

ECE 110-093L

Spring, 2025

Capstone Project: Analysis of Child Development

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May 18, 2025

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Introduction

Throughout this Capstone Project: Exploring Child Development, we have delved into the essential psychological and social foundations that shape early childhood. By closely observing and analyzing various aspects of development, including physical growth, emotional and social interactions, language use, and cognitive abilities, we have drawn meaningful connections between developmental theory and practical application in early childhood settings, from infancy through age eight.

Our studies have also encompassed both foundational and modern theories that inform how children grow and learn. Using three video observations of children aged 11 months, four years, and five years, we considered a range of influences on development, including biological makeup, family dynamics, educational settings, and broader societal elements. These observations also allowed us to reflect on the cultural identities of the children, as well as on our own cultural perspectives, deepening our awareness of how society and culture significantly influence developmental outcomes.

Through the study of child development, we have not only expanded our knowledge of young learners but also gained valuable insights into our personal development, family relationships, and professional roles as current or future educators. We have practiced observing children in a thoughtful and respectful way, free from premature judgments or labels.

Our learning journey has shown us that development begins long before birth and continues to be shaped by both inherited traits and life experiences. The seven written reflections included in this project trace our evolving understanding of early learning and highlight the personal and academic growth we've achieved along the way.

Part I - Observation Summaries

A. Observation Summary on Physical Development

Section 1: Infant/Toddler Observation

The child's name is Sharon. She is an 11-month-old baby. Sharon is a chubby baby, she is Caucasian, Sharon has white fair skin. She has short sparse, light brown hair that is almost blonde in some areas. Sharon has blue eyes, a round and full face with high, pronounced and rosy cheeks. Sharon has two bottom teeth. The girl is wearing a purple shirt dress with white polka dots, pink lettering that reads 86, and matching shorts. She is wearing lavender socks and no other accessories or shoes.

This observation occurs in the household, living room, and play space. The walls are reddish with visible bricks. The room is well lit, with natural light. There is a fireplace, a colorful patterned rug positioned in the middle of the room. The carpet is red, brown, and beige and has squares and rectangles. The room contains toys and furniture, including a black shelf with a gray radio and books on top of it. Behind this shelf, a light brown closet can be noticed too. In the left corner of the room, there is a stand for musical instruments. A light brown guitar can be seen in the stand. Next to the black shelf and musical instruments, one can observe a tall step; on the steps, there are many different toys and stuffed animals. Yellow cars, bears, dolls, Elmos and Clifford the Red Dog can be observed in a basket. To the right of the basket, there is another square wooden woven basket. The container also has smaller toys. To the right of the basket, a table is seen with electronics. The flooring is made of a light brown wood.

The mother and the father were present in the scene with Sharon. They were both actively playing with Sharon, the father was also recording. They were initially engaging in pretend play with teatime. They were utilizing a pink toy teapot that made sounds, and teacups. The Mother

would take the teacup from Sharon and say 'Thank you' while making sipping noises. After that, she would pretend to pour tea in the cup. Sharon discovered that the toy kettle made noises and repeated the action a couple of times. She would smile and laugh and generally react positively to the interactions. After Sharon dropped the cup, the mother proceeded to show Sharon how to introduce toy coins in a pink piggy bank. This game seemed more challenging, so the mother modeled it twice. When noise and songs were prompted from the toy, Sharon would smile and laugh. However, she crawled around the carpet and went back to playing with the Tea and cups, passing the cup using pincer grasp and expecting the mother to receive what she was passing. After receiving the cups, the mother said, 'Thank you' in parentese, or 'Baby talk.' Sharon displayed good use of her gross motor skills by reaching out to grab and pass on toys to her mother. She would also demonstrate mastery by introducing blocks and other toys in the teacup. She crawled, rolled to her sides, held her head, flailed her legs and arms, and used them to move around in the rug, demonstrating good management of her gross motor skills according to her age and development level. As evidence for her fine motor skills, she picked up small objects with their thumb and forefinger, transferring them from one hand to another. Sharon also banged objects together, put toys in and out of containers like the teacups.

In another scene, the mother helps Sharon to stand and hold onto a toy that resembles a tree with monkeys and branches, which is situated in the middle of the living room. She used the palm of her hands to roll a ball located at the top of the tree toy. Assisted by her mother, Sharon sat and stood back next the toy. After that, Sharon decided to go play with a knit, off-white blanket that was laid on the floor.

Sharon's motor skill development aligns with the milestones outlined in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines. Below is a cross-reference of her activities with the relevant sections and page numbers from the guidelines:

Gross Motor Skills: Crawling, rolling to her sides, flailing her legs and arms, and maneuvering across the carpet: These activities correspond to the developmental milestones described in "Large Motor Development of an 8 to 16-month-old, Page 43 under the Physical Well-being, Health and Motor Development and large Motor Skills" section. The guidelines detail typical behaviors such as crawling and coordinated movements.

Using her hands to stabilize herself after tripping and falling: This behavior is also covered under the "Large Motor Development of an 8 to 16-month-old, Page 43 under the Physical well-being, Health and Motor Development and Large Motor Skills" section, highlighting the development of balance and coordination skills.

Fine Motor Skills: Picking up small objects using her thumb and forefinger (pincer grasp): This skill aligns with the "Small Motor Development of an 8 to 16 month-old, on page 47 in the Physical well-being, Health and Motor Development B. Small Motor Skills, section" milestones, which discuss the emergence of the pincer grasp as a significant developmental step.

Transferring items from one hand to another: This action is included in the "Fine Motor Development" section, illustrating the development of hand-eye coordination and dexterity.

Placing toys in and out of containers like teacups, banging objects together: These behaviors are also part of the " Small Motor Development of an 8 to 16 month-old " milestones, reflecting the progression of hand coordination and exploratory play.

Section 2: Preschool Observation

Samantha is a four-year-old child, slender, with light brown skin. She has a round face and cheeks. Pointy and petite nose. She has almond shaped brown eyes. She has straight black hair pulled up in a high ponytail, her hair tie is pink. Samantha is wearing a white T-shirt with texture designs in the front and sides. Her pants are finely striped black and white. Samantha's socks are white, and her shoes are black and pink. Samantha has no earrings or any other accessories.

This observation took place in a kindergarten classroom. The space is well lit, with bright white light fixtures up in the ceiling. The observation happened near the entrance. The play space is separated by shelves. These contiguous shelves are very light brown with three square cubicles on the top half, and two rectangular cubicles at the bottom. Each cubicle is full of toys. The first three square cubicles have clear plastic containers with Lego pieces. The rest of them are filled with wooden building blocks. At the corner of the classroom, in front of the first shelf, a Basket with colored building blocks can be observed. This basket belonged to the US Post Office. The classroom's floor is carpeted. The carpet is a dark gray color. The walls were adorned with posters of numbers and doodles. On top of the shelf, a red basket full of books can be observed. In a wider shot, a stackable toy is also present.

