Child?S Development Essay, Research Paper

Introduction

Enthusiasm in children is like a ripple in the water … it

spreads.

~Anonymous~

The study of child development helps us understand the

changes we see as children grow and develop. A child’s

development is divided into five areas: physical, emotional,

cognitive, social, and moral development (Mitchell and David 1992).

Although each area will be discussed separately, it is important to

remember that all these areas overlap. Together, they make up the

whole person.

Physical development is an increase in body size and shape.

Motor development is included in physical development because it

shows the development of the large and small muscles. Changes

in the brain and nervous system will affect physical and motor

development.

Emotional development is how the child feels about

himself/herself, other people, and the world that they live in.

Emotional development also involves children’s learning to

distinguish different feelings and express them in culturally

acceptable ways (Henniger, 1993/94).

Cognitive development is how the child thinks and learns.

Children learn by interacting with their environment, objects,

adults and other children. Cognitive development includes growth

in memory, attention, reasoning, problem solving strategies, and

language abilities (Mitchell and David 1992).

Social development is how children of different ages relate to

other people. In the beginning, the social world of a child consists

of family members. Throughout development, they meet friends,

teachers and other adults in their community. Social development

is simply the act of making new friends and learning how to get

along with other people.

Moral development is when the child will learn the difference

between right and wrong. Piaget came up with three theories of

moral development: id, ego and superego. Lawrence Kohlberg

expanded Piaget’s theories and came up with six stages of moral

development.

A four year old child is known to be very active and energetic.

They love to talk, enjoy silly humor, love learning new information

about their world, and enjoy finding solutions to problems in

imaginative ways (Miller, 1999). Not every four year old child can

perform these tasks at the same time. It is important to remember

that each child is an individual and should be motivated to reach

their full potential.

The child that I am observing is a boy named Michael. On

the first day of my observation I was not sure who I wanted to

observe. Michael caught my eye right away when he came over to

me and asked if I would help him find snowballs. As I continued to

watch him, I noticed that he is very outgoing and likes to be the

center of attention. If I was not paying attention to him when he

was throwing a snowball or sliding down the slide he would call out

to me and say,

“Hey! Look over here at me”.

Michael’s physical characteristics resembles any other four

year old boy and does not show any signs of limitations. He has

brown hair and brown eyes and is average in height, weight, and

body structure. His style of dress consists of jeans or comfortable

sweatpants and a sweatshirt.

In the life of this four year old, physical, emotional, cognitive,

social and moral development are brought together and expressed

in every day play and activities (Mitchell and David 1992). In this

personality study, I will look at why knowing about childhood

development is important and compare Michael’s behaviors to that

of other developing four year old children.