

## LIFESPAN OBSERVATION REPORTS

### SUBJECTS

Begin immediately to secure a child to observe in his/her home setting. Consider using a child from your church or asking to use children of faculty or staff at Evangel. When you contact the parents, identify yourself and ask if you may observe their child in some typical activities and interactions with parent(s) and siblings for approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours. State that this is part of an assignment for this class; be specific that you are NOT coming as an expert on raising children but to supplement your learning from the textbook. Work out the details about a good time to do the observing, who will be there, the length of time, and what the parent will be willing for you to do such as checking reflexes, and doing simple tests such as Piaget's conservation tasks, checking fine and gross motor skills, etc.

### YOUR ROLE

You may observe children in teams of two students (no more than two students observing the same child at the same time), or you may observe children by yourself. **Each student needs to turn in his/her own individual report for the class.** Utilizing suggestions given in this handout and ideas in the textbook, focus initially on describing what you see. As you complete your observations, ask the parent for any comments he or she would like to make about the physical, cognitive, psychological/emotional, social, spiritual and moral development of the child. Later, when you are completing the report, you may include some speculations about interpretations. Following your observation, a short thank-you note to the parent(s) would be appropriate and probably appreciated.

### AVOID

1. Babysitting during an observation
2. Only playing with the child; you are there to observe him/her
3. Reporting on a past experience with a child
4. Using a child from a practicum for your observation, unless you go into the child's home
5. Observing the same child if three or more other students/teams have already done so
6. Setting up a time when the child naps, sleeps, or is busy

### ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

1. **Title page** with the following information centered on the first page:
  - a. Type of report (Kindergarten through 9<sup>th</sup> Grade)
  - b. Lifespan
  - c. Dr. Orr
  - d. Your name
  - e. Date due (11/19/09)

**2. Background Information.** Begin your report by introducing your child and providing background information to include (this section can be a list):

- a. Who you observed
- b. Birth date of child and age
- c. Date of observation
- d. Name and address of parent(s)
- e. Telephone number of the parent(s)
- f. How you chose the child
- g. Where you did the observation; the setting, what rooms of the house, etc.
- h. Length of time for the observation
- i. Who was present (if other children, include ages)
- j. Any circumstances that might have influenced your observations
- k. Any background information of significance given by the parent (ask the parent if there is anything they think you should be aware of.)

**3. Observations.** Use headings and underline or **bold print** the following:

- a. Physical Characteristics
- b. Cognitive Characteristics
- c. Psychological/Emotional Characteristics
- d. Social Characteristics
- e. Spiritual Characteristics
- f. Moral Characteristics

**4. Other comments.** Speculations, interpretations, and general comments. Include your personal reflections about/during this observation. If you have done this throughout your paper, you may skip this section.

**5. Artwork and/or writing samples.**

**6. Double-space, 12 font, one inch margins.**

**7. 4-6 pages of text excluding title page.**

**8. Number the pages.**

**9. Staple observation rubric to the back of your report.**

**10. Staple top left.** No folders, please.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD OBSERVATION ( 5 YEARS OLD)

### READ CHAPTERS THAT CORRESPOND BEFORE DOING YOUR OBSERVATION!

Here are some suggestions to assist you in this observation. **Utilize your textbook for other ideas.** To get the most from this observation, you will want to observe the child's behavior by himself or herself, as well as interactions with others, including parents and siblings. You will also want some interactions between the child and you. It is helpful going into this observation to have an outline of what you are looking for and activities/tests you have planned.

**Physical Characteristics**—Describe the child's physical characteristics; weight and height; is child on time developmentally; chubbiness; health; fine motor skills (draw a circle, cut paper, build, pour water from a pitcher, draw pictures—see Kellogg's stages); gross motor skills (can they run, climb, balance, jump, hop, throw and catch a ball, ride a bike); handedness; sleep disturbances; potty trained?

**Cognitive Characteristics**— Piaget's substage?; are they asking questions?; do several tests of conservation; language development; vocabulary; have them read to you...

