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Anecdote Child Study

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As an Aunt of both an infant and a toddler, I took advantage of the quality time that I spend with my nieces as an opportunity to perform the following focus child study. For this particular study I chose to observe my niece Kaidence who is a 9 month-old female infant. Kaidence and her parents along with her 2-year-old sister came over to my house to visit my parents and I for the weekend. The following anecdotes entail observations of Kaidence over a two day period.

Anecdote #1- This anecdote consist of physical development milestones of infancy in which sitting alone, crawling, pulling to stand, and learning to walk is involved. The reason why I chose this anecdote is because Kaidence shows an important amount of motor achievement. These four motor skills are significant to Kaidence exhibiting her ability to perform complex systems of action. Kaidence sitting alone shows that she has an appropriate amount of control of her head and upper chest allowing her to sit alone. As a result of her own support, Kaidence spent majority of her evening crawling. The environment of the home provided a broader physical environment to influence her motor skills due to stairs being in the home. Kaidence has mastered crawling up the stairs. As the evening continued Kaidence displayed her ability to pull herself up into a standing position and went as far as taking one to two steps when holding onto things and tottering around them. Furthermore, Kaidence fell multiple times when attempting to take steps without holding onto any objects. After falling on her bottom numerous times she always returned to motion within a few seconds. This shows that she is in the process of learning the amount of strength that is needed to balance her body vertically over two moving feet.

In order to support her physical development an activity that I would do to help Kaidence learn how to walk would be for me to provide more balance and stability for her by holding her

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hands after she pulls herself up. This will help Kaidence gain the confidence that she needs to take her first steps.

Kaidence's physical development can be connected to *Piaget's sensorimotor stage* with the "baby's use of the senses and movements to explore the world" (Berk, & Meyers, 19). Piaget's idea of circular reaction involves infants who stumble across new experiences caused by their very own motor activity. According to Piaget "the reaction is "circular" because, as the infant tries to repeat the event again and again, a sensorimotor response that originally occurred by chance strengthens into a new scheme" (Berk, & Meyers, 203). In relation to Kaidence, her repeated events of holding onto things and tottering around them will strengthen her chances of developing the new scheme of learning how to walk. On the contrary, according to *Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory* a child develops within a complex system (Berk, & Meyers, 26). This theory in relation to Kaidence would interpret that her activities and interaction patterns within her immediate surroundings stem from the innermost level of the environment, also known as the microsystem. Whereas Piaget believes that a child develops throughout stages rather than a systematic approach.

Anecdote #2- This anecdote consist of cognitive development milestones of infancy in which intentional or goal-directed, behavior coordinating schemes are used to solve simple problems. The reason why I chose this anecdote is because Kaidence displayed her ability to successfully problem solve simple tasks. This is significant to Kaidence because she shows a more complex action sequence through being able to retrieve hidden objects. When Kaidence spotted an attractive toy she was motivated to crawl towards the toy in order to play with it. Due to the toy being her older sisters it was not an appropriate toy for an infant to play with. As a result, the toy was hidden under a cover in the process of Kaidence crawling towards it. When

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Kaidence made it over to where she first saw the toy she pushed aside the cover in order to retrieve the hidden toy. This shows that Kaidence's ability to retrieve hidden objects reveals her mastery of object permanence through her understanding that objects continue to exist although it may be out of sight.

In order to support her cognitive development something I would do is to help complete her awareness of object permanence. I would do this by letting Kaidence visibly see that a hidden toy can be moved from one hiding place to another. For example, Kaidence would make the *A-not-B search error* of searching for a hidden toy in the first hiding place even after being shown that it was moved to a second hiding place. I would practice hiding an object in its first hiding place (A), next I would have her see me move the object to a second hiding place (B). Currently, Kaidence would try to find the hidden object where she first saw it (A). However, I would help Kaidence understand to go to the place where she last saw the toy hidden. This would help her develop a clear image of the object as persisting even when hidden from view (Berk, & Meyers, 204).

Kaidence's cognitive development can be connected to *Piaget's cognitive-developmental theory*. Piaget's theory of cognitive development points to the belief that "children actively construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore the world" (Berk, & Meyers, 19). This relates to Kaidence learning through experience that an object hidden from view continues to exist. This theory suggests that children's understanding is different from adults. On the other hand, Vygotsky believed that adults and more expert peers help children master culturally meaningful activities (Berk, & Meyers, 25). While Piaget says a child tends to receive knowledge through experience, Vygotsky appears to lean more towards the idea that a child

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receives knowledge through the help of adults and peers as a child's way to master meaningful activities.

Anecdote #3- This anecdote consist of language development milestones of infancy in which cooing and babbling is apparent. The reason why I chose this anecdote is because Kaidence is consistently making speech like sounds. This is significant to Kaidence because she is cooing and babbling as a way to communicate. While Kaidence was playing with her two-year-old sister she used cooing and babbling as a way of conversational behavior. Kaidence's sound patterns were those of adult like speech. This shows that Kaidence is reflecting speech patterns of what appears to possibly transfer into to her first words in the near future.

An activity I would do to support Kaidence's language development is to take out some time to sit down and talk to her. I would also incorporate gestures when speaking to her so that she may be able to integrate words with gestures. For example, although Kaidence is neither deaf nor hard of hearing I would use sign language as a way to expand her vocabulary so that over time the gestures will symbolize words.

