Case Study: Preschool Observation

Classroom Arrangement

The classroom has wide windows, dark blue shades and its decorated with different types of art and literary work of kids. There are six different boards - parent's board, teacher's board, craft's board, noticeboard and literary board.

The furniture is all wooden and there are different sections in the classroom depending upon the activity. Writing zone, house and dramatic play, kitchen and tools area, manipulative area, science area, a small literary section.

The whole room is carpeted and there is a blue carpet with different shapes on it. The carpet has each child's name on it labeled. The tables are also labeled. Every child has a personal space to store his clothes and jacket.

There is a bin for water bottles. The boy under observation is an Indian American boy with black eyes and brownish hair. He has a wheatish complexion and has a prominent mole in his right eye. He is wearing a yellow T-shirt and white jacket with blue pants and sports shoes. He is 3 years and 2 months in age, like everyone he is sitting in the circle time listening to teacher's word. He is singing along the 'good morning' song. He is chosen as the helper for the particular day. He gets up quickly as the teacher calls his name and goes to stick his name on the wall board. The teacher smiled at him and said “Thank you”. He smiled back and went to his spot.

With all the other children in class he is listening to the story that teacher is reading. He frowns when the scene changes and the story becomes more intense. After storytime all the children are excused and the boy gets up and goes to the manipulative area to play. He is using bristle blocks to make something out of it. Connecting each pieces, he is talking to a friend who is playing with him in that area.

They both back two trucks and pretend to be firefighters. The two friends are smiling and playing with harmony. The boy keeps the toy back into the bin after he is done with playing. The teacher gives the call for snack and the boy goes to her for a snack. He is eating Baguette and cream cheese wiping his face with a napkin. He finishes his snack and goes to dump his plate in the garbage can. Now he is washing his hands and counting 1-20 while washing.

He comes back to the play area and goes to the dramatic play section. He is wearing an apron and serving food to his peers. He is also calling their names and inviting them to the restaurant, serving foods and pretending to take bill from them. They are all smiling and laughing while the boy is setting up plates.

After sometime the teacher switches off the light and counts till 5 saying that its time to clean up. The boy takes off his apron and begins to sing 'clean up song' while picking up and sorting toys and keeping in the bins.

The boy then goes to the teacher showing the area that he cleaned up. The teacher appreciates

his efforts and asks him to sit on his spot. The child sits and looks at the teacher who is taking out stamps from the bins. The boy's name is called and he gets stamp on his hand. They all stand for the gross motor circle. The boy is prompting for the song and the teacher is playing the CD player and they all begin dancing on 'head, shoulders, knees and toes'. The boy quickly bends to touch his toes. He is smiling while doing his activity. He is actively participating and movements are well coordinated.

Physical Development

The height of the child is 93 cms, and his weight is 22 pounds. He looks healthy and has a built and flexible body. His gross motor skills are strong. He can run, walk, climb up and down the structures in outdoor area. He can kick the ball, he has hand and eye coordination, he knows well how to catch a ball that is thrown at him. He has the advanced knowledge of speed, movement and distance. His leg movements are also well coordinated. He has control over his body and motion. He is efficiently able to balance his body on the monkey bars.

Social Skills

The child is sociable and takes initiative in making connections with friends and teachers. He goes and gives hug to his teacher when he arrives in the morning. He wishes everyone good morning /good afternoon.

In few incidences he shows a high sense of empathy as he asks his friends who fall during playtime. 'Are you okay?', 'Do you want to sit and relax?'. He offers prayer before eating his meal at school and sings songs with teachers and friends. He uses his table manners while eating and saying 'thankyou', 'sorry', 'please' in his conversations.

He understands the concepts of taking turns and exchanging toys after the timer rings, doesn't act violently when a child grabs a toy from him instead he asks him to return it without being physical. He shows respect for his teachers and authorities in school.

His mother is a teacher in the same school. When she comes to his class he continues to call her miss and not mom, he does understand and respects other people's work and follows rules most of the time.