In the scene, two children can be seen, Sarah and Samantha. Samantha is playing with the wooden building blocks. In the beginning, she stacks them on top of orange-colored bricks. Background noise can be heard. Teachers and students are talking. Samantha is carefully stacking the blocks, making sure they line up correctly to have a sturdy structure. When she had around 22 blocks stacked, she moved to the side to retrieve more rectangular blocks. She gets more and more careful as her tower grows taller. After adding 6 or more blocks, she slows down and starts using the tip of her toes to add more units. She uses her hands to line up the blocks.

She sneaks a peek at the camera and continues to add more bricks. When the structure gets wobbly, she pauses and tries to stabilize it again. Her classmates took notice. Sarah shares looks with her, Samantha tries to assist, calls the teacher's attention. And she gets the reminder to be careful. Samantha takes a step back and watches her creation and smiles. She tries to put smaller blocks and starts to play with the idea of breaking the tower. Sarah intervenes as a classmate watches, both girls attempt to knock it down. And after a couple of tries, they manage to do it. When the tower is down, a teacher comes into the scene to ask them to clean up. The Teacher uses lights to get their attention and prompts them with a song.

Samantha demonstrated motor skills that align with the developmental milestones outlined in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines. Below is an analysis of her activities cross-referenced with the relevant sections from the guidelines:

Gross Motor Skills: Walking and shifting her weight from foot to foot: These actions correspond to the developmental milestones in the "Physical Development and Health" domain, specifically under the "Large Motor Development of a 4-year-old, page 44, Physical well-being, Health, and Motor Development A. Large Motor Skills" section. The guidelines highlight behaviors such as walking and weight shifting as indicators of gross motor proficiency. Reaching for tall objects on her tiptoes: This behavior demonstrates balance and coordination, aligning with the same " Large Motor Development of a 4 year-old " section, which includes reaching and stretching movements as part of motor development.

Building a brick tower taller than herself while adjusting her stance: This activity showcases advanced gross motor skills, involving both balance and spatial awareness, as outlined in the guidelines.

Fine Motor Skills: Using her thumb and forefinger to stack wooden blocks carefully: This precise action aligns with the "Small Motor Development of a 4-year-old, page 48, Physical well-being, Health, and Motor Development B. Small Motor Skills" milestones, which discuss the development of the pincer grasp and dexterity necessary for tasks like stacking.

Lining up blocks with precision to maintain balance and stability: This behavior reflects hand-eye coordination and meticulous control, key aspects of fine motor development as detailed in the guidelines.

Section 3: Young School-Age Observation

For the third and last Observation, we will focus on Jasmine. Jasmine is a twin, and her sister's name is Joanna; Both girls speak Cantonese and English. Jasmine is a 5-year-old Chinese girl living in California. She is tall and slim and has black medium-length, straight hair. She has almond-shaped eyes and fair skin. At the moment of the observation, she was wearing a red sweater with a Pikachu in the front. The sweater had yellow details in the arm cuff, the seam, and the neck. Jasmine's pants were light pink. She was also wearing red and pink slip-on sneakers and light pink socks.

This observation took place in two settings. First, the kitchen, which was bright and full of food, snacks, and appliances. The room was well lit and full of natural light coming from the windows. In the Kitchen, the whole family can be observed. There is a highchair, with a baby brother being fed, his name is Terrence, next to the highchair, the twins, and a male adult companion can be seen eating a meal. Jasmine is eating while working on a sticker book. A female adult companion is at the same time feeding her sister with chopsticks. Conversations cannot be heard at this time, as the tape has no audio at this point. The video transitions to Cuesta Park, Mountain View, CA. Jasmine can be observed playing in a spinner in the playground. The

ground is sandy. Jasmine can be seen shifting her body weight to make the spinner move. Her twin sister Joanna, who is wearing a gray top like Jasmine's, joins briefly, touches the spinner and then runs off camera. Jasmine calls her back, watches her go away and then gets off the spinner just to get back up tentatively. Jasmine balances on one foot and then goes fully in. She spins briefly and then uses one foot to catch some impulse. Another child approaches her to use the spinner, Jasmine concedes them a turn with no protest and runs off to see her Father who is manning the camera. They exchange a few words in Cantonese and then Jasmine runs off to another park equipment. She waits for her sister to be done at the slide bar (a playground equipment, where the children put one arm in front of the other in order to get to the other side while hanging high). Jasmine shows no signs of difficulty going the first time, but when she is coming back, she first slows down and then stops to ask her Dad for help. Her Dad encourages her to 'just go on' but she refuses. He then finally helps her get down. When she is on the floor, she walks by her sister Joanna to join her at the balancing bar.

The video cuts into another scene. The Twins are spinning together in the spinning device. Their Dad recommends them to put their heads together. 'It will go faster,' he says. They slow down. Jasmine lets her Dad know she is hot. The camera cuts. The scene restarts, this time Jasmine took her red Sweater off. Now she is wearing a pink T-shirt with white flowers in the front. She spins slowly and then gets off the spinner. The Father/cameraman exchange some words in Cantonese and then the scene changes again. Jasmine can be seen in the slider bar again. She shoots a look to the camera and goes on, this time without much difficulty. The scene changes one more time, Showcasing Jo in the monkey bars. Jasmine comes to the scene running, and goes through the same monkey bar without issues. She demonstrates mastery and balance while carrying out this game. After that, Jasmine can be seen in the background of the scene,

playing in the slide bar. The Twins get together in a piece of equipment. It's a horizontal Monkey Bar with no steps. Just a tube, Jasmine is unsure how to cross it, but her Twin Joanna says, 'I'll show you how, okay?' and then indeed, proceeds to show her how to use the equipment. Jasmine does not immediately follow suit and her twin calls for the dad to help Jasmine. The Dad approaches Jasmine and asks her, 'What do you want?' 'Help me,' she responds. He encourages saying 'You can do it' and gives her some pointers. She says she is not capable. They speak Cantonese and the scene cuts to another moment.

The scene depicts Terrence (Jasmine and Joanna's little brother) in the sandbox. The twins are playing in the background. They are building a sandcastle and using little twigs as staff poles. Jasmine uses her hands as shovels to bring more sand for their castle. An unidentified man is playing with Terrence. The girls keep playing with the sand. There's a lot of noise of kids playing and adults conversing in the playground. The camera cuts, and Jasmine is seen in the swing with her Dad. He moves from swing and Jasmine follows him. He get himself comfortable and positions Jasmine again to swing. They call her name, and she just looks at the camera. They swing strongly for a couple of minutes next to Terrence. The scene changes. Jasmine is twisting in the swings by creating loops with the swing chains. She is screaming and swinging. Jasmine calls for her Dad and tries to twist the chains again. The camera follows an unidentified person briefly and then cuts to Joann and Jasmine again. Jasmine is wearing another jacket on top of her sweater, the sweater is striped. It is pink, green, red and white. They exchange some words and say something about Joanna's jacket. Then the girls can be seen running towards the swings, this unsettles their dad who tells them 'never run into the swings'. Jasmine hangs from the swings with her belly to the seat and then the video ends.

