

Case study of severe behavioural problems education essay



Child X is in the Year One class of a Primary School which is close to her home. Child X is one of eight children, some live with their auntie and the rest live in the same house with their mother and father. The child's father is a double leg amputee, his first leg was removed before Child X was born and since Child X was born he has had the other leg removed, as well as a thumb. The mother is out most evenings socialising with friends and leaves the children at home with the father. They moved onto a local council estate just as Child X was born, they moved from another council estate in the area. There is little routine in the house, packed lunches not being made, tube of crisps given to the child for their dinner etc. Home reading books are not given to take home as they are not brought back or are brought back damaged. Social Services are heavily involved with the family as well as the staff at school. There is a lot of question over the hygiene of the children, frequent head lice, same tights etc for the whole week. Attendance and punctuality of the child are above average with Child X being in school or on time eighteen out of twenty five days which is above the average for the class.

There is no fear in Child X, consequences do not work, the teacher confirmed this; detailing consequences that have been tried in the past. Child X has numeracy help every day where a group of six children are taken out to a small classroom and are given extra support with their work. This also happens on a Monday where they are taken for social skills/ nurture. There is no parental involvement with the child's school work, when the reading book was allowed home it was not read and also homework, when given, is not brought back, there should be no question as to stationary not being

available as the children are provided with pencils, rubbers and colouring crayons. Steer, 2009, “ Evidence suggests that parental involvement in the early years helps a child develop secure attachments, helping them to establish personal and learning skills. Parents showing interest in their child’s education by talking to them regularly about their progress appear to have a considerable effect their outcome.” (Steer, 2009, pg 54) As this does not happen with Child X there is a clear understanding as to why Child X is showing limited to minimal progression during school. It is also evident that this has also affected the attachment bond with the child, with no skills being transferred from the parents to Child X.

Observations in the classroom help to understand the child more as it is possible for the observer to see what the triggers are with the child. Various observations were done on the child at various times; the observations are included in the appendix.

The first of the observations was of Child X during a carpet activity (Appendices A) with the class, twenty-eight children and four adults. The child was observed during the lesson talking out of turn, not putting their hand up, even though there is a poster reminding the children to put their hand up. Rogers and McPherson, 2008, pg 12, suggests that a poster be used, “ A visual poster cue can assist children’s short term memory here. The poster is displayed on the board, able to be seen by all children. It illustrates how children have their hand up (without calling out or clicky fingers.)” Although this method does work with the other children in the class, it does not work with Child X; the poster was visible to the child during the lesson. During the lesson the child was also rocking backwards and
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forwards on the carpet which was disrupting the children that wanted to learn.

The second observation was whilst the child was playing with a small amount of children (Appendices B) during this time the child was observed not joining in conversation with the other children, even though this was fully expected and encouraged from myself. Under the Independent review of the primary curriculum Rose, 2009, pg 77, suggests that children are to be taught a range of social and emotional skills this is because these skills are used a great deal in the education of the children and their development. Also during the observation the child snatched from another child and was very aggressive when doing so this could be to do with rivalry and attention seeking at home, “ A common description of such nuisance or attention-seeking behaviours is: They fidget, tap rulers, pencils or feet, whistle or sing ostentatiously, swing on chair tipped dangerously backward, roam around the room, crawl about under desks, snatch others’ books and pencils.” (Cooper, 1999, pg 165.) Child X displayed a lot of these behaviours during this time; this could be to do with the amount of children in the house and the rivalry.

During the observation of the child during play time during their dinner hour (Appendices C) Child C was observed to be looking sullen and upset whilst colouring in with her friend when another child come over to the table to colour in. Duffy, 2003, pg 15 describes how a child is seen to be saturnine, disengaged and bemused this is because a child’s anger has been curbed.

