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Self Evaluation #1

**1. What are your strengths and challenges as you work with the children each day?**

Every day I work with children, I am reminded of how different every experience is. The way children act or think on one day can change completely by the next. And as children change, so do their needs. I think one of my biggest strengths that allows me to work with children well is my ability to be flexible. In the classroom, when something needs to be done, I do it. Whether that means changing my routine for a few minutes, or altering the way I do something from then on in regards to the children. As with any new change, however, comes doubt. I think my biggest weakness is that I am often unsure of myself in both my speech and my actions. In the beginning, I was not used to the routine in the classroom, which led me to be unsure as to what I should be doing or not doing. With time, it has gotten better, but I am still very careful with what I say to children and how I say it.

**2. Using the Guides to Speech and Action as a framework, describe an episode based on your experience in your placement this semester where you used a specific guide effectively when working with children.**

On my very first day in the classroom this semester, I was asked by a child to sit and read with her in a corner of the room. The small reading corner had a curtain that could be used for privacy, which the child wanted while I read to her. After a few minutes, I realized that from my current position, I could not see over the curtain. This is not my first time working with children, but I am used to observing them from a distance. Although this means I have a more difficult time taking initiative when it comes to interacting with the children, it also means I have built a habit of automatically positioning myself so that I am able to see the entire room, as Guide #13 suggests. As I was attempting to move in the tiny space and change my position, Ember came up to me to remind me the importance of facing the entire room, which let me know I was thinking on the right track.

**3**. **Using the Guides to Speech and Action as a framework, describe an episode this semester where you felt you were not effective in guiding a child (or children’s) behavior. In detail, describe how you could have used a specific guidance technique (using a number) from the guides in this situation.**

Just the other day, I was outside playing with a child in the sand. For a while, we had been having fun drawing shapes in the sand and erasing them. Then he grabbed a fistful of sand and threw it in the air, covering both of us with the sand. In the past, I would have just told him not to do that, which I know now would have been a negative thing to say. Instead, I told him that I did not appreciate having sand in my hair, but after he did it again, I told him we could do another activity. I realized later that I could have actually suggested an activity that would relate to his throwing action, such as playing with a ball instead, as mentioned in Guide #6. It would have made him feel like I acknowledged the reason behind his action, rather than leaving it up to him to keep throwing sand.

**4. What are you learning about yourself in terms of your strengths in working with children? What are you learning about yourself in terms of challenges? Please be specific.**

Working with children this semester has been like a completely new experience so far. I have a feeling I am learning a lot about myself already in regards to how I adapt to new environments and how I learn from those around me. For example, when I do not know what to do, I pick up on things the teachers say or how they handle situations and I keep it as a reference for the future. I also like talking to the children because it gives me a better sense of their individual personalities, as well as their relationship to each other. Being flexible and observant has helped me out a lot, but I know I will eventually need to take what I learn and apply it myself. For example, I have to take more initiative when it comes to approaching a child or a group of children while they play. I need to be interacting with them on their level, rather than just standing back and observing them from afar.

**5. What else do you want to learn about yourself? Write one specific thing that you will be working on when you are in the classroom this week.**

After all of the times I have worked with children in the past, I have never experienced nap time until this semester. I want to learn not just the proper way to help a child fall asleep, but also understand what each individual child needs as Ember and Ashley do. With time and practice, I want to learn which children need a little more encouragement, which are fine sleeping on their own, and which are least likely to stay asleep for long. I believe these tie in a lot to learning to understand their individual personalities, acknowledging the differences between the children, and learning how to meet those individual needs. That is why this week I will keep working on getting to know the children, as well as paying attention to what I learn about the children based on what Ember and Ashley have observed about them.

**6. What would be most helpful to you right now?**

Right now, I am still getting to know each child on an individual level. Yet, so far I have not been able to spend time with all of the children. It would be helpful to have some time to work with a few at a time, such as in a small group, in order to focus on getting to know them without the craziness of the playground. This would also allow the children to get to know me as well, which would help me if I ever need to be firm and get them to listen. I would also love to know more about certain children through the eyes of others. Some of the girls that have been there longer and are able to recognize certain habits or little details about some of the children have shared their experience, which has helped me to understand some of the children’s personalities right away, rather than spending all semester to learn about them on my own.