Jasmine demonstrated motor skills align with the developmental milestones outlined in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines. Below is an analysis of her activities, cross-referenced with the relevant sections and pages from the guidelines:

Gross Motor Skills: Shifting her body weight to make the playground spinner move: This action demonstrates Jasmine's ability to coordinate movements and adjust her body to interact effectively with playground equipment, reflecting her gross motor development.

Balancing on one foot before engaging with the spinner: This behavior showcases her balance and coordination, essential components of gross motor development.

Climbing and maneuvering on the slide bar and monkey bars: These activities involve complex movements, strength, and coordination, reflecting advanced gross motor skills. Walking, running, and engaging in coordinated physical play: These fundamental movements are foundational aspects of gross motor development. Swinging on the swings and experimenting with twisting the chains to create loops: This indicates her ability to control movements and explore different physical actions. All of these actions correspond to the developmental milestones in the "Physical Development and Health" domain, specifically under the "Large Motor Development of a 5 year-old" section on page 44.

Fine Motor Skills: Using fine hand movements to engage with a sticker book during mealtime: This activity demonstrates hand-eye coordination and dexterity, key aspects of fine motor development. Gathering and shaping sand while building a sandcastle: These actions involve manipulating materials with precision, reflecting refined fine motor skills. Positioning small twigs in the sandcastle as decorative elements: This task requires careful placement and control, highlighting advanced fine motor abilities. All of these actions correspond to the

developmental milestones in the "Physical Development and Health" domain, specifically under the "Small Motor Development of a 5 year-old" section, page 48.

B. Observation Summary on Social Emotional and Language Development

Section 1: Infant/Toddler Observation

The child's name is Sharon. She is an 11-month-old baby. Sharon is a chubby baby, she is Caucasian, Sharon has white fair skin. She has short sparse, light brown hair that is almost blonde in some areas. Sharon has blue eyes, a round and full face with high, pronounced and rosy cheeks. Sharon has two bottom teeth. The girl is wearing a purple shirt dress with white polka dots, pink lettering that reads 86, and matching shorts. She is wearing lavender socks and no other accessories or shoes.

This observation occurs in the household, living room, and play space. The walls are reddish with visible bricks. The room is well lit, with natural light. There is a fireplace, a colorful patterned rug positioned in the middle of the room. The carpet is red, brown, and beige and has squares and rectangles. The room contains toys and furniture, including a black shelf with a gray radio and books on top of it. Behind this shelf, a light brown closet can be noticed too. In the left corner of the room, there is a stand for musical instruments. A light brown guitar can be seen in the stand. Next to the black shelf and musical instruments, one can observe a tall step; on the steps, there are many different toys and stuffed animals. Yellow cars, bears, dolls, Elmos and Clifford the Red Dog can be observed in a basket. To the right of the basket, there is another square wooden woven basket. The container also has smaller toys. To the right of the basket, a table is seen with electronics. The flooring is made of a light brown wood.

The mother and the father were present in the scene with Sharon. During the observation, Sharon exhibited social-emotional and language skills that align closely with the developmental expectations for children aged 8 to 16 months as described in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines.

In the social-emotional domain, Sharon demonstrated strong attachment behaviors and positive social interactions. She actively engaged with her parents during pretend play, smiling, laughing, and responding positively to their cues. Her ability to share toys, such as passing the teacup to her mother and expecting a response, reflects the milestone of "engaging in reciprocal interactions with familiar adults," found in the Social and Emotional Development section under "Relationships with Adults," page 21. Sharon also showed "seeking comfort and encouragement from trusted adults" by moving toward her mother during play when tasks became challenging (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 21). Further, Sharon exhibited early signs of emotional expression and regulation. She laughed at the tea set sounds and the piggy bank songs, demonstrating the milestone of "expressing a range of emotions" appropriately for her developmental stage (Social and Emotional Development, "Sense of Self," page 23). Her persistence in returning to her favorite play activity (tea set) shows early "emerging independence and initiative" (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 23).

In the language domain, Sharon displayed important receptive and expressive communication skills. She responded to familiar verbal prompts, like "Thank you," and mimicked simple social routines. Sharon's ability to understand simple phrases and react appropriately aligns with the milestone described under "Communication Skills and General Knowledge: Communication, Language, and Literacy Development," page 83, specifically in the subsection "Developing Receptive Language Skills" (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 83).

Additionally, Sharon's vocalizations, laughing, and her interactive use of sounds from toys support the milestone of "using vocalizations, gestures, and simple words to communicate needs and interests" (Communication Skills and General Knowledge: Communication, Language, and Literacy Development, page 83). Her participation in back-and-forth "conversations" during pretend play with her parents demonstrates the early emergence of turn-taking in communication, an essential foundation for later language development (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 83).

Overall, Sharon's social-emotional and language development is progressing typically for her age, showing strong connections with trusted adults, joyful engagement in play, emerging emotional self-regulation, and early receptive and expressive language skills.

Section 2: Preschool Observation

Samantha is a four-year-old child, slender, with light brown skin. She has a round face and cheeks. Pointy and petite nose. She has almond shaped brown eyes. She has straight black hair pulled up in a high ponytail, her hair tie is pink. Samantha is wearing a white T-shirt with texture designs in the front and sides. Her pants are finely striped black and white. Samantha's socks are white, and her shoes are black and pink. Samantha has no earrings or any other accessories.

This observation took place in a kindergarten classroom. The space is well lit, with bright white light fixtures up in the ceiling. The observation happened near the entrance. The play space is separated by shelves. These contiguous shelves are very light brown with three square cubicles on the top half, and two rectangular cubicles at the bottom. Each cubicle is full of toys. The first three square cubicles have clear plastic containers with Lego pieces. The rest of them are filled with wooden building blocks. At the corner of the classroom, in front of the first shelf, a Basket with colored building blocks can be observed. This basket belonged to the US Post Office. The

classroom's floor is carpeted. The carpet is a dark gray color. The walls were adorned with posters of numbers and doodles. On top of the shelf, a red basket full of books can be observed.

In a wider shot, a stackable toy is also present.