Language Development

The child's language development is advanced. He comes from a bilingual household. He verbalises his wants, expresses his sensitivity or care for others in words. During circle time he was participating and interactive, talking about the topic that the teacher asked to discuss.

He stands up and recites a rhyme in front of the class. During circle the teacher makes different animal sounds and the child is following and imitating her voice and movements. During story telling he is curiously listening to the story, and making conversations whenever necessary.

Emotional Development

As told earlier, he empathetically talks to his friends 'do you have a boo-boos?', 'Are you okay?' which depicts that he has emotional response and feeling for others. If he sees his mother working in the same area he goes to her, hugs her and comes back or waves at her, he respects presence of his teachers and listens to their instructions. He stops an action when an authoritative figure tells him to do so. The child is also sensitive, where in a conflict when a teacher spoke to him in a stern manner, he begins to cry but then when the teacher asks him to say his version of incidence he speaks about it and asks for an apology. The temperament of the child can be considered easy and mouldable, all throughout the observation there was no episode of violence, pushing or screaming.

Self Help Skills

HE is able to feed himself using spoon and fork, clean up his face, shedding anything that falls on his cloth. He is potty trained, needs less or no assistance to clean his bottom. He verbalizes his needs efficiently to his teachers.

He wipes his own nose, can dress and undress himself with little guidance. During naptime he prepares his own mat and takes care of his belongings placing them in his cubbies. he has that sense of self reliance and autonomy in what he does.

Gross Motor Development

Based on his physical activity gross motor skills of the child can be categorized as advanced. For example, he can easily walk up and down the stairs alone, jump, run, ride a bicycle while pedaling.

Fine Motor Skills

The teacher during class hours gave play dough and he was able to pat it, roll it, cut it with scissors, make an impression on it with stamps. During play he was able to connect to create an object that he called 'truck' and play with it. His ability to use his finger is proficient and he is easily able to put puzzles together and string the medium size beads together.

Cognitive Development

The child can count efficiently till 40 with little assistance. He is well versed with primary colors and shapes. He knows his five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, hear) as the teacher discusses them during circle time, he points out his senses with his fingers. When his name was called he responded to the teacher and friends, which clearly shows his proficient knowledge about his own self and his surroundings.

During pretend play, he was offering food to his peers and giving them bill for the order that they made, his play was defined and goal oriented. He knew the concept of working and earning through work.

Another aspect that was revealed during the observation was his knowledge about safe and unsafe environments, as he stops a friend from touching the 'hot pizza' that he served during

play. The child has the knowledge of the world that surrounds him and acts with intention. While observing him Diaget's theory comes to my mind how the development occurs in several stages and becomes more pronounced at each stage.

The Environment

The environment of the school was safe and sound. If we consider the physical aspect of the environment everything was under licensing policy. The structure, the curriculum, the cleanliness, the arrangement of outdoor play had the element of licensing rules and regulations.

The school was a nut-free zone and no-bully zone. There were charts for classroom rules with pictures and playground rules as well. Another aspect of the safe environment was fire inspection and stranger danger inspection. The school had all the provisions for safety from fire and they also had a fire drill.

Apart from this, the school's internal environment was nurturing, besides having a structural curriculum the teachers individualized care according to the needs of the child. The school program seems to be designed to motivate, nurture and quench the curiosity of young preschoolers.

The classroom environment with different learning centers made it easier for children to make choices and invest their energy in areas where they are inclined to. The centers were timely cleaned and the floors were cleaned after meals. Every toy and shelves was sanitized according to the sanitization schedule chart. The teachers and children took active participation in maintaining a clean, safe and warm environment where learning was fun.

1. There was a scope of participation and due opportunities given to the children
2. Better understanding of child psychology
3. Emphasis on adopting positive and direct methods for behavior change or boosting listening skills
4. Activities and curriculum framed in mind keeping the attention span, focus and age of children
5. As teachers and parents holding realistic expectations from children and being an active participant in their journey
6. Creating a curriculum which is an amalgam of learning and creative expression