Child X was also observed to preferring to remain alone, on the quietest table, the child also stated that they prefer to and do play on their own at <https://assignbuster.com/case-study-of-severe-behavioural-problems-education-essay/>

home. According to Schaefer and O'Connor 1994, pg 396, "The loner child is more often one of the younger children in the family. This child is born into a family system with no place to fit. This child cowers from the behaviour of the troubled child and withdraws into a world of fantasy, books and animals." This is appropriate as Child X is amongst seven other children and is amongst the youngest of the children with two other children being younger. There is again an understanding that this could be because Child X has to attention seek and be amongst a lot of rivalry at home so now shadows from others in order to not have to do so. However this is not beneficial for her education, "Classmate support, friendly socialising with classmates is believed to influence students' satisfaction with school because it may nurture the need for relatedness. In addition to strengthening the bonding between students, positive student interaction may nurture students' need for competence and autonomy through a shared focus on learning activities." Danielsen, 2009, pg 305 if Child X defers from socialising with other children then the satisfaction with school is degraded and the learning is then decreased.

During the observation of the child before going home (Appendices D) the most imperative behaviour that was observed was the incessant daydreaming before going home, this was also observed at other times, this affects their learning, "Similarly, a child's daydreaming, passivity and under-performance in the classroom could be dissociative behaviour, or the result of limited intelligence and failure to comprehend due to traumatic, neural pathway disorganisation." (Hughes and Archer, 2003, pg 137) The

daydreaming needs to be looked at in order to gain some strategies to curb this and enhance Child X's learning in the classroom and boost intelligence.

Child X was observed during their mathematics lesson which was in a small classroom with six other children (Appendices E) during this lesson the children are given a biscuit if they have not eaten, Child X misled the teacher by saying that they had not eaten even though they had. Lewis and Saarni, 1993, pg 93 describe the behaviour of the children when they lie about food, " Children are not stupid nor are they foolish. After only one or two interactions like this, the child discovers that if she admits to eating the cookie she will be punished. She lies to avoid the punishment." Child X lied to avoid the punishment of eating a biscuit when she had already eaten.

The childhood experiences have affected Child X's social and emotional development in a severe way, which is imperative to their learning and development, " Childhood is a crucial stage in physical, intellectual and psychosocial development, so children with mental health problems can struggle with their education, social skills, general health and friendships." (Honeyman, 2007, pg 39)

Child X is amongst a larger than average family and this could affect her social and emotional skills for a variety of reasons, as described by Lask and Lask, 1982, pg17, " The most likely explanations are than in large families the parents have less time to spend with each child and so may provide less stimulation and education. Further, large families tend to be more disorganized, and so both verbal interchange and discipline could be inconsistent and confused. Finally, discord and disharmony in large families

are more likely.” As Child X is part of a big family there is less time for the parents to spend time with her, which is diminishing the chance for social interaction between parents and child. This is also affecting the child’s behaviour as discipline is more than likely kept to a minimum due to chaos in the house as there is a lack of routine. Jardine, 2008, [Online] explains that a child who is raised in a larger families benefits with their social and emotional skills this is because they learn new skills, “ Children from larger families get into fewer fights, and are better at making and keeping friends. Through having siblings, children learn empathy, team playing, gratification deferment, time-management and how to resolve disputes.” As Child X is in a bigger family then she should have learnt emotional and social skills that will benefit her in her educational setting and in her coming life.

Child X has also grown up with her father being a double leg amputee, this surely will have effected her emotional development in a positive way, Rogers believes that having a parent who is disabled strengthens a child’s emotions, “ Some children with a disabled parent were asked what strengths they got from having a disabled parent and the responses included perseverance and ingenuity.” (Rogers, 2005, pg 71) Child X will have built the emotional skills to be able to persevere in things she does as she will have seen her father do so with his disability. However it is unknown for Child X to show the skills of ingenuity in the classroom where there has been a lot of opportunity to do so. However Byng-Hall considers that children who live with a disabled parent may bottle up a lot of anger and may express it at any time, “ A child might start to express the feelings of the disabled parent or those of the parent who might now feel trapped by their disabled partner.

