

Child observation for development studies



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For this child-study project, I observed my roommate's four-year-old brother who currently attends preschool weekly in their hometown of Olathe, Kansas. My subject was born on August 12, 2015 and is the middle child of the family. His older brother, my roommate, is 22 years old, while his younger sister is three years old. The youngest two siblings still live under the same roof of their married, biological parents. This middle-class family is of the Mexican descent. The father is a 4-year college graduate and currently works as a substation electrician. The mother is a high school graduate and cooks at the Chapala Mexican restaurant in Olathe. My subject loves sports and everything about them, specifically football. The four-year-old likes attending the preschool because he gets to see his friends and caring teachers. He is very alert when it comes to his surroundings and is highly intelligent when it comes to memorization. He was born a healthy baby weighing in at seven pounds and five ounces with a length of 19 inches, the average length of a newborn.

My subjects day-to-day schedule consists of waking up at approximately 7:00am. Typically, he is already awoken before one of his parents come to wake him up. He finds joy and a sense of accomplishment in dressing himself for the day. His breakfast usually consists of some scrambled eggs, strawberry yogurt and brown sugar oatmeal. The mother takes his sister and him to the preschool center just before 8:30am. Typically, they spend nine hours a day at school, except for Fridays. When the parents work on days with no school, their grandpa picks them up for part of the day. Once the mother gets off work at around 5:00pm, she picks them up from the grandparent's home. When he gets home, he usually kicks and throws the

football around. He also indulges in sociodramatic play with his toy tool kit until dinner is served. Once dinner time has concluded, he typically lays down and watches his favorite show, Bob the Builder. My subject's schedule during the weekdays is kept on track and consistent. However, his schedule on the weekend varies with the different family activities he is involved in. The parents do try their best in maintaining a regular sleep pattern for him so that his behavior remains easy. Typically, he is the jokester of the room and enjoys making other people laugh at his jokes. When he gets older, he wants to play for the Kansas City Chiefs.

The social development of my roommate's younger brother is quite normal for that of a pre-K aged child. He does have many friends at his preschool, three of which are his neighbors. The father told me that their neighbors' young children have definitely helped his two youngest kids get along with others well through daily, social interaction. All of the neighbors' preschoolers are boys, so that helps him relate better. He is typically very kind to all of his friends and other peers. Around the age of four, the child will get better at sharing with others and develop more friendships ("Preschool Developmental Milestones"). During my time of observing him, we both played with his tool kit in his room for a solid amount of time. He told me to give him certain tools for building a house which were not accurate to the actual functions of the given tool. We would also switch off using a hammer, then exchanged for the power drill to complete our house project. I noticed that he has developed a grasp for gender identity due to having a younger sister as a playmate and watching his father fix things around the house with tools. It was clear to me that my study subject had a good understanding of

specific gender roles, which was probably from watching his parents perform gender-typical tasks.

The child's physical development is progressing very well. The average weight for a four-year-old male is 36 pounds and the average height is 40.3 inches ("Average Height to Weight Chart..."). He is definitely within the average on the height and weight for a child his age, weighing in at 40 pounds and standing at 40 inches tall. Considering his enjoyment for sports, he includes himself in high amounts of cooperative play. While observing him, we tossed around the football, and I noticed that his accuracy on throws were above average, but couldn't manage to throw a spiral. When I threw the football back at him (underhand), I observed that he caught it with his arms instead of using only his hands. He caught about three-quarters of my tosses to him. An average four-year-old can throw a ball overhead with coordination and exhibit improved balance ("Developmental Milestones Record..."). When referring to the previous source, he is clearly excelling in physical development. Him managing to catch my tosses suggests that he has proficient hand-eye coordination for another child his age. Children this age begin to develop increased upper body flexibility and mobility which supports my observation of his enhanced throwing and catching capabilities. Also, I noticed his fine motor skills are developing rapidly. One of his favorite activities to do at preschool is coloring different kinds of animals. He can hold the crayons and markers properly while coloring inside the lines well. He also enjoys drawing pictures of his family and showing them off to his elder peers. Typically, four-year-old females have improved fine motor skills

comparative to males, however, my male's fine motor skills are more comparable to a female's.

Along with the other domains of development, his emotional growth is quite average. My subject's younger sister has played a key role in his emotional development. Her, being the youngest, seems to get a little more attention from the parents and it causes my observee to feel jealous at times. He tends to throw temper tantrums when his sister is receiving all of the attention. My observee tends to cope with this issue, externally, usually exhibiting with frustration and crying. Even though he shows great love towards his younger sister, he still clearly displays the envy inside.

My observee's cognitive development surpasses that of the typical four-year-old. According to the theory of preoperational thought, he exceeds the boundaries of Piaget's "pre-logical" stage. From ages 2-4, children are to have mental representations but can't reason well. However, my subject shows that he has developed intuitive thought (primitive in reasoning) rather well. While I was observing him, I set up an experiment, one of Piaget's Seven Conservation Tasks. For this experiment, I filled two identical, clear bowls with equal levels of water and dropped a golf ball in one of them. Then I asked him which glass bowl has more water, then he replied, "the one with the ball." According to Jim Morgan's article, "Piagetian Conservation Tasks," a child cannot comprehend the conservation of volume until age nine or ten. Before testing this theory on him, I already assumed failure with the conservation of volume. Shortly after the experiment, we went to the living room and watched some television. At first, I couldn't find the remote so I asked him if he knew where it was and he replied, "It's right there dummy;"

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the remote was behind a pillow in his plain sight, but not in mine. He assumed that because he could see it, I could also. This observation proves the concept of egocentrism during cognitive development in early childhood.

My roommate's younger brother is smoothly developing through the early stages of human development. I would expect for his fine motor skills (brushing teeth, tying shoes, etc.) to sharpen within the next year of his development. From my observations, he is a sympathetic child that can get confused and irritated when one of his peers is being bullied. Assuming his love for school and teachers remains constant, he will continue to foster optimal development. Since his family is close-knit in all ranges and provides him with positive influences, his character will be a role model to his peers. Most of his elder peers have different occupations, which will in turn, provide him with an open-minded outlook on life and will promote newly learned skill sets from various people.

All in all, he is an intelligent, thoroughly developed young boy who is exactly where he needs to be, or in fact, " ahead of the game," when comparing to specific stages of child development. His physical characteristics, height and weight, are not exactly the average in children his age, but that is due to genetic influences. My observee will continue to grow in the social and emotional areas of progression, similar to his peers. I predict for his physical and cognitive areas to exceed his peers throughout the rest of life. There is great importance on keeping your child on track through all domains of development.

Works Cited

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