In the scene, two children can be seen, Sarah and Samantha. Samantha is playing with the wooden building blocks. During this observation, Samantha demonstrated social-emotional and language development that is typical for a four-year-old child, as outlined in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines. In the social-emotional domain, Samantha displayed important milestones related to self-regulation, social interaction, and emotional expression. As she built her tower, she showed self-control and persistence, carefully adjusting blocks and modifying her strategy when the structure became unstable. This behavior aligns with milestones described under the Social and Emotional Development domain, "Self-Management," page 27, where four-year-olds are expected to manage their behaviors, persist with tasks, and respond appropriately to environmental cues (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 27). Samantha also engaged in cooperative play, showing social awareness and the ability to negotiate interactions with her peers. When Sarah intervened during the tower-building and demolition, Samantha shared looks, communicated nonverbally, and collaborated in knocking the tower down. These interactions align with the milestone "Engages in cooperative play with other children," found under "Social Development with Peers" on page 29 (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 29). When the teacher prompted the cleanup with a song and flashing lights, Samantha responded appropriately, demonstrating the milestone of "responding to transitions with the support of cues," as outlined in the Social and Emotional Development section under "Approaches to Learning," page 31.

In the language domain, Samantha demonstrated strong expressive and receptive communication skills. She effectively called the teacher's attention when the tower became unstable, using her words to seek assistance. This action corresponds to the milestone of "Using language to express needs, ideas, and feelings," detailed in the Communication, Language, and Literacy Development section, page 88 (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 88). Furthermore, Samantha's understanding and use of classroom routines — such as responding to the teacher's prompts to clean up — indicate her emerging listening and comprehension skills, aligned with "Demonstrates comprehension of complex directions and classroom routines" (page 88). Her nonverbal communication with peers during play (eye contact, shared smiles) also supports the guideline milestone on developing pragmatic language skills, or using language appropriately in social situations (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 88). Overall, Samantha's social-emotional and language development is on track for her age, showcasing strong self-regulation, cooperative play, expressive communication, and understanding of classroom norms.

Section 3: Young School-Age Observation

For the third and last Observation, we will focus on Jasmine. Jasmine is a twin, and her sister's name is Joanna; Both girls speak Cantonese and English. Jasmine is a 5-year-old Chinese girl living in California. She is tall and slim and has black medium-length, straight hair. She has almond-shaped eyes and fair skin. At the moment of the observation, she was wearing a red sweater with a Pikachu in the front. The sweater had yellow details in the arm cuff, the seam, and the neck. Jasmine's pants were light pink. She was also wearing red and pink slip-on sneakers and light pink socks.

This observation took place in two settings. First, the kitchen, which was bright and full of food, snacks, and appliances. The room was well lit and full of natural light coming from the windows. In the Kitchen, the whole family can be observed. There is a highchair, with a baby brother being fed, his name is Terrence, next to the highchair, the twins, and a male adult companion can be seen eating a meal. Jasmine is eating while working on a sticker book. A female adult companion is at the same time feeding her sister with chopsticks. Conversations cannot be heard at this time, as the tape has no audio at this point. The video transitions to Cuesta Park, Mountain View, CA.

During this observation, Jasmine displayed important social-emotional and language skills consistent with the developmental expectations for a five-year-old, as outlined in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines. In the social-emotional domain, Jasmine demonstrated notable progress in self-confidence, emotional expression, cooperative play, and managing social interactions. Throughout the observation at Cuesta Park, Jasmine showed perseverance and willingness to attempt new tasks, such as balancing on the spinner and maneuvering the slide bar and monkey bars. Her willingness to attempt these activities, even after needing help initially, reflects the milestone of “demonstrating confidence in new activities with encouragement,” found in the Social and Emotional Development domain, "Self-Management," page 27 (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 27). Jasmine also showed cooperative play skills, especially when building a sandcastle with her twin sister and when playing on playground equipment. She engaged in collaborative communication, accepted turn-taking (giving up the spinner to another child without protest), and negotiated social roles with her sister during play. These behaviors align with milestones outlined under "Social Development with Peers" on page 29, which describe how five-year-olds engage in sustained cooperative play and develop

strategies for resolving social challenges (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 29). Additionally, Jasmine exhibited emotional expression and regulation during moments of difficulty (e.g., asking for help instead of becoming overwhelmed) and communicated her feelings, such as expressing that she was hot after playing intensely. These behaviors align with milestones described under "Self-Management" regarding children recognizing and expressing their emotions appropriately (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 27).

In the language development domain, Jasmine showed strong expressive and receptive communication skills across both English and Cantonese. She effectively communicated her needs verbally, asking for help when she encountered difficulty on playground equipment, and responded appropriately to adult prompts and encouragement. This ability to "use language for a variety of purposes" is a key milestone in the Communication, Language, and Literacy Development section, page 88 (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 88). Her casual conversations in Cantonese with her father, her responses to safety reminders (e.g., not running into the swings), and her exchanges with her sister demonstrate an ability to understand and use complex language structures in meaningful ways. This meets milestones such as "engages in conversations of multiple exchanges" and "uses language to share experiences," both outlined on page 88. Additionally, her use of language to negotiate play strategies and seek support during physical challenges reflects her emerging pragmatic language skills (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council 88).

Overall, Jasmine's social-emotional and language development appears well-aligned with typical developmental milestones for her age, marked by strong peer interactions, emotional regulation, bilingual language use, and active engagement in complex social and physical environments.

C. Observation Summary on Cognitive Development

Section 1: Infant/Toddler Observation

The child's name is Sharon. She is an 11-month-old baby. Sharon is a chubby baby, she is Caucasian, Sharon has white fair skin. She has short sparse, light brown hair that is almost blonde in some areas. Sharon has blue eyes, a round and full face with high, pronounced and rosy cheeks. Sharon has two bottom teeth. The girl is wearing a purple shirt dress with white polka dots, pink lettering that reads 86, and matching shorts. She is wearing lavender socks and no other accessories or shoes.

This observation occurs in the household, living room, and play space. The walls are reddish with visible bricks. The room is well lit, with natural light. There is a fireplace, a colorful patterned rug positioned in the middle of the room. The carpet is red, brown, and beige and has squares and rectangles. The room contains toys and furniture, including a black shelf with a gray radio and books on top of it. Behind this shelf, a light brown closet can be noticed too. In the left corner of the room, there is a stand for musical instruments. A light brown guitar can be seen in the stand. Next to the black shelf and musical instruments, one can observe a tall step; on the steps, there are many different toys and stuffed animals. Yellow cars, bears, dolls, Elmos and Clifford the Red Dog can be observed in a basket. To the right of the basket, there is another

square wooden woven basket. The container also has smaller toys. To the right of the basket, a table is seen with electronics. The flooring is made of a light brown wood.

The mother and the father were present in the scene with Sharon. During the observation, Sharon, an 11-month-old baby, demonstrated cognitive abilities consistent with milestones outlined in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines: A Child Development Resource for Educators of Children Ages Birth Through Eight.

Sharon actively engaged in cause-and-effect exploration, particularly when playing with the pink teapot that made sounds. She repeated the action of pouring tea and activating the sounds, which illustrates emerging understanding of cause and effect, a key cognitive milestone for infants between 8 to 16 months (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Approaches to Learning," page 27). Sharon's reactions of smiling and laughing in response to the toy's noise indicate that she was beginning to predict outcomes based on her actions.