A child may give vent to the anger, frustration, and depression which are his or her family's as well as his or her own." (Byng- Hall, 1998, pg 266 Having observed and worked with Child X for many months I believe that Byng- Hall is correct with the emotions of the child being angry and frustrated, this is due to many possibilities of missed opportunities due to the father being in a wheelchair and the apparent lack of the mother in the evening. These feelings are stopping Child X from developing both emotional and in her education.

Not only have Child X's earlier and current experiences effected her emotional and social development they also are affecting her learning whilst in the classroom. The first one is the nutrition of the child, no breakfast is given normally and when it is; it normally consists of a packet or tube of crisps not portion controlled. This is affecting Child X's learning in the classroom as deemed by Gurian, Henley and Trueman, 2001, pg 86 " If a five year old is under emotional stress, she has great difficulty controlling herself or learning. If she is under emotional stress, the same is true." As Child X has no breakfast some days this could be a factor into the lack of learning and input from the child. However Child X does sometimes have a breakfast of crisps or sweets which is under some controversy with some practitioners believing that children having fast food for their breakfast increases their results when doing examinations, could this boost their learning in the classroom as well, " When given a pre-exam, fast-food lunch, which contained eight per cent more calories than usual, the children's grades were, on average, seven per cent higher for maths and history, and four per cent for English." (Hoe, 2005, [online]) There is a number of statistics that

show that consuming fast food does help to improve a child's examination results, however this would not be approved by the governing bodies for children to eat fast food everyday to improve results. This is because there is much research into the understanding that eating fast food and foods which contain high numbers of additives are factors towards a child's behaviour, "Diets high in processed foods are causing bad behaviour and learning difficulties in children, scientists have warned. They claim junk food stops the brain from working properly, leading to underachievement and a host of disorders." Hope, 2005, [online]

During some of the observations Child X was seen to be day dreaming during the carpet work and occasionally during independent work and at home time Brandell describes how certain types of children can occasionally 'go into' a daydream and not pay attention to what is happening, "For example girls tend to have more problems with attentions and may engage in daydreaming, may have difficulty processing information and following directions, or may be shy and withdrawn. Girls with hyperactivity can generally be hyper talkative." (Brandell, 2010, pg 303) Brandell looks at the process of daydreaming as a symptom of a child with ADD or ADHD, and that the child will be slow at processing the information. However Fries, 2009, [Online] believes that children who do daydream are in fact intelligent and inventive, "For the most part, children are natural, prolific, and happy daydreamers, and the process plays an important role in their developing lives. Too often, however, parents and teachers are quick to label daydreaming as a symptom of an Attention Deficit Disorder or the sign of a slacker in the making. A new study finds that "positive-constructive"

daydreaming, even when heavy in pattern, is not related to psychological disorders as some have previously thought, but rather is a normal activity that reflects the daydreamer's imaginative tendencies and enjoyment of daydreaming." When observing Child X daydreaming she seemed to be in a happy daydream rather than a scary or withdrawing dream. However as with Brandell Child X displays problems with attention, finds it difficult to follow instructions and can seem to be withdrawn when around other children. Fries on the other hand has looked at this on a more neuro-scientific way rather than diagnostically.

There is there neuroscience theory of a child's behaviour and then there is also the attachment theory which does affect the way a child behaviours and learns in the classroom. " According to attachment theory our first relationship with our carers acts as a lifelong template, moulding and shaping our capacity to enter into, and maintain, successful subsequent relationships with family, friends and partners. It is believed that these early and powerful experiences with the people who first looked after us will shape our long-term emotional wellbeing." (Hall, 2007, [online]) Having observed and worked with Child X for some time it has come to my knowledge that she does have symptoms of reactive attachment disorder these being," Young children may seem withdrawn and passive. They may ignore others or respond to others in odd ways. Some may seem overly familiar with strangers and touch or cling to people they've just met. However, they lack empathy for others. Their behaviour comes across to others as needy and strange, unlike the normal friendliness of children. Other symptoms of reactive attachment disorder in children can include the following: inability

to learn from mistakes (poor cause-and-effect thinking) learning problems or delays in learning, impulsive behaviour, abnormal speech patterns, destructive or cruel behaviour” (Bower, 2010 [online]) Child X displays many of these symptoms in the classroom, this could be a factor to the behavioural issues that have happened in the classroom. Even though attachment disorders are produced during the early stages of a child’s life, it stays with them throughout their life and affects the people that they meet from teachers, bosses friends and future partners.

