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Assignment: Child Observation

NAEYC Standard 1: Promoting Child Development and Learning

Introduction

The child that I chose to observe is named J. He is four years nine months of age. The observation took place inside and outside of the preschool classroom. J has been observed in class by a developmental specialists this semester, Spring 2012 and for the previous semester, Fall 2011. He is being observed for emotional maturity and social interaction with adults and peers. The developmental specialists observes J every Wednesday for one hour. I have learned from the specialists, that J has made some overall improvement. He is still working on management of his spontaneous behavior towards others, which includes interrupting at inappropriate times and his inability to stay on task with current activities. On one of my observation days, I was allowed to sit in on a behavioral update meeting that was held concerning J. At the meeting, the specialist suggested several exercises (disguised as games) that the lead teacher could have the entire class perform, whenever J became over-stimulated and needed to bring it down a notch.

1 – Child's characteristics

J appears to be healthy. In the time I have been in the classroom, he has not been absent. He is taller and heavier than his peers. His peers at this age have some defined muscles, J is on the softer pudgy side. My observation and verification from the lead teacher shows that J is a little

more uncoordinated than his peers of the same age. I have not seen J try to play the more physical activities such as running, jumping, climbing, or peddling a tricycle. I watched him during his recess, which consisted of sedentary activities. He sat in the sand and filled a bucket, then he sat next to some children who were digging in the sand and talked to them.

2 – Child’s interests



I have seen that one of J’s favorite place to play indoors is in the dramatic play area. He likes to play dress up with whatever theme we have going on for that week. The two days that I observed him, we were getting ready for Rodeo Week. He ask me put on a pair of boots for him, he put on a cowboy vest and played with the a few of the other boys who also dressed up. J also likes to go up into the reading loft and pretend that it is a pirate ship. He told me that he wants to be a pirate when he grows up. If given a choice, J will any other center over the “work job” center, he saves that for last. He will go to the free style art, where the children can pick paper that is available to color, staple, hole punch, tape or lace up with yarn.



3 – Child’s need

I have yet to observe J sit still during our circle time. He is under the teachers chair, crawls off into the corner or he lays on the floor and talks (sometimes loudly) to peers who are trying to listen. The developmental specialists has suggested that during circle time J be given some form of tactile toy that he can squeeze and play with to keep him occupied so he will stay in group and not disturb the other children. Today, the teacher introduced a new form of sensory toy for J to

handle during circle time. It looks like a blue octopus that has the legs stuffed with heavy pellets to add weight to the toy. It has a Velcro closing that lets the toy be laid flat across the child's chest to soothe them, or it can be placed around the neck to keep it in place



while the child strokes the stuffed toy for comfort. At first J didn't want it, he said it was scary, and he wanted his ball. The teacher said that his ball was no longer available and that the stuffed octopus was his new comfort toy. One of the other children said that the stuffed octopus looked



like fun, after hearing that. J laid down on the carpet and played with the toy while the teacher conducted the lessons. He even asked to put it around his neck, he said he liked the way it felt. So for now, the stuffed octopus is his sensory toy of choice to distract him from

his fidgeting during circle time.

4 - Child's interactions with peers, environment and adults

During one of my observations, during large group circle time, J was sitting next to another little girl and he kept laying on her, playing with her hair and trying to whisper in her ear. The girl didn't complain but was clearly not receptive to his physical proximity to her, the teacher told him that the girl was trying to listen to the story and that he had a choice to either move up by the teacher, or he could go sit on a chair in the back of the group. He chose to sit in the teacher's lap until she finished the story. I observed that giving him a choice of consequences to his behavior, that he is more apt to comply. I have seen that the other children are very tolerant of J as a whole, even though he is quick to point out to one of the teacher when another child is not following the rules. As far as the environment goes, when it is time for pick up/clean up, J will tell others

around him what he thinks they should be picking up. I saw the assistant teacher ask him to help with the play kitchen area, he told her that he had not played there so he should not have to clean it up, even though we saw him there for quite awhile during free play.

5 – Child's learning strengths and limitations

The learning strengths that I observed were age appropriate linguistic skills and well developed fine motor skills. He can write his name, holds his writing implement in the correct position and can hold his scissors to cut (thumbs up). J speaks and explains thoughts, feelings and situational



activities clearly and succinctly. J is asked to form his letters by using a sensory medium such as sand, by his developmental specialists. She stated that it helps him with making choices by having to decide the color of sand and color of the tray that he wants to use. His limitation would be that he

cannot always control himself appropriately in certain situations. An example I observed was during the Pledge of Allegiance, he was looking all around the room, he wouldn't place his hand over his heart when the lead teacher specifically asked him to, he sat on the ground and crawled under the Lego's table. The lead teacher chose to ignore the behavior so the other children would not be more distracted by her trying to halt his behavior.