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Developmental Profile: 2/3 Grade

This semester I will be working with children in second and third grade at Harrisville Elementary. The ages within second and third grade range from seven to nine. Along with the age range the developmental levels of the children range. There are eight students in my classroom. Each student is an individual and has a different level of development within cognitive, language/literacy, social/emotional and physical development.

Piaget felt that children between the ages five-seven develop cognitive development the most. Children older than seven vastly think differently than children younger. Children between the ages five and seven are beginning to think about things differently and solve various problems. Within my placement classroom this semester children will be over seven. After age seven children will have been through most of their brain development which is a result of biological changes that occurred at this time. (Copple, 2009, P. 260-264). Children in second and third grade can solve some abstract problems such as place value but they are not ready to grasp highly complex problems, learning by text or direct instruction alone. Children age seven and eight can typically reverse direction such as left and right. Children of primary grades are less egocentric however; a seven year old may believe that because he did not score soccer goal means he is not a good athlete he may hold onto that despite the evidence to the contrary.

Vygotsky believed that children are ready to focus their attention to learn. Second and third graders are ready to focus their attention. They can retain information on purpose and be able to compare the process of their own learning with teacher expectations. Primary grade children have enhanced their ability to classify, sort and organize materials. Around ages seven-ten children are beginning to understand their own capacity. Children under age nine greatly can use memory strategies but they must be introduced by the teacher. Around the age of six or seven children are beginning to understand and consider decisions and fairness. It is not until ages eight that children typically understand that some get special consideration for those in need. Teachers can promote cognitive development by providing children with challenges that they can meet.

Children in primary grades increase their language and literacy development through reading and listening to reading. By age eight children will have doubled their vocabulary from age six. Children are learning to understand parts of words and to apply that understanding to other words. Eight year olds enjoy jokes, puns, tongue twisters and knock knock jokes. Those jokes usually reflect their new language capacities. At this age children often tease using nicknames or secret words; children are very sensitive at this age. By third grade children can decode advanced words, read aloud with fluency, and point out words that are causing difficulty, differ word meanings prefixes, suffixes and roots of words that children have been taught. By second grade children are improving their spelling based on previous knowledge. Third graders can produce reports, responses to literature, journal entries and letters. Teachers can promote literacy development through setting the room in such a way that children have easy access to books, teachers use focused instruction, trade books and games. Teachers adjust the level when needed and link various activities to reading and writing. (Copple, 2009, P. 281-283)

Children in primary grades are increasing their knowledge of how their behavior affects others, their roles in society, and the importance of showing empathy. Peer relationships grow and strengthen. Children flourish in environments that they feel comfortable and safe in. Teachers need to create a classroom community to support that. Peer groups age’s six to eight are important, but children tend to come and go from peer groups. By ages ten or twelve peer groups are very important. Bullying in schools is very prevalent during the primary school years. Children are developing their self-concept and self esteem it is not until age eight that children think about them they verbalize whether they like themselves and how much. Children develop self-esteem through adults helping them develop confidence with in skills such a literacy, mathematics, language and social skills. Teachers need to create environments that promote self esteem and positive self image. Teachers should create a harmonious, cooperative, minimized competition which in turn will enhance children’s want to learn. (Copple, 2009, P. 264-271).

During the primary school years physical growth has slowed but it is still steady. Children encounter growth spurts. Children have improved their gross motor skills which allows for more fine motor development. On average children grow two to three inches a year and gain three to five pounds a year. Access to nutrition can be a factor within that statement. By the age eight children’s brains are 90% of adult size and the head growth slows. Children have a better coordination, balance and movement skills. Younger primary grades have family slow reaction time. Gender skills between sexes are mostly insufficient. Children during the primary school years become more interested in team sports which not only develops their physical abilities but their cognitive and social awareness such as following the rules and cooperation. At the primary school age children are becoming more aware of the skills and comparing themselves to their peers. Teachers can promote gross motor development through including gross motor activities throughout the entire curriculum areas. Children need opportunities to move freely during recess and not just in organized games. Teachers can incorporate large muscle movement activities throughout various curriculum strands, circle time, reading, mathematics, etc… Fine motor development increases throughout the primary school years. Children’s writing becomes more precise and controlled. By age seven or eight children’s fine motor development is very precise and intricate. Teachers can promote fine motor development through writing, play dough, cutting activities, drawing, etc… (Copple, 2009, P. 260-264).

As teachers we can support cognitive, language/literacy, social/emotional and physical development throughout curriculum. We need to plan lessons and our classroom accordingly to help support the development of children.

**Bibliography**

Copple, C. & Bredekamp, S. (Eds.) (2009) *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs serving Children from Birth to age 8.* (3rd Edition). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.