As Child X’s father was in and out of hospital during the early part of her childhood, there was little bond formed with both Child X and her father, which could have a big impact on the child’s education. However Bowlby implies that the primary caregiver and the person most receptive to creating a bond is the mother, “ The underlying assumption of Bowlby’s Maternal Deprivation Hypothesis is that continual disruption of the attachment between infant and primary caregiver (i. e. mother)” Simply Psychology, 2010, [online] Even though a father can contribute to the upbringing of the child, Bowlby believes that father is not a main contributor and so is not a primary caregiver and so will not form a bond and her attachment and behaviour will be challenged throughout her life.

However upon looking at the behaviour of Child X further, their behaviour fits more with a child who has Avoidant disorder attachment. “ Extreme shyness, especially while facing a new situation, hypersensitivity to criticism, rejection and other negative assessment, Avoidance of social as well as occupational interaction and activities, especially if they require interpersonal contact,

Low self-esteem, self loathing and a sense of inadequacy and inferiority,
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Fantasizing about the situations that they usually avoid in reality, Keeping a certain distance even in intimate relationship, for the fear of being ridiculed.”

Bora, 2010, [online] Child X shows many of these behaviours in the classroom and other environments in the school with a variety of people within the environment. The avoidant attachment is imperative to the lack of parents that were and are around whilst Child X is growing up, the father being in hospital and the mother socialising, there is also a number of other children who may take up a lot of attention from both parents.

As we as forming an attachment with their caregiver, Learning Theories, 2010, [online] understands that children need a variety of different aspects fulfilled in their life to develop in life and in their education such things are, for the child to have a sense of worth, accomplishment, and respect for others and property it also includes care for others, acquaintances and possessions, etc. There are many other requirements that are needed for the child to lead a successful and content life and education, upon looking at the needs Child X seems to be unfortunate to not meet them all, such as having a sense of worth and not taking ownership of their own work which is essential in their education.

However as this area of needs is at the top of the ‘ pyramid’ it could be seen as Child X has not progressed to that level, although it is possible that she may not progress with limited to no structure in her home life the safety needs area are not being met as this requires direction and permanence, with no organization and the parents being in and out of the house the child may not gain a sense and understanding of this. On the other hand there is

also and understanding that each child starts at the bottom and must
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progress through each stage singly, though some of the needs do effect some of the other needs and so they can meet these consequently which Maslow believes should not happen, so is this really the best theory to look at and for educational leaders to follow?

It is more realistic to look at the effect that Bowlby's attachment theory has on a child's education, life and behaviour as the way a child builds relationships holds a great deal of responsibility on the way a child's life is structured. This is because if a child feels loved and safe in their environment they feel content there is no need for the fight or flight response as they are comfortable in their life. Looking at the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs there is problems and flaws with the way a child understands and develops those skills and many of the skills learnt throughout a human's life are needed during the earl stages and throughout the educational development stage.

Looking at Child X's behaviour there is an understanding that it has effects on her education and social development within school. Child X has numerous behavioural problems however there are four imperative behaviours that are affecting her education. The first of these is the lack of respect and understanding of the reality that her behaviour has consequences whether it is good or bad; Child X does not react to consequences whether it involves staying in a playtime or the loss of 'golden time'. The school also hosts a traffic light system (Appendices F) which does not result in effecting Child X's behaviour.

