

PSY325
Child Observation Assignment

Purpose of Project

It is very easy to be around children without noticing fascinating aspects of their behavior. Indeed, it is rare when anyone intently observes a child for a continuous period, looking for behaviors that characterize an individual child or childhood. Conscientious fulfillment of this project will help the observer be a better and more appreciative student of child behavior. If you have children, you may observe your own children.

General Instructions

You will observe children in a natural setting for 1 hour. This means that you may not be able to focus on one child exclusively. For example, you might observe children at a park, school, shopping center, amusement park, etc.

While you are observing make detailed notes of the following:

1. Age range of children
2. Number of children present. Number of adults present?
3. What behaviors are children engaging in?
4. How do the children interact with one another?
5. How do the children interact with an adult who is present?
6. Are the children engaging in age-appropriate activities?
7. Comment on the attention span of the children.
8. Are there any gender differences in any of the behaviors you observe?
9. Does anything that we have covered in class or in the text apply to this situation?

Report Criteria

1. Write up of project, 2-4 written pages (typed)
2. Give a general description of child (age, sex, etc.) and the observation situation
3. Describe behavior or patterns of behaviors that were interesting to you and analyze the significance to child development
4. Do not just put a chronological list of what child did during observation period, but do show evidence that you make careful observation.
5. Discuss significance of behaviors for the child and child development in general (use your text and notes.