Her engagement in problem-solving behaviors was evident when she interacted with the pink piggy bank toy. Although initially challenging, Sharon observed her mother model how to insert coins, attempted the task, and adjusted her play by returning to the more familiar tea set. This behavior aligns with cognitive milestones around exploration and persistence in problem-solving for her age group (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Cognitive Development," page 54).

Additionally, Sharon demonstrated object permanence — an essential cognitive skill — by seeking out the teacup after it had fallen and by crawling back to preferred toys even after moving away. The guidelines state that developing object permanence typically occurs between 6 to 12 months as infants understand that objects continue to exist even when out of sight (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Cognitive Development," page 52).

Imitative learning was another important cognitive skill observed. Sharon imitated her mother's actions, such as handing over the teacup and pretending to sip tea, which reflects early symbolic thinking and the beginning of representational play (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Cognitive Development," page 55).

Finally, Sharon's play with different materials, such as manipulating toys into containers, banging objects together, and exploring a blanket, demonstrated her growing ability to experiment and explore different properties of objects. These behaviors align with milestones in exploratory play that support early scientific thinking (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Scientific Thinking," page 61).

In conclusion, Sharon's activities during the observation showed strong cognitive development appropriate for her age, reflecting typical milestones in cause-and-effect reasoning, problem-solving, symbolic play, and early experimentation.

Section 2: Preschool Observation

Samantha is a four-year-old child, slender, with light brown skin. She has a round face and cheeks. Pointy and petite nose. She has almond shaped brown eyes. She has straight black hair pulled up in a high ponytail, her hair tie is pink. Samantha is wearing a white T-shirt with texture designs in the front and sides. Her pants are finely striped black and white. Samantha's socks are white, and her shoes are black and pink. Samantha has no earrings or any other accessories.

This observation took place in a kindergarten classroom. The space is well lit, with bright white light fixtures up in the ceiling. The observation happened near the entrance. The play space is separated by shelves. These contiguous shelves are very light brown with three square cubicles on the top half, and two rectangular cubicles at the bottom. Each cubicle is full of toys. The first three square cubicles have clear plastic containers with Lego pieces. The rest of them

are filled with wooden building blocks. At the corner of the classroom, in front of the first shelf, a Basket with colored building blocks can be observed. This basket belonged to the US Post Office. The classroom's floor is carpeted. The carpet is a dark gray color. The walls were adorned with posters of numbers and doodles. On top of the shelf, a red basket full of books can be observed. In a wider shot, a stackable toy is also present.

In the scene, two children can be seen, Sarah and Samantha. During the classroom observation, Samantha, a four-year-old child, demonstrated cognitive abilities consistent with the milestones outlined in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines: A Child Development Resource for Educators of Children Ages Birth Through Eight.

Samantha exhibited advanced problem-solving and planning skills as she carefully constructed a tall tower using wooden building blocks. She adjusted her stacking technique to maintain the structure's balance, showing awareness of spatial relationships and an understanding of cause-and-effect concepts, key cognitive milestones for four-year-olds (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Cognitive Development," page 56). Her careful decision-making and slowing down as the tower grew taller reflect emerging executive functioning skills, including planning, patience, and goal-directed behavior. Spatial awareness and measurement concepts were also evident as Samantha gauged where to place the next block to maintain the tower's stability. According to the guidelines, preschool children begin to develop concepts of size, shape, and position, which are foundational for later mathematical thinking (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Mathematical Thinking," page 63).

Through her playful interaction with Sarah, including deciding when and how to knock the tower down, Samantha demonstrated social cognitive skills such as collaboration, turn-taking, and understanding others' perspectives. This interaction aligns with cognitive

milestones involving early social understanding and shared problem-solving (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Cognitive Development," page 57).

Moreover, Samantha's ability to focus and sustain attention on her tower-building task amidst a busy classroom environment reflects cognitive control and emerging self-regulation abilities, important for school readiness (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Approaches to Learning," page 29).

Lastly, Samantha's enthusiastic reaction to the successful collapse of the tower shows her engagement in cause-and-effect exploration and highlights the natural curiosity and joy of learning emphasized at this stage of development.

In summary, Samantha's observed behaviors reflect strong cognitive development for her age, particularly in problem-solving, spatial awareness, executive functioning, and social cognition.

Section 3: Young School-Age Observation

For the third and last Observation, we will focus on Jasmine. Jasmine is a twin, and her sister's name is Joanna; Both girls speak Cantonese and English. Jasmine is a 5-year-old Chinese girl living in California. She is tall and slim and has black medium-length, straight hair. She has almond-shaped eyes and fair skin. At the moment of the observation, she was wearing a red sweater with a Pikachu in the front. The sweater had yellow details in the arm cuff, the seam, and the neck. Jasmine's pants were light pink. She was also wearing red and pink slip-on sneakers and light pink socks.

This observation took place in two settings. First, the kitchen, which was bright and full of food, snacks, and appliances. The room was well lit and full of natural light coming from the windows. In the Kitchen, the whole family can be observed. There is a highchair, with a baby

brother being fed, his name is Terrence, next to the highchair, the twins, and a male adult companion can be seen eating a meal. Jasmine is eating while working on a sticker book. A female adult companion is at the same time feeding her sister with chopsticks. Conversations cannot be heard at this time, as the tape has no audio at this point. The video transitions to Cuesta Park, Mountain View, CA. During the observation, Jasmine, a five-year-old child, demonstrated a range of cognitive skills that align with the developmental expectations outlined in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines: A Child Development Resource for Educators of Children Ages Birth Through Eight.

Jasmine displayed problem-solving and decision-making abilities throughout her play. For instance, when encountering difficulty with playground equipment such as the slide bar and the horizontal monkey bar, she assessed the situation, sought adult support, and attempted alternative approaches. This reflects the development of critical thinking and persistence, key cognitive milestones for five-year-olds (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Cognitive Development," page 56).

Spatial reasoning and understanding of cause-and-effect relationships were evident as Jasmine navigated playground equipment like spinners, monkey bars, and swings. She adapted her movements based on how the equipment reacted, demonstrating an understanding of physical properties and spatial challenges. This kind of exploration is essential for cognitive development in mathematical and scientific thinking (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Mathematical Thinking," page 63).

Additionally, Jasmine exhibited social cognitive development through interactions with her twin sister Joanna and her father. She negotiated turn-taking on the playground spinner, responded to her father's encouragement, and engaged in collaborative play while building a

sandcastle. These behaviors align with the cognitive milestones involving social reasoning, communication, and cooperative play (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Cognitive Development," page 57).