Child X also has behavioural issues when doing carpet work within the whole class, behavioural issues during this time are ill-disciplined as the work done at this time assist the child's independent work subsequent to the carpet work. If Child X is behaving in a difficult way it is distracting herself from learning as well as the other children who are also sat on the carpet, also the teacher's attention is focused on her rather than other children who may be struggling with understanding the work.

The behaviour that also affects Child X's learning is the attention seeking from the child from both the teacher and the teaching assistant's in the class. After looking into the matter of the attention seeking it has come to my knowledge that the behaviour of Child X could also be related to suffering from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Mellor and Weymont, 1997, pg 19 discusses the indications of a child with ADHD, " As a very rough way of distinguishing the two we can focus on the hyperactivity aspects of ADHD and attention seeking. The child who displays a great deal of activity in the class as a way of obtaining attention will almost certainly be happy to settle to work quite calmly with the teacher 1: 1. If the child continues to fidget and move all the time and you suspect ADHD discuss this with your special needs co-ordinator and school medical officer." However Child X will fidget when working one to one with a teacher it is no different to those who have acceptable behaviour in the classroom so ADHD will not be a huge factor in the strategies that will be attempted with Child X.

The final crucial behavioural issues is the lack of socialisation skills from Child X with the other children, the social skills are needed for the children to develop in their educational setting this is verified by an article by Garner, <https://assignbuster.com/case-study-of-severe-behavioural-problems-education-essay/>

2001, [online] which states, " Teachers' leaders warn that a growing number of pupils are arriving for their first day at school without the social skills they need to get by. David Hart, the general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: " I'm not in the least surprised about the figures. They show primary school heads are having to deal with a growing number of children from dysfunctional families, and it is clearly not reasonable to keep pupils in school who are damaging the education of others." The social skills are needed from each child to ensure that there are no disagreements in the class and that the children can undertake simply group discussions without affecting the education of the other children. Child X has great difficulty maintaining friendships and upholding and having a view during discussions with the other children in the class, which in many ways is causing classroom rifts which are leading to the teacher taking time out of a lesson to discuss the issues and consequences of such clashes.

Now that we have defined the behavioural issues of Child X and the consequences on her education, it is now time to look at the strategies that could be used within the educational setting which can then also be used at home I shall look at these in a critical way looking at how they could be seen more as a hindrance rather than a help to her education. The first strategy I shall look at is the lack of effect that sanctions have in Child X, however Porter, 2008, pg 9 believes in a scheme which does not involve reprimand or incentive for children's behaviour in the classroom. She believes that children should be taught behaviour as such like a normal curriculum lesson in the classroom, using the same methods and resources as you would for any other lesson. On the other hand Wagner, 2002, pg 85 illustrates how

rewards can stimulate children in the classroom, “ Children like rewards, which keep their enthusiasm and willingness steady,” Like Wagner I do believe that rewards help to enthuse and encourage the pupils to behave in the correct manner, but as seen with Child X such rewards do not alter the way in which she behaves. Child X does have nurturing on a Monday with a Special Support Assistant along with five other children, upon discussion with the SSA it is apparent that Child X is making slow progression, but is ultimately making progress, this could be the method of teaching children good behaviour that Porter was suggesting to do rather than rewards and punishment.

One strategy that has been researched to combat the behavioural issues whilst Child X is doing carpet work, with the rest of the class; is tactically ignoring the child. Rogers, 2007, pg 144 examines the use of tactically ignoring the child, “ Tactically ignoring each student who calls out while responding to those using the hands up rule. Tactical ignoring is only helpful if the students actually sense that the teacher is conveying a message about selective attention to appropriate behaviour.” Ignoring the calling out of Child X may trigger her to put her hand up when she wants to answer or ask a question; on the other hand tactically ignoring a child can be seen as a negative in the classroom as Westwood explains, “ While it is common to view the frequency of undesirable behaviour in a child as something to reduce, it is more positive to regard the non- disruptive (appropriate) behaviours as something to reward and thus increase. It is a golden rule to be much more positive and encouraging than be critical and negative in interactions with students.”

