

**Assignment: Observation of infants, toddlers & young children in education contexts**

Observation 1: Running Record

Child: A (white shirt blue sleeve)

Age: Infant-2 years

Gender: Boy

Setting: Play area around empty shelf and table near the entrance of the centre

Weather: Bright and warm as rays shine in the centre through the window

Date: October 2019

Video source: Video 3

Time: 13:20 – 13:40

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A spread out both his hands to pass a toy to the educator. A turns his head to the right to look for the next toy on the floor. He swipes his hands briefly with the front of his shirt. He hops a little by using his body weight and his body bend forward as he reaches down to grab a toy with his left hand. Using both his legs to support his body weight, A raises his head up to look his eyes to the educator. He lifts up his left hand to show the toy to the educator. Then he bounces his body to a straight position. As his eyes and hands focus on the toy, he walks two steps towards the educator to close the gap between him and the educator. He uses both hands to pass the toy to the educator. Immediately after putting the toy on the educator's hands, A turns his head and shifts his body to the right again to look for a new toy. A drops his body, using both his legs to support his weight, bend his back and put both his hands down in front of him to support himself. He lifts his hips up, slides parallel to his right to reach for the toy on his right. He keeps himself in the squatting position and spread his left hand to balance himself. The moment he grabs the toy, he lifts his head up to focus on the educator. Then he passes the toy to the educator again. The educator acknowledges his effort by celebrating in an excited tone, showing how many toys are on her hands. As A continues to move to his right and take more toys to the educator, A pauses and looks at the amount of toys on the educator's hand. The educator engages with A by counting the number of toys on her hands. He turns his head to another educator as she calls out "Alexandar". A turns around and focus on the toys in front of him. He hops and sit down on the floor while focusing on the educator in front of him.

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**Analysis:**

Through the observation above, A demonstrated a strong sense of identity through play with the educator. The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (AGDEEWR) states that personal identity of children is shaped by experiences (2009). A was playing in a safe and secure environment where he was supported by the educator. This is evident as he continuously initiated interaction with his trust educator and confidently explored the infant room for more toys to play with. In addition, the educator has help A in promoting his sense of belonging and agency by showing enthusiasm when A

exhibited sharing behaviour (Buckwalter & Reed, 2017). A also have a strong sense of wellbeing as he displayed trust in the relationship with his educator.

By constantly locking eyes with his educator and making sure he has the educator's attention on him, A actually recognizing respect and reciprocal relationship from his educator (AGDEEWR, 2009). Eye-to-eye contact is a primary means of conveying messages and feeling between infant and educator. This action established intersubjectivity for infant as gaze was identified as an important pedagogical act. The educator acknowledged A's attempt in sharing behaviour and this essentially promoted A's emotional intelligence in terms of sharing emotions with others.

## Observation 2: Duration Recording

Child: B (with blue hat)

Age: 3 to 5 years

Gender: Female

Setting: Indoor common play area with 7-8 peers and 1 educator

Weather: Bright and warm as rays shine in the centre through the window

Date: October 2019

Video source: Video 1, Kindergarten 1

Time:

Context		Start time	Stop Time	Duration
Solidarity Play	-			
Onlooker Play	Sit quietly while eating at table 1 and observe what the other children is playing	3:44	7:10	3mins 26secs
Associative Play	Hang around centre table, ask questions and communicate with other children	7:11	9:10	2mins 21secs
	Stand behind the children at centre table, moving around and keep interacting with another boy regarding the camera	13:15	17:20	4mins 35secs
Parallel Play	Play with other materials at table 1, parallel with centre table and the other children	10:00	11:30	1mins 30secs
Adult engagement	B shouted at another child saying "Stop pushing me" when the child invited her to play outside. This leads to engagement of the educator in resolving the conflict.	11:35	12:56	1min 21secs
Co-operative Play	Joins the centre table with three other children and educator to cut spider from plastic plate	17:22	19:40	2mins 22secs

Definition of context:

Solidarity Play – When children play on their own

Onlooker Play – When children watch others play

Associative Play – When children start interacting and asking questions with each other