Jasmine also demonstrated planning and organizational skills during her quiet indoor activities. Working on a sticker book while eating shows her ability to manage dual activities, stay focused, and complete fine-motor tasks. This type of concentration and multi-step activity management reflects emerging executive function skills essential for school readiness (New York State Early Learning Guidelines, "Approaches to Learning," page 29).

Finally, Jasmine's initiative in attempting physical challenges independently—despite occasionally needing assistance—demonstrates growing confidence in learning and self-regulation, both key cognitive traits for children in this developmental stage.

In summary, Jasmine's behaviors show strong cognitive development, including problem-solving, persistence, spatial understanding, executive functioning, and social cognition, as expected for a five-year-old.

Part II. Reflections on Culture

Understanding culture is essential in early childhood education, as it shapes children's identities, behaviors, and ways of learning. As educators, reflecting on our own cultural backgrounds and biases allows us to create more inclusive, respectful, and responsive learning environments. This paper explores my personal reflections on culture, the impact of cultural awareness in the classroom, and the importance of embracing diversity in early learning settings followed by an analysis of 3 different video observations.

I am a 31-year-old abled-bodied Paraguayan woman coming from a mid-to-low-income background. My cultural roots are deeply shaped by Paraguay's traditions and everything that comes with its idiosyncrasies. In Paraguay, Spanish and Guaraní coexist as official languages. Guaraní is often spoken in more intimate and community-oriented settings, but Spanish is still the dominant language in my family. After coming to live to the US, however, and having my Uncle and Aunt speak mainly Guaraní and thus forcing me to become more fluent gave me a strong sense of belonging and identity, grounding me in my heritage.

Being culturally Catholic, I was raised with values such as humility, respect for authority, and a strong emphasis on family and community. However, Religious practices were central to my spiritual development and how I understood my place in the world. However, my Family had an enormous respect for differing opinions and made the effort to raise us with critical thinking

skills. In Paraguayan culture, the Church is not just a place of worship—it is a hub of social interaction, moral education, and community support. These values instilled a sense of purpose and resilience, particularly important in a society where material resources were often limited. We get to witness this every day since my house is across the street from the church and the park where services are held.

Reflecting on my cultural background through the lens of power and privilege, I recognize the complex intersections of identity that influenced my development. Being a woman in a patriarchal society limited my access to certain roles and expectations. Traditional gender roles shaped the kind of behaviors that were encouraged or discouraged. While caregiving, cooperation, and emotional strength were cultivated, assertiveness and independence were often met with resistance but not rejected. My family has a very interesting dynamic, and it shifted dramatically throughout the years. In my early childhood, my Father was the breadwinner, and my mother was still in college; however, in my early adulthood, my Father faced severe health issues that forced his retirement. This made my Mother become the breadwinner of the family and changed forever the power balance in my family. Especially reminding us girls that we are also capable of leading our lives financially and not depending on others.

Class status further impacted my educational development. Public education in Paraguay can be under-resourced, and quality often depends on geographic and economic factors. Growing up in a mid-to-low income family shaped my worldview in practical and emotional ways. The scarcity of financial resources taught me discipline, resourcefulness, and the value of hard work. However, it also meant that opportunities, particularly in education and professional development, were often constrained. Access to quality education, extracurricular activities, and exposure to diverse experiences were limited, and I often had to strive harder to achieve what

others might take for granted. That is why when scholarships came along, it was life-changing, and it shaped my worldview.

Despite these barriers, my cultural heritage also provided a rich source of resilience. Community, family support, and cultural pride offered a strong foundation. Guaraní wisdom, Catholic teachings, and the stories of those who came before me gave meaning to my efforts and hope for the future.

Understanding my cultural background helps me appreciate not just the limitations but also the strengths that have shaped me. It offers a critical lens to recognize where systems of power and privilege either support or hinder individual potential. Moving forward, I am committed to using this awareness to advocate for more inclusive and equitable approaches in development and education, where diverse cultural identities are not only acknowledged but celebrated as assets.

Regarding the cultural aspects of an observed child, I chose Jasmine, which are as follows. Race/Ethnicity (Chinese American): Jasmine's Chinese heritage likely informs aspects of her upbringing, including values like respect for elders, collectivism, and interdependence. These values may influence her social-emotional development, such as deference to her father, cooperative play with Joanna, and reserved demeanor in asking for help. Culturally specific parenting practices, such as close family involvement and high expectations for achievement, could also shape her cognitive and academic development.

Language (Bilingual – Cantonese and English): Jasmine's bilingualism is an asset to cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills. It's clear from the observation that she switches comfortably between Cantonese and English, particularly when interacting with her father.

Bilingualism can enrich her communication skills and deepen her connection with family and cultural heritage.

Gender (Female Child): Gender expectations may influence Jasmine's interactions and the types of play she engages in. In the observation, Jasmine is assertive and independent in some situations but still seeks help and reassurance, possibly reflective of social norms around girls being nurturing, cautious, or deferent. Educators may unconsciously reinforce these behaviors, affecting opportunities for leadership or risk-taking in learning.

Family Structure and Education Level (Involved, Supportive Family): Jasmine is observed in a highly engaged family moment, where adults (especially her father) are attentive, nurturing, and encouraging. The presence of a bilingual, multi-child household and interactions with both parents indicate strong familial bonds and structured support, which fosters socio-emotional growth and early learning.

On the topic of privilege, the aspects of culture and its impact on development and education, Jasmine may benefit from the "model minority" stereotype associated with her Chinese American background, which can lead to higher academic expectations. However, this perceived privilege may mask her individual needs and create pressure to perform, potentially impacting her mental well-being or limiting access to personalized support. Her bilingualism in Cantonese and English offers cognitive and cultural advantages, but privilege plays a role when families can advocate for dual-language support within schools. Without this ability or knowledge, children like Jasmine may struggle in English-dominant environments and be underestimated by educators.

As a girl, Jasmine may face less encouragement in leadership roles or STEM activities due to implicit gender biases. While this may not appear early in development, the lack of privilege

related to gender can influence long-term educational opportunities and self-confidence. Jasmine's family is actively engaged and supportive, which provides her with a privileged start to learning. Their involvement and encouragement create an enriched developmental environment that not all children have access to, leading to educational advantages.

Part III. Reflecting on Your Observations: Commentary Paper

For this commentary paper, I have chosen to focus on Jasmine, a five-year-old Chinese American girl living in California. Jasmine was observed in two settings, including her home kitchen and Cuesta Park, alongside her twin sister, baby brother, and parent. Her interactions and behaviors offered rich insights into various areas of development, and those are

a. Developmental Skills & Processes

Cognition

Problem-solving: When Jasmine tried to figure out how to cross the horizontal monkey bar with no steps, she hesitated, evaluated her options, and asked for help, showing cognitive engagement with a new physical challenge.

Symbolic thinking: While building a sandcastle, she used twigs as flagpoles, demonstrating symbolic representation and creative thinking.

