Observation Paper One: Observations of Body Growth and Physical Development

Katie Howard

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Child 354

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**Introduction**

In this observation four children were observed at Oak Way Park in Chico, California. Three of the children were of Caucasian, and one was Hispanic. I observed three girls and one boy. The three girls observed seemed to be around eleven years old, while the boy looked younger. He looked around eight years old. My observation took place on Saturday 2/26/2011 from 1:10 to 1:40 pm. The type of observation I decided to use was the Observations of Body Growth and Physical Development. The developmental domain used in my observation was the physical domain. The physical domain is the development of fine motor and gross motor skills.

**Observation Summary**

During the observation first height, weight, ethnicity and physical attractiveness of each of the children were looked at. Child one is a Caucasian girl; she has an average height and an average weight. Child one’s estimated height and weight is 4’5” and 75 pounds. Her physically attractiveness is above average. She is well groomed and has clean long blonde hair. She has almond shaped blue eyes with long lashes. Her smile is wide with dimples on both checks and has a petite nose. Child one has a body shape of a mesomorph. A mesomorph is a person who has a naturally muscular body, they look athletic. Child one has toned muscular legs, an average upper body and thin arms. She has breast development which is an indication of pubertal change. All four children are playing basketball, although the three girls are barely letting child four join in. Child one is the clear athlete of the group. She is able to run smoothly while bouncing the ball, dribble between her legs and shoot the basketball in the hoop with ease.

Child two is also a Caucasian girl; she has an above average height and below average weight. The approximate height for Child two is 4’8” and her approximate weight is 75 pounds. She is averagely physically attractive, her hair is short light brown and very thin. Her face shape is oval and she has an extremely thin upper lip. Her brother is child four, and she seems to only be the leader to him, but a follower in her group of girls. Child two has a body shape of an ectomorph which is a slender and lean body type. She is tall with thin long legs; she has a slender upper body and thin arms. She has no indications of pubertal change, she has a flat chest and her hips are narrow. Child two is able to run and bounce the ball at the same time. She can shoot the ball, but not as easily as child one. She cannot dribble the ball between her legs.

Child three is a Hispanic girl, who has an average height and above average weight. Child 3 has an estimated height of 4’5” and an estimated weight of 85 to 90 pounds. She is average in her physical attractiveness, with long thick dark brown hair. She has brown eyes and dimples on her cheeks. She seems very confident, and is the clear leader within the group of girls. Child three has a body type of an endomorph which is a soft rounded body, has a tendency to carry extra weight. She has a rounded stomach as well as thick thighs. Her arms are relatively thin though. Child three does have indications of pubertal change; she has wide hips and the beginning of breast development. Child three is noticeably not an athlete. Child one and two were helping to teach her how to shoot the basketball. She was able to throw the ball, and dribble the basketball. She was able to run, but did not seem to want to.

Child four is a Caucasian boy and has an average height and below average weight. His estimated height is 4’ and weight is approximately 55 pounds. He is averagely attractive, he has brown hair and his hair shape is a bowl cut. While observing he showed confidence, but at times he was quickly shot down by his older sister. Child four is an ectomorph. He has thin long legs, which look to large for his body. He has a thin upper body as well as thin arms. He does not have any indications of pubertal change. Child four is not able to shoot the basketball and make it in the hoop on a regular basis. His arms are not as developed and strong to shoot the basketball at the hoop, uses “granny style” to shoot ball. He has the ability to dribble basketball and his running seems to be relatively smooth. He can catch the basketball when thrown at him.

**Conceptual Overview**

Children are developing at a rapid speed during early childhood and middle childhood; they are going through numerous body growth changes and gaining a large amount of physical ability. The developmental domain being observed in this observation was the physical domain. The physical domain consists of gross motor development and fine motor development. Gross motor development is the skills that use a person’s large muscle ability, such as agility, force, balance and flexibility. In middle childhood the specific skills children are able to achieve are, skateboarding, tumbling and jumping rope (Zembar & Blume, 2009). Fine motor development is the use of controlled and accurate movements such as; buttoning a shirt, zipping a jacket and controlling a pencil.

During the school age years children follow a steady growth pattern. In middle childhood children typically gain two to three inches in height a year and four to six pounds in weight a year (Zembar & Blume, 2009). While these are typical weight and height gains a difference in growth rates can be found within different ethnic backgrounds. Children not only gain height and weight but other parts of their bodies mature and grow as well. As a child moves through middle childhood their complete stature grows, “or total height, is made up of head and neck length, trunk length and leg length” (Zembar & Blume, 2009). Around the years of six and seven years of age, children’s baby teeth begin to fall out and gradually are replaced by their 32 permanent teeth. During the middle childhood years every child’s body is growing at a steady pace, leaving their childlike stature and continuing to develop their adult stature.

During the middle childhood period some children begin to enter puberty. Girls tend to start puberty at a younger age then boys do, girls can being puberty as early as eight years old and boy generally around ten years old. Hormonal changes in a child’s body begin many years before any physical characteristics are noticeable. For girls breast development can start to bud as early as eight years old, along with pubic hair growth. Menarche usually appears approximately a year and a half after breast development occurs. Boys start puberty later than girls, the generally start about one or two years after girls do. For boys the onset of puberty can start to begin as early as ten years of age. For boys the start of puberty begins with testicular growth, and pubic hair begins to appear. In the third stage of testicular growth an increase in penis size begins to happen (Zembar & Blume, 2009). Boys go through vocal changes, which cause a deepening of their vocal chords and finally their facial hair begins to develop. Two of the children observed seemed to have entered into pubertal changes, with child one and three beginning to have breast development and child three to have widening of her hips.

