**Kindergarten Child Study**

**Introduction**

“Children are like tiny flowers: they are varied and need care, but each is beautiful alone and glorious when seen in a community of peers (Frobel).” I chose the age group of five year olds which are kindergartens because I wanted to get to know how they learn in every aspect. I also chose kindergarteners because I always thought about being a kindergarten teacher. Through my observations, our text book and lectures I have learned a lot about five year olds. My reaction to my age group is that you can’t just sit and lecture five year olds. They are busy individuals and learn in different ways. Kindergarteners need to be taught with patience and love. I have found that they learn best with imitation, instruction, suggestions, and reminders. Through observing I found that five year olds do great with different variety of options and when they are applying their selves rather than listening to a teacher talk.

**Physical Development**

In physical development for five year olds they need physical activities and free play. Kindergarteners practice gross motor skills by running, jumping, and throwing. A good activity to practice these skills is a game like dodge ball. Five year olds hold their pencil with a pincher grasp. I observed that five year olds are still developing their left to right tracking and often use their finger to keep their place when reading. Kindergartens focus on objects that are close to them rather than far away. Developmentally appropriate activities should include opportunities to develop physical development. Some examples are; allowing kindergartners to write, cut out objects, play freely, and play games like duck duck goose and red light green light. Through research I found theorist Friedrich Froebel that truly believed in physical development. Froebel established the first kindergarten. Through his school he used games, songs, stories, and crafts to encourage children’s imagination and widen their physical and motor talents. Five year olds could shape and manipulate clay, sand, beads, and rope to strengthen fine motor skills. Games, songs and dances were accepted by Froebel as the key for healthy activity and physical development. Motor expression, which refers to learning by doing as opposed to following instructions, is a very important aspect of Froebel’s educational principles. “Froebel did not believe that the child should be placed into society’s mold, but should be allowed to shape his own mold and grow at his own pace through the developmental stages of the educational process.” I would have to agree with Frobel children need to be given items that are natural to develop physically. Children need time to play out side to run, jump, and throw. I agree with giving five year’s olds pencils, scissors, and clay to enhance their fine motor skills.

**Cognitive Development**

In cognitive development for kindergarteners/ five year olds the brain undergoes its most dramatic growth, and children rapidly develop the cognitive capacity that enables them to become intellectually curious and creative thinkers. Through cognitive development five year olds often only see one way to do things. In this stage kindergarteners are not ready to understand the concept of fairness. Five year olds also think by knowing by instinct rather than logically in this stage. They learn best by repetition and through active exploring of manipulative. Many children know the alphabet and names of upper- and lowercase letters. Good activities for cognitive development are Simon says, building blocks, and memory games. Modeling for children is important in this stage. I also have learned that cognition is not adding more content, but more structure. Theorist Jean Piaget said that five year olds are in the preoperational period. “Piaget stated that five year olds do not yet understand logic and can’t mentally manipulate information, and are unable to take the point of view of other people, which he termed egocentrism”. I agree that five year olds are egocentric in there cognitive development.

**Social Development**

In social development of five year olds they like to help, corporate, follow rules, along with being good and wanting adult approval. Kindergarteners are very dependent on adult authority and have problems taking others viewpoints. Five years old are often oppositional about whether to be good or bad. Through observing this age group I have seen that they always need adult approval before doing something, and will ask can I go to the bathroom? I have also seen that kindergarteners need routine/ schedules. Five year olds in social development need consistent discipline and rules and respond well to clear and simple expectations. Kindergarteners learn and practice language skills through teacher modeling and directed role play as well as dramatic play. Through free play five year olds take on different roles such as Mom or doctor. Theorist Erickson described the stage of initiative vs. guilt. Through researching Erikson I feel that five year old fit in this category. Erikson believed that in this stage children attempt tasks they observe their teacher or parent doing.

**Moral Development**

Through moral development in five year olds we are describing their ability to distinguish right from wrong. Piaget found that young children have a much a better understanding of right and wrong behavior than do older children. With five year olds their egocentrism, does not allow them to consider the perspective of others. Kindergarteners see rules as fixed and absolute. Through observing I have seen that five year olds don’t have the tools or development to truly know what is right from wrong. An example being "who is did worse" a boy who accidentally broke fifteen cups or a boy who breaks one cup trying to reach a cookie jar when his mother is not around. Younger children attributed the "worse" behavior to the boy who broke the most cups regardless of the other child's intent. I feel this is because five year olds are not fully development yet.

**The Classroom**

I feel that the Kindergarten class room that I observed met the needs of the five year olds in every developmental stage. For physical development children were using their fine motor skills by writing, drawing, and cutting with scissors. Through the classroom observation the teacher said that they have songs and play games to promote physical development. I didn’t get to see the five year olds be physically active outside. To promote cognitive development in the classroom the five year olds should read labels, signs, posters, and charts indentifying familiar objects in their environment. For example I feel the chart I saw for days of the week and the weather are promoting the children’s learning. Through research I have found writing letters of the alphabet are great for cognitive development. Learning phonics and reading predictable books is also great. When I observed the kindergarten classroom I feel the teacher did a great job with social development. I observed that the rules for the classroom were clearly posted and the teacher had a consistent discipline policy. For the teacher to promote moral development she should try to get the children to think of new ways to do different tasks.

**The After School Program**

I feel that the after school program I observed met all the developmental needs a five year child. For physically development I observed the children having a recess. The five year olds were running, jumping, and throwing. I saw jump ropes, hula hoops, and bouncy red balls. All of the equipment and play structure were age appropriate. For cognitive development the activity I observed the children were taking ordinary items like a broom and turning it into a horse. The program has a set program for kindergartens and has set enrichment that is age appropriate. Examples being repetitive games, manipulatives, Spanish, art, music, and brain games. I observed that the after school program promotes social development by letting five year olds be with their friends the setting is relaxed. The after school program had a clear set of rules and a strict discipline policy called the level system. The after school program also encourages children to talk and listen when conflict arises. The after school program did a great job of meeting the kindergarteners needs.

**Conclusion**

I feel if I was working with five year olds I would meet there developmental needs in every aspect. Kindergartens are busy individuals and learn in different ways. I would meet the five year olds needs by doing activities such as games, songs, stories, and crafts to encourage children’s imagination. I would make my classroom and environment that lets the children be themselves and gives them room to be creative and room to express themselves. I would offer a variety of ways of teaching a certain subject. I would meet the five year olds needs by teaching by modeling, imitation, and instruction. Kindergartners need to be taught manners and rules. I would meet there needs by doing so. Meeting the needs of kindergartener’s would be applying age appropriate development practices in every category Social, cognitive, physical, and moral development.