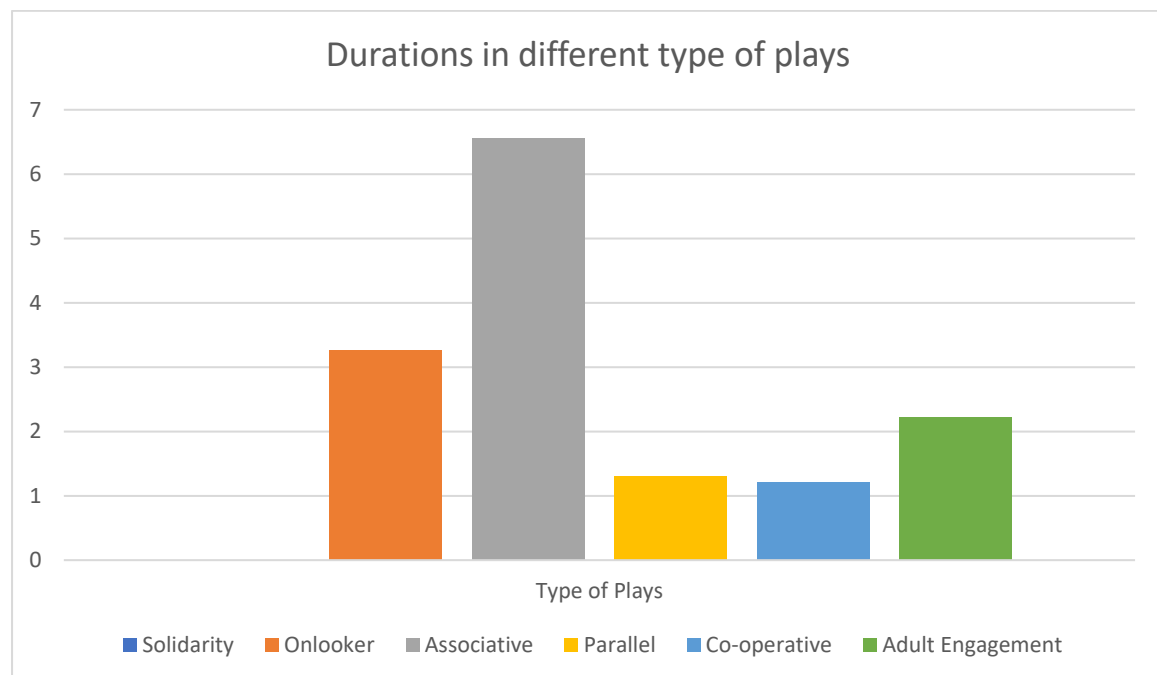
Parallel Play – When children playing side by side without interaction, but paying attention to each other.

Adult engagement – When educator engages with the children for certain purpose

Co-operative play – When children begin to share toys and ideas, and follow established rules and guidelines

(Parten, 1933)

Analysis:



Based on the observation above, it was evident that child B spent most times in onlooker play and associative play. As seen in the video, child B was constantly observing other children in the ECE setting, either in a far distance or close distance. This behaviour established that young children are capable of analysing and absorbing new information through observing as they developed sense of individuality and improved on their emotion socialization (Tominey et al, 2017). Thereafter, she slowly closed her distance with her peers and began to interact with educator and other children in the room. She believed that she was safe and secure and being supported before she took the step to involve herself in co-operative play.

It was vital to notice that the educator was trying to involve different children in the room into the structured learning on the centre table. She was creating an environment where children can feel they are being recognized and encouraged to participate in the activity. In order to

promote child B into co-operative play, she first let child B to parallel play at table 1. Throughout the time when she was parallel playing, her attention was not on the play materials in front of her but at the centre table. As child B ran towards the other side of the room, she encountered an incident where another child was inviting her to play outside but the physical contact made her uncomfortable. Being a responsible educator in promoting strong social wellbeing, she immediately attended to child B. She lowered her body and squatted beside child B. This action helped to show genuine concerns, understanding and affection towards the child (AGDEEWR, 2009). She spent some times to talk with child B about her feeling and respond to events with a view to support her emotional regulation and self-control.

## Observation 3: Time Sampling

Child: C (Yellow long sleeve shirt)

Age: Infant

Gender: Male

Setting: Infant room in Early Childhood Education room with 6 to 7 infants and 3 educators

Weather: Bright and warm as rays shine in the centre through the window

Date: October 2019

Video source: Video 4 – Infants 2

Time: 5 minutes with 1 minute interval

Time	Event	Behaviour
2:00	Sitting down near the entrance of the centre and keep his eyes on the crying infant	Interested in other infants and starts showing empathy.
3:00	Putting both of his hands on the entrance door and look upward toward the educator outside the door	Starts to test boundaries.
4:00	Playing parallelly with two other infants in the centre of the infant room	Begins to parallel play and pay attention to other infants.
5:00	Standing in front of the entrance door while an educator is communicating with C and trying to keep the door shut	Begins to explore cause and effect relationship.
6:00	Interacting with an educator at the dining area and observing other infants having their meals	Begins to feel sense of belonging in a safe zone (where everyone gathers at a same spot)
7:00	Walking around the infants and educators at the dining area and pay attention to the entrance door whenever the door is open	Begins to involve in co-operative play and show curiosity at the same time.

## Analysis:

The first behaviour retrieved from observation 3 showed child C has the capability in showing care and empathy towards other infants in the room (Tominey et al, 2017). The crying infant caught his attention and he was observing and probably thinking why the infant cried and how can he help the crying infant. Consequently, child C begun to test boundaries and displayed curiosity in what was happening beyond the entrance door. He developed disposition for learning by expressing wonder and interest in his environment (AGDEEW, 2009). This learning was further enhanced at 5:00 as he went back to stand at the door. It showed that infants are confident and involved learner when he persevered in exploring what was on the

other side of the door. Towards the end of the observation, even though child C was far away from the door, he remained focus and concentrate on the door whenever it opens.

