

The history of infant development education essay

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CDFS 212: Early Childhood Development: Physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children from conception to seven years with implications for guidance and care in practical settings. (3 Hrs)

Narrative 2

I am what is known as a non-traditional student. Nontraditional is a good definition of who I am and how I live. What that means, in my case, is I attained my knowledge in many different forms other than the traditional education institution. I started my college career at 18 years old like most people, but I am the oldest of five children and my parents could not afford to pay for my college. I was not an exceptional student so I did not qualify for most scholarships. I had to work full-time while taking a full course load. I lasted one semester and realized I could not do that anymore. It was a big reality check for me. I had to be either a full-time student or work full-time. Unfortunately, I did not have the money to pay for my college without working so I had to withdraw from WVU. I always wanted to finish my degree and hoped someday I would return to WVU. This did not stop or discourage my quest to learn. I just had to find other sources and ways to learn. Over the years, I have taken different classes for various child care and child care center administration. Education has always been very important to me. I worked for a local day care center for 14 years. During my time in the day care center, my first job was infant and toddler care. I had worked all sections of both the infant room and toddler classroom. I was responsible for the routine schedule of activities for the rooms. In the day care center, the infants and toddlers were in a separate room and then children under 24 months were separated according to age and mobility. My schedule for the

room ran in 15-minute intervals, due to the attention span of the children. On my schedule, there were several sections for each of the developmental stages and skills. The infant room had three different sections or groups. During all sessions with the children, we were encouraged to assess the children to make sure they are developing appropriately for their age and stage of development. We had specific training as to what to look for and how to evaluate each child through the WV Early Childhood Development.

Child Care – Infancy to 23 months

" Group 1" was the youngest of children aged 6 weeks to 4 months. Part of my training was that infants are very interactive. With use of a special way of communication as they make sounds and smile with you. They enjoy making sounds as in coo's. They love to imitate, which helps them learn new communication skills. An example I would stick out my tongue or make a noise and then the baby would imitate. I would talk to them and try to arouse curiosity. This also helps with communication skills. For cognitive skills we played with sensory toys with different textures and shapes. If they were not able to hold objects themselves, I would use facial expressions, making different sounds and touch as stimulus. Touch is very important to children at this age. It is important to the development of bonding. At this age there is a lot of hands on interaction between caregiver and child. Everything I did with the child, I would communicate through voice and touch. We would also do physical stimulation. We performed floor exercises with the infants. We moved their legs and arms up and down, then in and out while singing " The Hokey Pokey" and " Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes". They always loved this. The floor time we would have the babies on their backs for face to face

time and then on their stomachs to help them with strengthening their muscles in their neck, shoulders arms and legs." Group 2" generally ranged in age from 6 to 10 months, and are children just becoming mobile. Training and experience with this age infants I learned, love to communicate. They use gestures and sounds, facial expressions to communicate what they need. They communicate through their actions instead of words. You learn to read their nonverbal communication. They usually start by putting consonants and vowels together to form small words like " mama" and " Dada." As their brain development increases, they start to imitate other children and adults. We try and motivate this activity with singing songs with hand gestures, like " The Wheels on the Bus" and " If your Happy and You Know It". Articulating what you are doing, what they are doing and how to do different tasks. An example would be while sitting with blocks we would say to the child " Blocks" and then say " Put it on top", as you are showing the child how to put one block on top of another. This time also begins the development of several new skills. Infants at this age, we encouraged the use of toys in more challenging ways. For example, pushing cars, spinning toys and beginning stacking toys. Infants motor skills are advancing quickly at this stage. But all infants grow at their own rate. Most infants by 6 months of age can roll over completely, scoot or crawl and even begin to pull themselves up to stand. I had playtime activities where they climbed on soft shaped climbing mats they can pull up on and climb over. This helps to develop coordination, balance and stamina." Group 3" was typically children that were 11 to 23 months old. These were the most challenging. Toddlers are terrific communicators. They learn new words every day. They use them, along with their gestures, to let you know what they are feeling and thinking.