Cause-and-effect reasoning: She shifted her body weight to make the spinner move, showing an understanding of how her actions influence movement.

Language

Receptive: Following directions, Jasmine responded to her father's instruction to "put your heads together" while spinning with her sister, showing comprehension.

Understanding social language cues: She looked at her father and responded appropriately when spoken to in Cantonese, indicating she understands both verbal and non-verbal communication.

Expressive: Requesting help, Jasmine asked her father directly, "Help me," showing the ability to express needs clearly.

Conversational turn-taking: She exchanged short verbal interactions with her family members, indicating emerging expressive language abilities.

Communication Skills

Code-switching: Jasmine used both Cantonese and English appropriately depending on the speaker, demonstrating bilingual communication skills.

Non-verbal communication: She used gestures like looking toward the camera or pausing to seek help, showing effective use of non-verbal cues to communicate.

Social

Cooperative play: Jasmine built a sandcastle collaboratively with her sister, showing teamwork and shared goals.

Sharing and turn-taking : When another child wanted to use the spinner, Jasmine gave up her turn without protest, demonstrating prosocial behavior.

Emotional

Self-regulation: When Jasmine got hot, she took off her sweater, showing awareness and management of physical discomfort.

Expressing needs: She verbalized feelings of being unable to perform a task (“Help! I can’t do it!”), showing emotional awareness and the ability to communicate emotions.

Physical

Gross Motor

Balancing: She balanced on one foot before entering the spinner and moved across monkey bars, showing coordination and balance.

Climbing and swinging: She successfully used the slide bar and twisted the swing chains, demonstrating upper body strength and coordination.

Fine Motor

Sticker book activity: At the table, she used her hands to manipulate stickers, showing fine motor precision.

Sandcastle building: Using her hands as shovels and placing twigs required dexterity and hand-eye coordination.

Sensory Processing

Tolerating different textures: Jasmine played in the sand with her hands, suggesting tactile processing and comfort with various textures.

Seeking movement input: Her repeated use of the spinner and swings indicates sensory-seeking behaviors that support vestibular development.

Activities of Daily Living

Dressing/undressing: She took off her own sweater when hot and wore layers of clothing, showing independence in dressing.

Feeding participation: Although her sister was being fed, Jasmine ate independently while working on her sticker book, demonstrating self-feeding skills.

b. Comparison of Development

Similarities:

Both Sharon and Samantha demonstrate developmentally appropriate skills for their respective ages across several domains. Cognitively, they are both actively engaged in exploration and problem-solving: Sharon explored cause-and-effect with her tea set and piggy bank toy, while Samantha planned and executed the construction of a tall block tower. In terms of language and communication, both children engaged in reciprocal social interactions—Sharon responded to her mother's parentese with gestures and smiles, and Samantha communicated nonverbally and verbally with peers and teachers. Socially and emotionally, both children showed awareness of others and enjoyment of cooperative or shared play. Sharon smiled and laughed during her interaction with her parents, and Samantha smiled at her peers and teacher, and engaged in collaborative play when knocking down the block tower with Sarah.

Differences:

Sharon and Samantha are in very different stages of development, which is evident across all domains. Cognitively, Sharon is focused on sensory exploration and cause-effect learning, while Samantha shows advanced problem-solving, spatial planning, and persistence during her tower-building. In language development, Sharon is in the receptive stage—responding to tones, gestures, and simple verbal cues—while Samantha likely has expressive language skills, using words to interact with peers and teachers. Physically, Sharon's gross motor skills involve crawling, assisted standing, and reaching, while Samantha demonstrates refined balance, walking, tiptoeing, and postural control. Sharon's fine motor skills include transferring objects, pincer grasp, and banging toys, while Samantha's precision in stacking and aligning blocks reflects more advanced dexterity and control. In sensory processing, Sharon uses tactile and

auditory feedback from toys, while Samantha relies on visual-spatial awareness to assess and adjust her structure. In daily living activities, Sharon is dependent on caregivers, whereas Samantha demonstrates emerging independence by cleaning up with teacher prompts and navigating the classroom autonomously.

c. Setting Comparison

The three children—Sharon (infant), Samantha (preschooler), and Jasmine (young school-age)—were each observed in distinct environments reflecting their developmental stages. Sharon’s setting was a cozy, family living room filled with toys and natural light. It was intimate, with both parents actively engaged, providing a secure, nurturing space conducive to early exploration and bonding. Samantha was observed in a structured classroom environment designed to encourage hands-on learning and peer interaction. The shelves, toys, and defined areas promoted focus, independence, and social engagement. Jasmine’s observations spanned two settings: her home kitchen and a public playground. These dynamic spaces offered a mix of routine, social interaction, and physical challenge.

All three settings were rich in sensory stimuli and adult presence, supporting developmental learning through play. However, the level of autonomy increased with age—from Sharon’s adult-led interactions, to Samantha’s semi-independent play, to Jasmine’s free exploration.

The environments likely influenced behavior and engagement: Sharon responded to direct modeling, Samantha thrived in cooperative play, and Jasmine showed both independence and need for encouragement. Developmentally, such settings enhance growth by matching challenges to ability—nurturing curiosity in infants, problem-solving in preschoolers, and resilience in school-age children. The setting, therefore, plays a crucial role in shaping each child’s developmental trajectory.

d. The Child's Aspects of Culture

Race/Ethnicity (Chinese American): Jasmine's Chinese heritage likely informs aspects of her upbringing, including values like respect for elders, collectivism, and interdependence. These values may influence her social-emotional development—such as showing deference to her father, her cooperative play with Joanna, and her reserved demeanor in asking for help. Culturally specific parenting practices, such as close family involvement and high expectations for achievement, could also shape her cognitive and academic development.

Language (Bilingual – Cantonese and English): Jasmine's bilingualism is an asset to cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills. It's clear from the observation that she switches comfortably between Cantonese and English, particularly when interacting with her father. Bilingualism can enrich her communication skills and deepen her connection with family and cultural heritage.

Gender (Female Child): Gender expectations may influence Jasmine's interactions and the types of play she engages in. In the observation, Jasmine is assertive and independent in some situations but still seeks help and reassurance—possibly reflective of social norms around girls being nurturing, cautious, or deferent. Educators may unconsciously reinforce these behaviors, affecting opportunities for leadership or risk-taking in learning.

Family Structure and Education Level (Involved, Supportive Family): Jasmine is observed in a highly engaged family moment, where adults (especially her father) are attentive, nurturing, and encouraging. The presence of a bilingual, multi-child household and interactions with both parents indicate strong familial bonds and structured support, which fosters socio-emotional growth and early learning.

e. Your Aspects of Culture

Reflecting on the video observations, I realized just how much my own cultural background shaped the way I viewed each classroom moment. I wasn't just watching children and teachers interact—I was filtering those experiences through the lens of my upbringing, my values, and my identity.

