

FROM: Bentzen, W. R. (1993). SEEING YOUNG CHILDREN: A GUIDE TO OBSERVING AND RECORDING BEHAVIOR. Albany: Delmar.

Observation Exercise 16-1

Physical/Motor Characteristics and Skills of the Infant or Toddler (One to Twenty-Four Months)

Observer's Name _____

Child Observed (code name or number) _____

Child's Age _____ Child's Sex _____

Observation Context (Home, day-care center) _____

Date of Observation _____ Time Begun _____ Time Ended _____

Brief Description of Setting/Situation _____

Objective (1): Physical Characteristics

Total Length of Child _____ Weight of Child _____

Length of Head _____ Ratio of head to total body length _____

Length of Trunk _____ Ratio of Head to Trunk _____

Describe the characteristics of the following:

HEAD AND FACE (shape, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, etc):

TRUNK (e.g., size in relation to head, overall appearance, etc.):

ARMS AND LEGS (positioning, shape):

HANDS AND FINGERS:

Comparisons with Newborn (These may be made using published norms if actual observations of a newborn are not possible or wanted):

Length:

Weight:

Ratio head to total body length:

Ratio head to trunk:

Child's height and weight relative to norms cited:

Objective (2): Motor Skills of the Infant (1-24 Months)

Observer's Name _____

Child Observed (code name or number) _____

Child's Age _____ Child's Sex _____

Observation Context (Home, day-care center) _____

Date of Observation _____ Time Begun _____ Time Ended _____

Brief Description of Setting/Situation _____

Event Sampling

Objective Behavioral Description
(Note specific behaviors observed)

Interpretation

Comparison of Infant's Functioning
With Age Norms:

Objective (3): Fine Motor Abilities

(If children were tested by observer, describe how they were persuaded to perform)

Fine Motor Task

Description of Response

Child 1: (Age

Stacking Blocks

Picking Up Raisin

Putting Blocks in Container; Removing Them

Stringing Beads:

Response to Playdough:

Scribbling with Crayon:

Turning Pages:

Hand and Leg Preference:

Indications of Tool Use:

Child 2: (Age

Stacking Blocks

Picking Up Raisin

Putting Blocks in Container; Removing Them

Stringing Beads:

Response to Playdough:

Scribbling with Crayon:

Turning Pages:

Hand and Leg Preference:

Indications of Tool Use:

Comparison (Similarities) of Child 1 and Child 2:

Contrast (Differences) Between Child 1 and Child 2:

Gross Motor Abilities

Child 1: (Age

Event

Description

Walking

Running

Climbing Stairs

Walking Sideways, Backwards

Jumping From Low Height (one step)

Other (crawling, creeping, scooting, etc.)

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Part Three

Child 2: (Age)

Event

Description

Walking

Running

Climbing Stairs

Walking Sideways, Backwards

Jumping From Low Height (one step)

Other (crawling, creeping, scooting, etc)

Comparison of Child 1 and Child 2:

Contrast Between Child 1 and Child 2:

Question Guides:

The following questions use language that seemingly emphasizes the observation of two infants. If you cannot perform that objective, simply refer to the questions in terms of one infant; none of the meaning will be lost.

1. If you observe a toddler, does he or she possess any physical-motor characteristics that might explain the term "toddler"?
2. What is the overall character or quality of the two infants' large muscle actions? generally smooth and accurate, or rough and imprecise? How do they differ? What differences would you predict based on their respective ages or developmental levels?
3. Are there large muscle actions that the infants perform easily and others they have difficulty with? Is there any apparent relationship between their abilities and the kinds of activities they choose? That is, do they try things that they do not do very well, or do they seem to stay with those activities they do best?
4. Do the infants show any signs of preferring one foot over the other? one hand over the other? If so, how do they demonstrate their preference (e.g., kicking a ball, the foot they lead with when stepping up a stair, the hand they use to pick up objects)?
5. How many blocks can the infants stack? What best characterizes their efforts to stack blocks? quick and sure? slow and uncertain?
6. When picking up a small object such as a raisin, which fingers do the infants use? What part do their thumbs play? Are they at first unsuccessful in their efforts and then succeed by changing their approach or grasping style?
7. Are there any differences between the way the infants grasp a large object such as a block and a small object such as a raisin?
8. How do their large and fine motor skills compare with the norms for children their age? What skills or responses would you predict they could do fairly well, and which would you predict they could not do at all? Can you rank them in order of increasing difficulty, based on the norms provided, and then rank order them based on how well they actually performed? How do the two rankings compare with each other?
9. What locomotor skills do the infants exhibit? If an infant is just beginning to walk, what proportion of time does she spend walking as opposed to crawling or creeping?
10. Which of Faw and Belkin's phases of reaching and grasping development describe the two infants? On what specific behaviors do you base your conclusion?