold a pencil or other drawing implement and to control the pressure.
- hand-eye coordination.
- to exercise imagination and creativity.
- that ideas have value.
- Concepts of shape, size, color, and location.

WHEN I FINGER PAINT I LEARN:

- to exercise imagination and creativity.
- about how colors mix to make new colors (science.)
- concepts and shape, size, color, and location.
- hand-eye coordination.
- an acceptable way to make a mess, and have fun sharing ideas with others who are near.

WHEN I PASTE, GLUE, AND COLLAGE I LEARN:

- to exercise imagination and creativity.
- concepts of shape, size, color and location, and design, relevant to reading.
- about different textures.
- how to create patterns and designs, a math skill.

WHEN I PLAY WITH PLAY DOUGH OR CLAY I LEARN:

- to see the shape against the background of the table, a reading skill.
- concepts of shapes, sizes, length, and height.
- to see negative space when cookie cutter shapes are taken away.
- to express feelings, especially negative feelings with squeezing and pounding.
- to exercise imagination and creativity.
- that the amount of a substance remains the same even when the shape changes.

WHEN I PLAY WITH SAND I LEARN:

- to exercise my imagination.
- concepts of size, shape, and volume; empty and full.
- how to use tools.
- to solve problems.
- concepts of warm and cool, wet, damp, and dry, heavy and light.
- how to play socially with others.

- to create own patterns and symbols, reading and writing skills.
- to observe changes, a science skill.

EXAMINING OBJECTS AT A NATURE TABLE HELPS ME LEARN:

- new vocabulary.
- concepts of texture, color, weight, and size.
- to group objects into categories.
- to observe likenesses and differences.
- to appreciate nature and develop a sense of wonder.

WHEN I SORT THINGS I LEARN:

- to notice details, likenesses, differences and to form categories, essential reading and math skills.
- concepts of color, size, and shape.
- numeral concepts of more and less.
- logical reasoning.

WHEN I STRING BEADS I LEARN:

- hand-eye coordination.
- concepts of color, shape, and location.
- number concepts like more, less, longer, and shorter.
- to create and reproduce patterns.
- pride in accomplishment.

WHEN I PLAY WITH PEGBOARDS I LEARN:

- one-to-one correspondence, one peg for one hole, a pre-math skill.
- to make and repeat patterns, a pre-math skill.
- concepts of addition as I add one peg at a time.
- colors.
- symmetry, shapes, order, and design.
- hand-eye coordination.

WHEN I DO COOKING PROJECTS I LEARN:

- about nutrition, tastes, and food groups.
- how heat and cold change things.
- concepts of volume and measure.
- vocabulary.
- whole-part relationships, math concepts.
- awareness of my own and other cultures.

WHEN I PLAY WITH BLOCKS, CARS, AND TRUCKS I LEARN:

- concepts of shape, size, length and location, all reading and math skills.
- to create and repeat patterns, a math skill.
- to exercise imagination.
- to express ideas.
- to cooperate with others.
- to solve problems.
- about the properties of wood.
- to see oneself from a different perspective, that of a giant.

WHEN I DO THINGS FOR MYSELF (SELF-HELP SKILLS), I LEARN:

- to competently care for own needs.
- to control the small muscles in hands when buttoning and zipping.
- to problem solve.
- to see oneself from a different perspective, that of a capable person.
- self-confidence, as new skills are mastered.
- I can teach others to help themselves.
- awareness of the importance of hygiene when I wash my hands before eating or after toileting.

WHEN I PLAY ON RIDING TOYS I LEARN:

- strength, balance, and large muscle coordination.
- to use energy in a constructive way.
- concepts of speed, direction, and location.
- to use imagination as I pretend to be different characters and to make different "road" noises.

- to negotiate and take turns.
- to solve problems
- self-confidence, as I master new skills.

WHEN I PLAY ON CLIMBING EQUIPMENT I LEARN:

- physical strength, coordination, and balance.
- to use imagination.
- to cooperate with others when involved in group play.
- to solve problems.
- self-confidence as I develop new skills.

WHEN I PARTICIPATE IN CIRCLE TIME ACTIVITIES I LEARN:

- to listen, sit still, and understand spoken words.
- that ideas added to the discussion have value.
- to wait when others are talking.
- new vocabulary words.
- to remember the words of songs and poems I have learned.
- the names of others in the group.
- to cooperate and be considerate of the needs of others.
- to help plan what we will do and what we will need to do it.

WHEN I LOOK AT BOOKS AND LISTEN TO STORIES I LEARN:

- that learning to read is important and enjoyable.
- that letters on a page represent words.
- to express own thoughts, feelings and ideas better.
- to exercise imagination.
- to interpret pictures to represent words and ideas.
- to listen well to spoken language.
- to make up own stories.
- to handle books with care.
- to recognize certain words when I see them in print.
- to use more complex language patterns in my own speech.
- to follow the development of thoughts and ideas in the plot of a story.

Reading to children frequently is one of the surest ways to ensure that they themselves will become eager and capable readers.

WHEN I SING SONGS I LEARN:

- principles of music and rhythm
- vocabulary.
- memory skills and sequencing.
- to be conscious of others.
- various concepts emphasized in songs.
- “auditory discrimination” recognizing differences in sounds, necessary for learning to read.
- awareness and identification with my culture and other cultures.

WHEN I PLAY RHYTHM INSTRUMENTS I LEARN:

- to be conscious of rhythm in music.
- concepts of fast, slow, loud, and soft.
- to express oneself in new and different ways.
- listening skills.
- “auditory discrimination” recognizing differences in sounds, necessary for learning to read.
- to interpret and understand signals and cues.

WHEN I PLAY LETTER GAMES I LEARN:

- to recognize and name upper and lower case letters.
- to associate letters with the sounds they represent.
- to recognize own name and other words.

WHEN I DANCE I LEARN:

- balance and coordination.
- to be conscious of the moods and rhythms of the music.
- to express myself physically.

WHEN I PLAY WITH PUPPETS I LEARN:

- to express ideas with words.
- to take on the role of someone else.
- to use voice tones as well as words.
- to use imagination.

WHEN I PLAY IN THE DRESS-UP AREA I LEARN:

- to be flexible in my thinking and to make decisions.
- to express oneself with my words.
- to try on different adult roles.
- to solve social problems through negotiation with friends.
- to sort and organize play things.
- to improvise and use things in a symbolic way to represent something else, abstract thinking.
- to exercise my imagination and creativity.

WHEN I SAY GOOD-BYE TO MY FAMILY WHEN I ARRIVE TO SCHOOL I LEARN:

- that the loving relationships that I have created with my family provide me with the confidence and the ability to create caring relationships at school with my teachers and my friends.
- how to say goodbye.
- to express how I feel; and I learn that my feelings will be accepted.
- that my family will consistently return each day to take me home.
- that I am a capable person.

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