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Child Observation

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Introduction

Child observation can be defined as the general assessment of a child's behavior and character from the earliest stages to the adult age. Children are observed purposefully for the developmental progress. The observations and assessment take place in a number of ways; namely: the normal activities carried out by the children, the language the children use to communicate, the interactions of children with the others (social interaction), and learning that they get when they do samples of work. In their book entitled *The Child's World*, E. Papalia and Ruth Duskin Feldman have described the activities related to the child conception and all stages leading to the development of a mature child. In this essay, the focus shall be on the development of the child after the birth and into the early childhood, as well as determining the observation criteria of the child. The essay shall also cover the wide range of the development patterns ranging from the psychological, physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development. The essay shall also cover the benefits or significance of child observation, since the early childhood in determining the character of a child.

There is always a reason why a child is under observation. According to Papalia et al. (2007), assessment is done in order to help in observing the development of the child with reference to the language. This helps in planning the best ways the parents can help to extend the language knowledge. The assessment is also done in an effort to observe the physical development of the child. The physical development is what later develops to the skills the child possesses. The physical development goes

hand in hand with the behavior or character observation; the behaviors are influenced by the activities that the children undertake. The activities promote some specific aspects, including physical, cognitive, and social development (Papalia et al., 2007).

Physical Development of Children

The physical development of a child is observed from the time the baby is conceived or born. Physical development entails the natural child's body. This is observed through the development of the various features of the body. Once a child is born, the best physical activities he or she can undertake, are feeding on the milk and sleeping. This stage is marked by cries and roaming around of the hands and eyes. The child develops the motor ability. This is characterized by controlling of the hands, sitting without support, and crawling about. At the age of 10 months, the baby is able to utter words and imitate various sounds. He or she is able to control the legs and feet and can stand and creep (Papalia et al., 2007).

The physical development of the child changes, when the baby hits the year mark. This includes an ability to run and to kick the ball. Some of the behaviors that a child depict in the age of 4 to 5 years include an ability to make short sentences, an ability to stand on a leg and to jump, to dresses himself or herself, and use adult speech sounds. The physical development, once a child hits the teen year, changes depending on the gender of the child. The boys usually change the physical structure of the body; that is the broadening of the shoulders and the breaking of voices. The girls depict changes in the body features, including enlargements of breasts and hips. The physical development of the child is well assessed, if the child is observed keenly (Papalia et al., 2007).

Cognitive Development of a Child

This type of development specifically focuses on the brain development of a child, as he or she progresses from the middle childhood to the adolescent period. This helps the teachers and instructors to clearly expose the students or children to what role the brain plays, when it comes to the execution of emotions. The cognitive abilities that child develops relate to an ability to remember, an ability to think and reason, and an ability solve the problems. There are four stages that are recognized in the cognitive development process. The first stage is the sensor motor stage. This is described as the period of time, when the infant is limited in terms of the knowledge related to the world. It is that time between birth and before the infant reaches the age of two. The behaviors of the infants at this stage are limited to the motor responses and the sensory perceptions (Papalia et al., 2007).

The second stage is called the pre-operational stage. This stage is marked by learning, where the child learns the language to speak. It is the stage, when the child is between two and six years old. The child, however, is not in a position to understand other people or manipulate the information mentally. The third stage is known as the concrete operational stage. This is the stage, when the child is already seven to eleven years old. This stage is marked by a better and clearer understanding of the operations related to the mind. This is marked by the logical thinking of the child. The fourth stage is called the formal operational stage. This stage is marked by the developed ability to think and to define more complicated concepts. The children between the ages of twelve to the adulthood fall under this category. The children are more likely to induce deductive reasoning and planning (Cherry, 2013).

Psychological and Psychosocial Development

The emphasis of this type of development is on the cultural and historical factors that influence the behavior of the child. The children ranging from the age of 1 month to 5 years depict several emotional and social changes, as they progress. For instance, during the first stages, the babies are usually tensed and distressed. The children have also a particular emotional attachment to their mothers. The children also tend to develop the fear of strangers, become more curious and tend to depict behavior to explore. The child also depicts violent emotions, as well as different expression of anger, through various facial expressions. The child becomes more adaptive to the sense of humor and anger. As the child approaches adolescence, the feeling of responsibility and guilt and pride in the daily accomplishments become evident. The children become oriented to the world of emotional attachment between the opposite genders (Cherry, 2013).

The social traits of children also develop as their years progress. For instance, at the age of two, children are able to obey the commands, to mimic people and to imitate their words, feeding becomes easy as well. The children also develop resentment for other babies and try resisting the parents' orders. They are, however, faced with the inability to make decisions and prefer playing with other children. The social element becomes more evident in a child, as he or she approaches maturity and adulthood. This is the stage that lies between the years of 10 to adulthood, also called the adolescent stage. The common behaviors depicted by kids in this stage include anger, shy of socializing with people they are not used to, for instance, of the opposite gender, preference to stay with the mated rather than the older ones.

After observing the children for quite some while, Michaela (2012) proposed the six types of children based on both their physical characteristic and behavioral characteristic. These include the large headed children, the small headed, the cosmic, the earthly, the rich in fantasy, and the poor in fantasy. He describes the large headed as those, who depict good concentration and are imaginative and artistic in nature. They are characterized by a larger head in relation to the body. The diet recommended consists of the root vegetables that contain high salt levels substances (Glöckler, 2012).

The small headed children are characterized by small head in relation to his or her body. The child has also extremely poor concentration behaviors and can be distracted easily. These children need sweet nutrient foods like dates and honey in the diet. The earthly children are characterized by their love for the earth and keeping themselves in a constant motion. The ones rich in fantasies usually have a good memory and creative imaginations. The ones poor in the fantasy are the complete opposite of the others (Glöckler, 2012).

Conclusion

Observing children, as advocated by many authors, is highly recommended. This is because once the parent or the teacher is aware of the behaviors depicted in the different stages, it will be easier for them to instruct, monitor, and direct the samples of work according to the ability of the children. It will also be easy to understand them. This essay has explained some of the developments that happen to a child in the growing process. These developments have been grouped to the ranges from social, emotional, psychological, physical, and cognitive. The essay has analyses some of the common types of behaviors depicted by various

kinds of children. In conclusion, my view is that for an individual to understand the child's world, it is essential that they come to terms with the kind of behavior and needs they depict.