**Psychological/Emotional Characteristics**--Erikson's stage; understanding results and consequences of actions; apparent temperament; bad temper?; whining; aggression; animism; use of transitional objects; sense of self (have child describe self)

**Social Characteristics**—Typical interactions with others, with you; shy?; uneasy around strangers?; how long to warm up; sibling relations; rivalry; competitiveness; interactions with parents; parents' style of parenting; friends; preschool; type of play most frequently observed (i.e., rough and tumble), also type of playing mentioned in book: pp. 366-368; favorite toys and games; type of TV programs watched

**Spiritual Characteristics**—Do they go to church; listen to tapes; do parents read stories to them and/or pray with child; (Ask: When do you pray? What do you pray for? What do you do when you pray? Can animals pray?)

**Moral Characteristics**—What is a rule? When is a rule fair? Why should a rule be obeyed? Is it ever okay to break a rule? Why? (Could give an example of a moral dilemma to measure their moral development, i.e., if Grandma got a haircut that you didn't like, and she asked you if you liked it, would it be okay to lie?) Be creative!

## MIDDLE CHILDHOOD OBSERVATION (6 TO 11 YEARS OLD)

### READ CHAPTERS THAT CORRESPOND BEFORE DOING YOUR OBSERVATION!

Here are some suggestions to assist you in this observation. **Utilize your textbook for other ideas.** Once again, it would be helpful to have an outline prepared before the observation, including a series of interview questions, although you need not follow it exactly. Seek to observe the child in some activities, such as demonstrations of athletic or musical skill.

**Physical Characteristics**—Child's weight and height; is child on target, ahead or behind according to the textbook's averages; what can he/she do physically; go outside and play basketball, catch, watch child in a game of soccer, etc; if the child is in the younger years of this age group, use ideas from the textbook to test for other things he/she can do; fine motor skills; gross motor

skills; general health of the child; major illnesses

**Cognitive Characteristics**—Grade in school; how is the child doing in school; most/least favorite subject(s); tests (or parts of tests) mentioned in text to determine the level of concrete operations he/she uses (Piaget); can child do sets and subsets of family relationships; ask questions for interpreting Bible stories, such as Moses and the burning bush, to determine if concrete operational thinking occurs (Why did Moses not look at God's face?" Then use a follow-up question to assess stage of thinking); language development; vocabulary; have them read aloud to you.

**Psychological/Emotional Characteristics**—Which of Erikson's stages; indications of the child's sense of self (describe self); test "perspective taking" using information from the textbook (a good example would be to devise a series of questions such as the following: Imagine that your best friend's parents got into a car accident. How would you feel? How might your friend feel?); achievement orientation; what stresses child

**Social Characteristics**—Interactions with sibling, peers, parents, you; how does child relate; style of parenting used by parents; ask about friendships; what do they do; what do they talk about

**Spiritual Characteristics**—Influences and activities present in the home; attends church?; involved in...children's church, Bible quizzing, music; reads Bible?; Ask: When do you pray? What do you pray for? Can animals pray? What do you do when you pray?

**Moral Characteristics**—What is a rule? When is a rule fair? Why should a rule be obeyed? Is it ever okay to break a rule? Why? You could give example of a moral dilemma to measure moral development.

## **ADOLESCENT OBSERVATION (12 TO 15 YEARS OLD – UP TO 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)**

### **READ CHAPTERS THAT CORRESPOND BEFORE DOING YOUR OBSERVATION!**

Here are some suggestions to assist you in this observation. **Utilize your textbook for other ideas.** To get the most from this observation, you will want to observe the child's behavior by himself or herself, as well as interactions with others, including parents and siblings. You will also want some interactions between the child and you. It is helpful going into this observation to have an outline of what you are looking for and activities/tests you have planned.

**Physical Characteristics**

**Cognitive Characteristics**

**Psychological/Emotional Characteristics**

**Social Characteristics**

**Spiritual Characteristics**

**Moral Characteristics**