(Westwood, 2002, pg 73) Westwood examines how rather than simply

ignoring the inapt behaviour as Rogers suggests doing, teachers should combine this with positive comments and praising the child for the correct behaviour. Rewards could also be used, but as examined earlier Child X does not react to rewards in the classroom.

There are many strategies to contest the attention seeking behaviour that Child X displays such as, “ 1. Give the student a position of responsibility in the classroom and encourage him/her to set a good example for others (e. g., passing out papers). 2. Post a chart in the front of the room delineating the rules to be followed when responding. For example: 1. Raise your hand if you wish to talk. 2. Wait to be called on. 3. Listen while others talk. 3. Assign the student a special project of interest and let him/her present the report to the class. 4. Ignore the student’s annoying comments, but give praise when the student describes his/her real achievements.” (Teacher Vision, 2010, [online]) Again focusing on the teacher is to ignore the behavioural problems from the child; there is a further issue with this, which may lead to the child’s behaviour exasperating, “ Likewise, simply ignoring children’s early disruptive behaviour and offending is linked to continued and more serious offending over time.” (Cipriani, 2009, pg 162) As Cipriani suggests the bad behaviour should be made clear to the child that it is un-acceptable behaviour; this will make clear that such behaviours will not be tolerated in the classroom.

The final behavioural issue that needs further intervention is the lack of social skills displayed by Child X, currently there is in place a special session where Child X is taken out of the class to go to a nurture group with some other children, this last for an hour and it helps children to enhance their <https://assignbuster.com/case-study-of-severe-behavioural-problems-education-essay/>

social and anger management skills. There are reports which show that children in a nurture group have their social skills and life skills dramatically improved, “ The input is intense - praise and encouragement are constant - and the rewards are high. The London borough of Enfield has had nurture groups since 1981, and now has 13, which it supports with training. A study here in the Nineties showed that 83 per cent of children who had been supported in a nurture group were able to later function in the classroom without additional help, compared to only 55 per cent of children with similar problems who had not had the nurture group experience.” (Wiles, 2007, online) There are radiant statistics there to inform those of the great help that children in a nurture group receive, however there is accounts of the nurture groups increasing the bad behaviour of the children, “ There are for example, reports of very difficult nurture groups which actually reach a crescendo of bad behaviour before calming down and consolidating” (Barnes, 1999, pg 103) As the nurture session is in the early stages, it would be more beneficially to allow Child X to continue in the classes and monitor her improvement and development. There are future developments in the classroom revolving around the social skills area according to OECD, 2010, pg 213 “ I remember being very impressed at the time by the fact that teacher trainees in practice teaching not only has to have a curricular and didactic understanding of how they were going to teach but also needed to show an elaborate and well developed plan about how they were going to work with a specific diverse class to enhance social cohesion in the classroom and to teach pro social values and social skills.” The author has seen trainee teachers in other countries learning how to involve social skills into their teaching and to utilise any available resources. There are plans to <https://assignbuster.com/case-study-of-severe-behavioural-problems-education-essay/>

bring such teachings over to England in the upcoming years; this would allow children such as Child X to gain and expand such skills whilst in the classroom rather than for them to be taken out of the classroom.

Having observed Child X at various occasions and produced a case study, it was effortless to find out the behaviours that were unacceptable. It was also looked into as to how Child X's early life experience have effected and continue to effect her education and her social and emotional development. There was also the research into how Bowlby's attachment theory could have also made Child X's behaviour improper and explain the lack of social skills. Having been able to understand the consequent behaviours displayed by Child X it was then obtainable to develop strategies that could be used in the classroom to help deter the behavioural issues; this was done in a critical way. After looking at the strategies critically it was clear that there was no definite strategy to help Child X, although there are future developments into teachers being able to involve social skills into curriculum lessons.

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