**Research Comparison**

The study focused on children seven to ten years of age, and aimed to find out how sports classes influence the physical and motor development. It was a four-year longitudinal study done in Slovenia that studied 328 children. The study used two groups of children, an experimental group, which included children from sports classes and a control group, which had children from general classes. The study used a sports-educational chart to collect date in April of every year. The researchers collected date by testing the children on eight motor tasks and three physical measures. The results of the data showed a positive impact on the children in the experimental group. The data showed that the children from the control group were below average and the children in the experimental group were above the Slovenia average (Jurak, G., Kovač, M., & Strel, J., 2006).

This research pertains to the children I observed because I watched them while they were playing a sports activity. The four children were playing basketball. It was clear that two of the girls, child one and child two were highly skilled in basketball. While child three who looked to be the same age as child one and two did not have the same amount of skill. The other two girls were teaching her how to shoot the basketball, and the rules of the game. Child four was a few years younger than the three girls and he did not possess the same developmental abilities. It was clear that the two girls were more skilled, whether it is that they play basketball on a sports team, regularly at school, or regularly at home. It was clear they were above average in the sport for their age level, to become above average in a sport it requires that a person practices and is involved more in athletic activities. In the study the children who had more involvement with physical activity were able to perform at a higher level then children who did not have as much involvement. In my observation, this seemed to prove accurate with the three eleven year old girls.

**Reflection**

I enjoyed watching the children during my observation. It was interesting to see the interactions of the children, and to notice who was the clear leader and the others who followed her. I also enjoyed watching the interaction between the sister and brother. She was the clear leader over him, and only really let him become involved in the activity with her friends when they needed a fourth player. I thought the most interesting part was that two of the girls showed signs of pubertal indications while child two did not. All the girls seemed to be the same age, but child one and three seemed to look more adult-like even in their facial features than child two who had zero signs of pubertal indications. She was very tall, but still had features in her face and body that made her look more child-like than the other two girls. It is interesting to me that puberty can happen at such a wide range of ages, from personal experience I had a friend who had a tall ectomorph body type and did not begin puberty until 17 years old. Having that experience and knowledge, did not surprise me that child two who has an ectomorph body type is the child without any indications of puberty.

References

Jurak, G., Kovač, M., & Strel, J. (2006). Impact of the additional physical education lessons programme on the physical and motor development of 7- to 10-year-old children. *Kinesiology*, 38(2), 105-115.

Zembar, M. J., & Blume, L. B. (2009). *Middle Childhood Development: A Contextual*

*Approach*. U.S.A.: Merrill.

**Record Form 3.1: Observation of Body Growth and Physical Development**

Age Group:11 and 8 Date 2/26/2011

Child 1 Child 2 Child 3 Child 4 Child 5

Gender M **F** M **F** M **F** **M** F M F

Mark an X on the line corresponding to the observed/estimated height and weight, race, and physical attractiveness of each child.

**1. Height** My estimations of height

Below Avg. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

Average X -4’5” \_\_\_\_ X-4’5” X-4’ \_\_\_\_

Above Avg. \_\_\_\_ X -4’8” \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

**2. Weight** My estimations of weight

Below Avg. \_\_\_\_ X-75lbs \_\_\_\_ X-55lbs \_\_\_\_

Average X-75lbs \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

Above Avg. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ X-85-90lbs \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

**3. Ethnicity**

Caucasian X X \_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_

African Amer. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

Hispanic/Mexican \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

Asian \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

**4. Physical Attractiveness**

Below Avg. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

Average \_\_\_\_ X X X \_\_\_\_

Above Avg. X \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

Child 1) Long blonde hair, wide lips, dimples, blue eyes-> long lashes 2) Stringy brown hair, thin, thin lips.

3) Long brown hair, dimples, and brown eyes. 4) Bowl cut hair, brown hair.

Notes about how attractiveness affected interactions with others? (E.g., leadership, confidence, lack of confidence) Child 1) Above average attractiveness, does not seem to be leader though. She does show confidence. Child 2) Averagely attractive, seems to lack confidence. Child 3) Clear leader, and averagely attractive. Child 4) Averagely attractive, has confidence. Seems to “act out” to get attention from girls. He is child 2 brother.

**5. Child’s Body Shape** (Meso, Ecto, Endo). List for each child specific body features you observed.

**Body Type Body features**

Child 1 Mesomorph Thin arms, averagely skinny stomach, toned legs, and clear muscle in

thighs.

Child 2 Ectomorph Tall, thin long legs, slender stomach, flat chest and thin arms.

Child 3 Endomorph Round stomach, wide hips and larger thighs. Relatively thin arms.

Child 4 Ectomorph Thin long legs-look tall for body, thin upper body and arms.

Child 5 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Indications of Pubertal Change (list for each child).**

Child 1 Breast development

Child 2 None

Child 3 Breast development and wide hips

Child 4 None

Child 5

7. **Motor skills** (e.g., level of coordination, balance, speed, accuracy in throwing, catching, etc).

**(list for each child). Children observed playing basketball**

Child 1 Able to dribble basketball through legs and while running. Can throw ball accurately and shoot the ball accurately at the hoop. Can run with a fluid gait, she looks advanced in playing basketball.

Child 2 Able to run, and shoot basekets, can dribble while running but not between legs. She can bounce pass the ball and catch it. Looks average, but becoming advanced.

Child 3 She can bounce ball, does not seem very athletic or interested in playing basketball. She is able to throw the ball, and can run. She does not seem to want to run though. Child 1 and 2 teaching her how to play, and teaching rules.

Child 4 Can dribble the ball, not able to shoot accurately and make it, he shoots “granny style”. He is able to bounce pass, arms do not seem as strong. He is able to run with a fluid gait.