Kaidence's language development can be connected to *Vygotsky's sociocultural theory*. Vygotsky's theory believes that children undergo certain stagewise changes where their ability to participate in dialogue with others progresses while cultural values are built up (Berk, & Meyers, 25-26). Although Vygotskey agreed with Piaget that children are active and constructive beings, Piaget chose to emphasize children's independent efforts to make sense of their world, (Berk, & Meyers, 25) which Kaidence appears to be doing through the use of cooing and babbling.

Anecdote #4- This anecdote consist of social development milestones of infancy in which social smiling is contributed. The reason why I chose this anecdote is because Kaidence

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reveals a broad grin at the sight of her parent's. This is significant to Kaidence because she expresses a social smile when encountering a face-to-face interaction with her mother and father. Kaidence was in the middle of playing with her sister and she heard the sound of footsteps coming towards her. Kaidence stopped what she was doing and turned to see who it was that was approaching her. When she realized that it was her father she begin to smile with an open mouth as she cooed and moved her arms and legs excitingly. This shows that Kaidence's use of a social smile in response to seeing a parent reflects a warm and affectionate relationship that is healthy for the child's social development.

An activity I would do to support Kaidence's social development is to play a game of peek-a-boo. This may generate a social smile when making funny faces or noises. Secondly, I would promote active social engagement to encourage laughter. Moreover, I would practice responding to Kaidence's smiles and social cues in a kind manner to stimulate affection.

Kaidence's social development can be connected to *Erikson's psychosocial stage, basic trust versus mistrust*. In this psychosocial stage infants gain a sense of trust that the world is good due to warm and responsive care that they are experiencing. This relates to Kaidence's social response at the sight of her father. Kaidence displayed a social smile to a person that gives her warm and responsive care. Erikson may interpret this as Kaidence having a sense of trust that the world is good (Berk, & Meyers, 16). On the other hand, Freud's psychoanalytic perspective would stress the influence of early parent-child relationship on development (Berk, & Meyers, 15). This would relate to the parent-child relationship that Kaidence has with her father. As a result of that positive relationship with a parent she is socially responding in a healthy way.

Anecdote #5- This anecdote consist of emotional development milestones of infancy in which clear-cut attachment and separation anxiety is experienced. The reason why I chose this

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anecdote is because Kaidence has a strong and affectionate bond with her mother. This is significant to Kaidence because she displays separation anxiety when her mother leaves the room. After a long morning Kaidence's mother was holding her until her mother was called to a different room. When Kaidence was given to me I sat her in my lap momentarily until her mother was able to come back. When Kaidence's mother was suddenly not in view she displayed a sense of fear and anxiety becoming upset and crying. Although I tried to soothe her by rocking her tightly in my arms she did not calm down until her mother was visible to her again. This shows that Kaidence experiences separation anxiety due to not understanding that the caregiver continues to exist even when not in view (Berk, & Meyers, 262).

An activity I would do to support Kaidence's emotional development is by practicing separation between her and her mother. When spending time with Kaidence I would plan out personal time without her mother being in the room for brief periods of time so that she may become more use to separation. Every so often I would plan to gradually have the mother leave for longer periods of time until Kaidence became more comfortable in understanding that her mother continues to exist even when not in view. Although Kaidence may be too young to understand I would try my best to reassure and communicate to her that her mother will return.

Kaidence's emotional development can be connected to *Bowlby's ethological theory of attachment*. "This psychoanalytic idea of attachment to the caregiver has profound implications for the child's feelings of security and capacity to form trusting relationships" (Berk, & Meyers, 261). Bowlby would observe Kaidence's emotions as a relation to "*clear-cut*" *attachment phase* where attachment is evident to the caregiver. According to Bowlby's theory it is believed that the use of a familiar caregiver is used as a secure base (Berk, & Meyers, 262). Similarly, Freud suggested that the infant's emotional tie to the mother is the foundation for all later relationships

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(Berk, & Meyers, 261). Freud would interpret Kaidence's separation anxiety as a healthy cause for later relationships due to a positive parent-child relationship that Kaidence has in early childhood.

Summary

Teachers have the wonderful opportunity to spend time with children who experience physical, cognitive, verbal, social, and emotional growth on a day-to-day basis. I believe that it is extremely important for teachers to observe infants and toddlers for healthy and successful development. If teachers lack in observation of infants and toddlers developmental milestones can easily be overlooked. Moreover, if teachers fail to keep track of whether a child is appropriately developing that is then putting the child at risk for receiving the help that he or she needs, if any at all.. It is also important for teachers to be aware of what healthy development entails. If a teacher does not know what to look for developmentally then they may not be aware of whether the infant and toddler is meeting their milestones. As a result of these reasons, I believe that it is crucial for teachers to know their infants and toddlers so that they are able to plan for their development accordingly.

This assignment was extremely beneficial to expanding my knowledge in regards to infancy and toddler development. It has also provided me the opportunity to become more hands on in the process of learning a lot about the specific infant that I observed. Personally, the best part of this assignment was being able to properly plan for the child's development after observing their physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional growth. I believe that it is extremely important for all infants and toddlers to be observed for the reason that childhood development can shape an individual's adult life.

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References

Berk, L. E. & Meyers, A. B. (2015). *Infants and children: Prenatal through middle childhood* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.



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