

CHLD 102: Child Growth and Development

Observing Early Childhood

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| Learning Outcomes | 2. Explain the inter-relatedness of developmental areas and milestones: physical/motor, social/emotional, language/cognitive, adaptive/living skills and how developmental needs influence learning. |
| DEC Recommended Practices | A20 Professionals assess the child's strengths and needs across all developmental and behavioral dimensions |
| NAEYC Standards | 1a: Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs. 3c: Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches |

In order to meet the Learning Objectives and Recommended Practices for this assignment you need to develop your observation skills and learn to focus on specific areas of young children's development. You also need a working familiarity with typical developmental expectations and "red flags" that can be associated with atypical development. In this assignment you will have an opportunity to develop these important skills.

Completing this assignment successfully requires the following steps:

- Review Chapters 8-10 of your course text. Be sure to focus on the Milestone charts located at the end of these chapters (pp. 408 & 409).
- The following link to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has discussions about observing children for Developmental Screenings. There are pages for various ages. Find the ones appropriate for early childhood and use them as a reference for this assignment.
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). *Developmental Milestones*. Available from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>
- Reread "*Red flags: A quick reference guide for early years professionals in york region, early identification of red flags in child development prenatally to age six.*"
 - York Region Red Flags Task Group. (2011). "*Red Flags: A quick reference guide for early years professionals in york region, early identification of red Flags in child development prenatally to age six.*" Ontario, Canada: York Region. Available from http://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/054ca0a9-0027-46a3-b817-452890b3038b/red+flags+guide_web.pdf?MOD=AJPERES
- Read the "**Objective vs. Subjective Observations**" handout to review how you must remain objective in Part 2 of this assignment.
- Contact the Child Development Lab or some other accredited center with culturally, linguistically and ability diverse children to make arrangements to observe in a preschool classroom. Plan on observing for at least an hour. The "**Partner Site Information Handout**" lists additional sites that will also welcome you.
- Print a copy of the "**Field Experience Verification Form.**" This form will need to be signed by the classroom teacher where the observation takes place.

Part One: Description of Setting

When you arrive in the preschool room for your field experience give the teacher a copy of this assignment sheet. Prepare to take careful notes on the following:

A description of the setting, including:

- Name and type of facility and the classroom you are observing in
- Number of children present
- Number of staff present
- Activities occurring during field experience time period
- Other relevant information (whether families were in the room, how children responded to strangers, etc.)

After you have described the setting, please proceed to Part 2.

Part 2: Completing a Running record

Choose a child to focus on during the remainder of your field experience observation. Then:

1. Use a Running Record strategy to take *accurate, concise, and objective* notes about that child's appearance, interactions and behaviors. Try to be unobtrusive and not interfere in the class or child's normal activities. For at least a portion of the time you are in the classroom, maneuver close enough to your target child so that you can see and hear them clearly.
2. Include in your running record a description of the child's physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional areas of development.
3. Before leaving the setting, guess the child's age based on your observations and knowledge of developmental milestones. Then, ask the teacher what the age really is and record this in your notes.

After you have completed Parts 1 and 2 please proceed to Part 3.

Part 3: Reflection

For this portion of your assignment you will be writing a Reflection based on your completed field experience, the Milestones Chart at the end of your textbook chapter, and the Red Flags resource. Your Reflection needs to include each of the following:

1. A summary and conclusion about each of the developmental areas that you observed. Be sure to include information from both your Milestones chart and any applicable red flags. During this portion of the assignment objectivity is no longer required, as you are now making subjective observations.
2. A description of how each area of development interrelates.
3. A description of how, based on your observation, you think the child's development may impact his/her learning.

Remember that to be valid, these conclusions should be based on numerous field experiences and in various settings. This is purely an exercise in learning about development through observation.

For this assignment, please submit your responses to Parts 1, 2, and 3 and the "Field Experience Verification Form."