

## **LAB EXERCISE #4 ONE CHILD OBSERVATION**

In this week's exercise, you will begin to observe one child. You will follow this child throughout the rest of the semester. This means that, in addition to the weekly exercises, you will spend some time of each visit watching your particular subject. You will record weekly observations of your child. Part B of the Lab Report will be turned in this week. Part A will be completed at the end of the semester and will be due when the final lab book is given to me.

The purpose of this activity is to allow you to observe some developmental trends over the course of a few weeks. Children, particularly young children, experience very rapid developmental changes. While you will only be observing for 8 more weeks, you should see some changes in your chosen child. You will be watching the child in terms of physical and emotional growth, language and socialization skills.

In order to chart the changes in your child's development, you must first obtain some baseline observations. Thus, this week will be spent observing the child you choose for this activity. While we have not covered all of the areas of development which you will observe this week, you should be able to make some basic observations. Remember the observation skills from week one. You can and should apply those same skills to these various areas.

During this lab, you should make your observations on the ONE CHILD OBSERVATION sheets. **You should make 10-15 copies of this sheet prior to beginning this lab.**

Then, make sure to take a couple of sheets each week. By using these forms, you can standardize, somewhat, your observations of the child. Be sure to put the date of the observation on the top of each sheet.

Choose one child to watch for the semester. Since developmental changes occur more rapidly with younger children, this activity will be more successful with children under the age of three. Check with the center director to make sure that your child attends regularly on the day that you go. Once you have ascertained these items, you are ready to begin.

First, describe the child you have chosen. Include first name (or a pseudonym), age and physical description. Be specific with the age, i.e. give it in terms of months. Remember that for a young child one or two months can equal years of developmental change for an adult. How long has the child been attending the center? If you have any information about the child such as siblings, parents' occupation, etc, include that. The idea is to give as complete a picture of the child as possible.

You should spend the first part of the observation period just watching your child.

Employ the skills from lesson one. Record only what you see. After you have watched the child for 25 minutes or so, you should try to engage the child in conversation and interaction. This will allow you to make some assessments about particular developmental levels that you were unable to make from observation alone.

ONE CHILD OBSERVATION

Date:

Physical: Record what skills the child has. Refer back to the lesson on gross/fine motor skills. The checklists from Lab #3 are included here are well. Use the appropriate one for your child. You should make several copies and complete it every other week so as to track physical development. Can the child walk, run, jump? Estimate the ease of movement (this is not strictly an observation but rather an evaluation).

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Specifics: Can the child perform the following physical skills with ease or difficulty?

- I. For younger children (ages 15 months - 30 months)
  - a. fill and empty containers
  - b. crawl under and over objects
  - c. chase a ball
  - d. bend at the waist
  - e. kick a ball
  - f. go up and down a slide
  - g. grasp with the thumb and forefinger
  - h. open and shut drawers
  - i. twist and turn bottle tops
  - j. take out and put back puzzle pieces

II. For older children (ages 30 months and old)

- a. bend over and touch toes
- b. walk upstairs and downstairs
- c. run between two points
- d. balance on tape or low beam
- e. catch a ball
- f. throw a ball
- g. catch a beanbag
- h. throw a beanbag
- i. jump on two feet
- j. jump on one foot
- k. skip
- l. do a somersault

Social: Record what skills the child has. How easily does the child interact with other children? With adults? Are they bossy? Do they share? Do they initiate interactions?

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Language: Record what skills the child has. How well does the child speak? List some typical words and/or phrases that the child uses. Does the child speak in complete sentences? How easy is it to understand what the child says? Does the child converse with other children? With adults? Does the child imitate your speech?

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Emotional/Psychological: Record your impressions of the child's psychological/emotional development. Does the child work and play alone well? If you are able to observe, how does the child react when dropped off at the center? When picked up? Toddlers are often trying to assert their autonomy. Do you see any instances of the child trying to assert independence? Does the child use his/her own name? Refer to the chapter on socioemotional development for additional considerations.

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You will be observing this child for at least 10-15 minutes per week. Make sure to bring these sheets so that you can have some standardization. You are free to include other issues in your observations. Make sure to include the date on each observation sheet. Keep all of your observation sheets together so that the final report will be a chronological record of the one child's development.

## LAB REPORT PART B QUESTIONS

Answer the following in 1-2 paragraphs each.

- 1) What attracted you to the child that you chose?
- 2) What evaluation would make about the developmental level of the child you have chosen? Is he/she on track? Early? Late?
- 3) In what area do you expect to see to most change? Why?