When educators gathered all infants at the dining area, child C demonstrated a sense of belonging by actively participated in a co-operative play with the educator (Halse 2018). Furthermore, he established and maintained respectful, trusting relationship with educators in the room. He did not show sign of demanding when he could not exit the door and listened to educator as the educator conversed with him.

### Part 3 - Summary of observations

In an education context, the three observations above revealed that infants and young children have similar learning outcomes. Despite having different background and culture, they are able to involved themselves in a play with their peers and establish positive relationship under the guidance of an ECE educator (AGDEEWR, 2009). Thus, it is important for educator in an ECE setting to instil the value of inclusive play among the children. This aspect is particularly essential in terms of creating a sense of belonging among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders families. In an effort to overcome trauma and stress after being expose to the foreign learning setting, ECE educators are being taught to be patient in allowing time for these families to get adjusted. Hunter Institute of Mental Health (2014) states that understanding their unique culture and providing a culturally safe environment for the purpose of supporting the families in the community are among the few approaches in creating a healthy and respectful community. As mentioned earlier in the analysis, infants and young children are great observers and mimickers. ECE educators are capable of building the children sense of identity and connection with the environment by introducing them to Aboriginal culture through play context. Routines and record keeping are helpful measures in aiding Aboriginals families to support them in any parenting issues in the community.

Paul (2014) states that children are actively constructing their own peer culture in an ECE setting. This leads to an emergence of social roles attach to each child depending on the setting. The role of a classroom community puts children in the position to understand classroom routine and regulate themselves in the ECE setting. Consequently, a build up of sense of agency and individuality in children can be seen through this process. They begin to develop understanding of interrelation between themselves and a community as a whole. This aspect of learning is demonstrated by child B where she was first seen to be observing from afar but decided to be co-operative at the end of the observation period. By actively involve in a group activity, children develop a sense of belonging to group and community based on them self-identify social roles (AGDEEWR, 2009). In addition, they are more playful and response more positively to others. They tend to reach out for friendship with the goal of creating reciprocal relationship in an active peer community. It is evident that children are capable of becoming socially responsible at a young age and be connected with their environment.

Curiosity and learning are inseparable. At such an early stage of their life, infants and young children have very limited experiences. Any foreign event will trigger their curiosity in exploring further. While there are many different approaches on how children tackle their

curiosity, observation is one of the first technique they acquire since young. From birth, infants have been exploring the world through their eyes. They detect their caretakers' emotion through their face expression. The experiment conducted by White (2015) established that infants can sense either pleasure in playing or distress when caretakers are not responding to them. Therefore, it is interesting to notice all three subjects in the observations above have utilise their observation skills to support their wellbeing in an ECE setting. At the same time, the educator plays a significant role in promoting the children to be confident and involved learner. As seen in observation 1, the educator responded positively to child A's learning by commenting on them and providing encouragement in an excited tone. Child A received compliment and his learning was appreciated by his trusted educator. This process heightens his sense of wellbeing to feel happy and connected with people.

Through play in an education setting, infants and young children also demonstrate high level of emotional intelligence (EI). As children build on their EI through experiential play, they become more understanding and able to self-regulate their emotions among peers (Bailey & Rivers, 2018). Hence, it is very crucial for ECE educators to recognise children emotional fluctuation in the room and tackle them strategically. Emotional support is essential in an ECE setting to promote positive interactions between peers and educators. Infants and young children often feel insecure in a new or foreign environment; therefore, educators are responsible to nurture relationships and make them feel safe, confidence and valued as an unique individual (AGDEEWR, 2009). According to observation 2, the educator quickly recognised a change of emotion atmosphere across the other side of the room. The presence of the educator gave child B a great sense of comfort as she probably would not be able to deal with her anger and anxious emotion. In addition, how the educator approached her and another child in conflict was tender yet promising. She levelled herself with them and respond sensitively to their incident. This incident exhibit high level of emotional support to children. As a role model for children in an ECE setting, the educator has showed the rest of the children in the room on how to interact with each other with care, empathy and respect.

As children become older, their emotional and physical connections with peers and environment increase in complexity. They are more intrigued by understanding the connectivity between each other and the surrounding. This aspect of learning contributes to how they feel about belonging and discover different ways of being in an active community. Subsequently, this is where the role of ECE educators kick in. Creating an environment where children feel safe and respected is the first step in establishing a strong sense of identity in order to promote children to live interdependently (Halse, 2018). When children are actively collaborating in community activity, they gradually learn how to "read" and respond to behaviours among their peers. This is the moment when children become aware of connections, similarities and differences between people (AGDEEWR, 2009). Also, this is the moment where ECE educators engage the children in understanding and encourage them in appreciation of differences among peers.



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