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We would encourage the toddler to articulate what they want not just grunts and sounds. When wanting a ball instead of them just being able to point and say " Uh", we would encourage them to say the word " ball". Toddlers understand a lot more than they can voice. By approximately 12 months old they can follow a simple instruction such as " Go get your coat." By 18 months they usually understand and carry out more complex and multitask directions. We start the toddlers out with simple play tasks as in finding the ball. Then we expand on the tasks as in finding the balls hidden in the boxes. This to the toddlers was just fun play, but it was actually keying in on the part of the brain that is responsible for cognition and learning. Also toddlers at this age begin to do pretend play. We had kitchen sets, dishes and even a small playhouse to play for the children to play with. They love to imitate what they see, for example, pretending to cook , wash dishes and especially pretending to eat. Pretend play helps develop important social and intellectual skills, plus creativity. At this age and stage of development the toddler motor skills are really starting to develop. They are starting to walk and run. It's a whole new world to explore for them, and this means we have to be more alert of their actions. While at the day care we try to keep the toddler safe, we also know that they understand " Don't Touch", but they lack the control over impulses. Sometimes it's hard to stop themselves the next time the temptation appears.

Child Care-Twos and Threes

Now for my two to three year olds and most active group. Two year olds can characteristically speak between 200 and 250 words. By 3 years old, their vocabulary is much larger still and they are able to put together simple

sentences. Even though they have all this word power, 2 year olds usually do not have the verbal skills to tell you how they feel. This is where they become frustrated and can cause a tantrum. This is where the terrible twos come in. This is where we come in and help them figure out how to verbalize their feelings and needs. Our daily activities started with free play to allow the child to make the choices of what to play with. The playtime is very important for the 2 and 3 year olds. It builds all areas of their development. In playing, they relate more with other children and relationships develop. Pretend play helps to understand things in more diverse ways and learns important concepts such as in and out, big and small and up and down. At this age they are very active. Their motor development allows them the freedom to explore in new ways as they run, jump and climb. They are very independent and want to do more things for themselves. Which, as a teacher, makes our job harder to keep them in a safe environment. Next we had a short class session that encourages participation and verbal skills. We would ask the children " What day of the week is it?". They were encouraged to say " Today is Tuesday". What is it like today? They would say " Today is sunny", " It's raining today", or ' This wind is blowing". This begins the building of complete sentences.

Assessment – As a tool

As I had stated before the child assessment is an important tool performed and used by a day care. I used them to create the personalized schedule for each child. There was always a main schedule for the class, plus a more individualized activities for each child's needs. If it was observed that an infant had less motor skills than the norm, I would incorporate more

activities that would target these muscles. On a daily basis we observed the children. Making notes about what they did each day. These were then given to the parents to inform them. These were titled " How My Day Was".

Included in this form was what activities the child had participated, what they ate, and even their diaper changes or going potty. This is a useful tool to track how a child does on a daily basis. If a health problem arises this information may help see if something could be an attributing factor. A formal and more detailed assessment would be performed on a monthly basis. I would observe the children throughout the day and use chart we had compiled from in class training and online searches. My assessment included a checklist and then any comments. Infants: This information would be documented and placed in the child's file so that each month I could track the progress of the child. If there was any red flags on development I would then notify the Director, who would then set up a parent conference to discuss my findings.

Child Care-Nutrition

We know that good nutrition is linked to brain development and physical growth. We provided healthy snacks and meals that encouraged this.

Normally a child receives most of their nutritional needs at the day care center. The children are at the center for breakfast, morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. Knowing that good nutrition can not only affect physical growth but also affects cognitive and behavioral development. A child that is malnourished will not develop proper muscle tone and motor skills. A child being well-nourished during their first years of life can have an acute effect on their physical health. Their ability to learn is also affected, as

well as communication skills and the ability to socialize. I was the daycare representative for the West Virginia Child Nutrition program. As the representative, I was responsible for attending the regular training sessions and then reviewing the training with the other staff members. I attended the annual training for all of the 14 years of my employment at the daycare. During these training sessions, we received certifications in several areas of childhood nutritional requirements of all the children from infancy to 12 years of age, the requirements for the reporting system to CACFP (Child And Adult Food Program), and programs and online tools used to file the reports.