Language stood out to me immediately. Growing up in Paraguay, I was surrounded by both Spanish and Guaraní, and I came to understand that language is much more than a communication tool—it's a connection to identity, intimacy, and community. After moving to the U.S., becoming more fluent in Guaraní through my aunt and uncle gave me a renewed sense of cultural pride. So, as I watched the videos, I found myself paying close attention to how children's home languages were acknowledged or ignored. I noticed when Jasmine's dad created space for the twins to speak in their native tongues, and I felt a deep appreciation for those moments of inclusion.

My upbringing in a culturally Catholic environment also influenced how I observed classroom dynamics. In Paraguay, the church is where community, moral guidance, and social life converge. These values taught me the importance of humility, respect for others, and collective responsibility. Watching how the adults in the videos modeled empathy, kindness, and moral reasoning with young children, I couldn't help but compare it to the sense of community I experienced growing up. I found myself drawn to classrooms where relationships were nurtured and where children were taught more than just academics—they were learning how to be part of something larger than themselves.

As a woman raised in a patriarchal society, I was always aware of the subtle (and not-so-subtle) expectations placed on me. Assertiveness was often discouraged, while caregiving and emotional strength were praised. But over time, I witnessed a shift in my own family—especially when my

mother became the breadwinner after my father's health declined. It was a powerful reminder that gender roles are not fixed. So, during the observations, I paid close attention to how children were being shaped by gender norms in their respective settings. Were boys and girls being encouraged equally to lead, express themselves, and explore different kinds of play? I noticed these dynamics more clearly because of my own journey.

Coming from a mid-to-low-income background also gave me a different lens on equity in education. I knew firsthand what it felt like to have limited resources and to rely on scholarships and opportunities that didn't always come easily. Watching the videos, I often thought about which children might be facing similar challenges—whose access to education and support might be constrained by their socioeconomic background. I looked for signs that educators and parents were aware of these disparities and were actively working to level the playing field.

But beyond the struggles, my cultural background gave me strength. The wisdom passed down in Guaraní, the resilience built through community, and the pride I hold in my heritage all helped me understand how powerful cultural identity can be for a child. In the classrooms I observed, I found myself hoping that each child was being given the chance to bring their full identity with them—to be seen and celebrated for who they are. Lastly, the shifts I've seen in my family over the years—especially in terms of power and responsibility—taught me that families are diverse, dynamic, and ever-changing. Watching the videos, I paid close attention to how different family structures were acknowledged. Were educators making space for all kinds of caregivers? Were they building partnerships with families that respected different ways of being and leading? In the end, these six aspects of my culture didn't just shape what I noticed—they reminded me why cultural awareness matters so deeply in early childhood education. It's not just about including

everyone. It's about understanding that every child brings a world with them—and that world deserves to be recognized, valued, and welcomed.

f. Conclusion

As an observer and learner throughout this project, I found myself deeply engaged—not just in watching what was happening in the classrooms, but in reflecting on how my own cultural experiences shaped the way I interpreted each interaction. It was a humbling and eye-opening experience that pushed me to be more intentional and self-aware. I noticed things I may have overlooked: the subtle power dynamics between grown-ups and children, how cultural identities were acknowledged or left out, and how emotional safety was built—or missed—within those spaces.

What struck me most was how intuitive and capable children are when given the chance to express themselves authentically, especially when their cultural backgrounds are recognized and affirmed. I was moved by the small moments—children playing with each other, showing leadership, or expressing joy in their own languages. These moments reminded me that learning isn't just academic; it's deeply emotional and cultural.

This experience has strengthened my commitment to being a more reflective and culturally responsive early childhood professional. I've learned that observing is not a passive act—it's a practice of empathy, awareness, and continual growth. Moving forward, I will strive to create environments where every child feels seen, supported, and celebrated for who they are.

Part IV. Domain Presentation

Gross Motor Domain.

Professor Virginia K. Lee

ECE 110-093L

Aurora Villagra Acosta.



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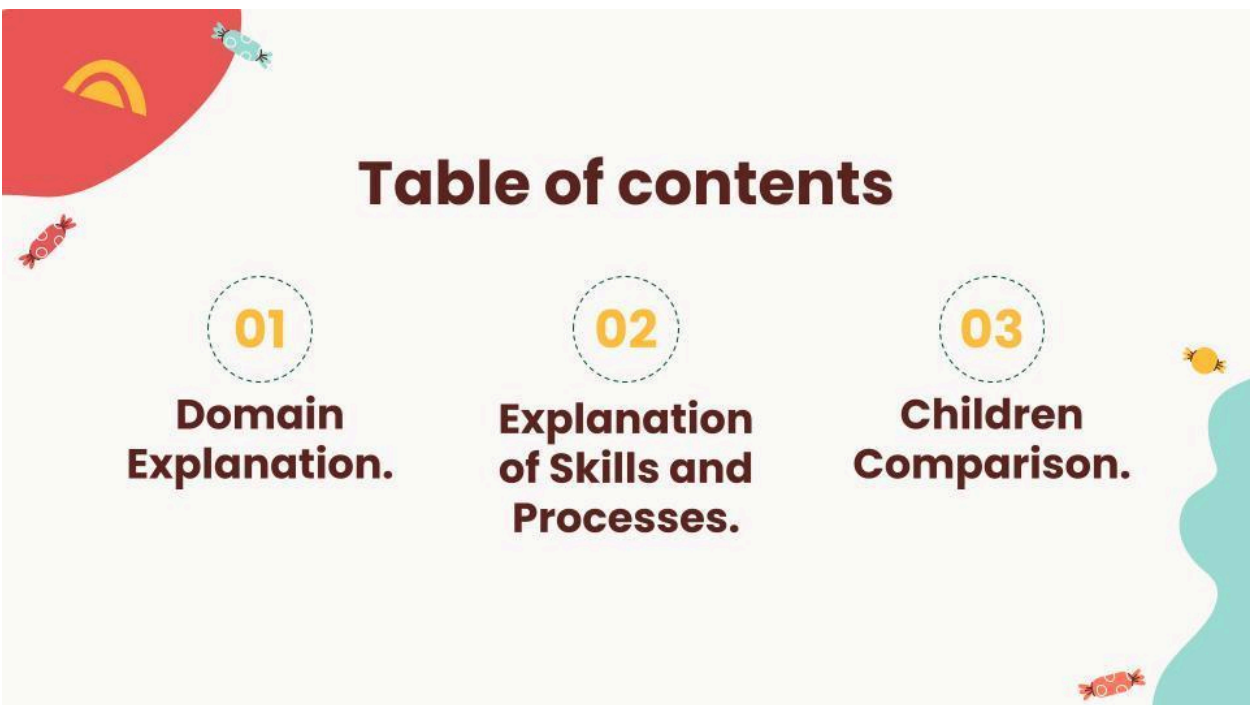
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Explanation.**

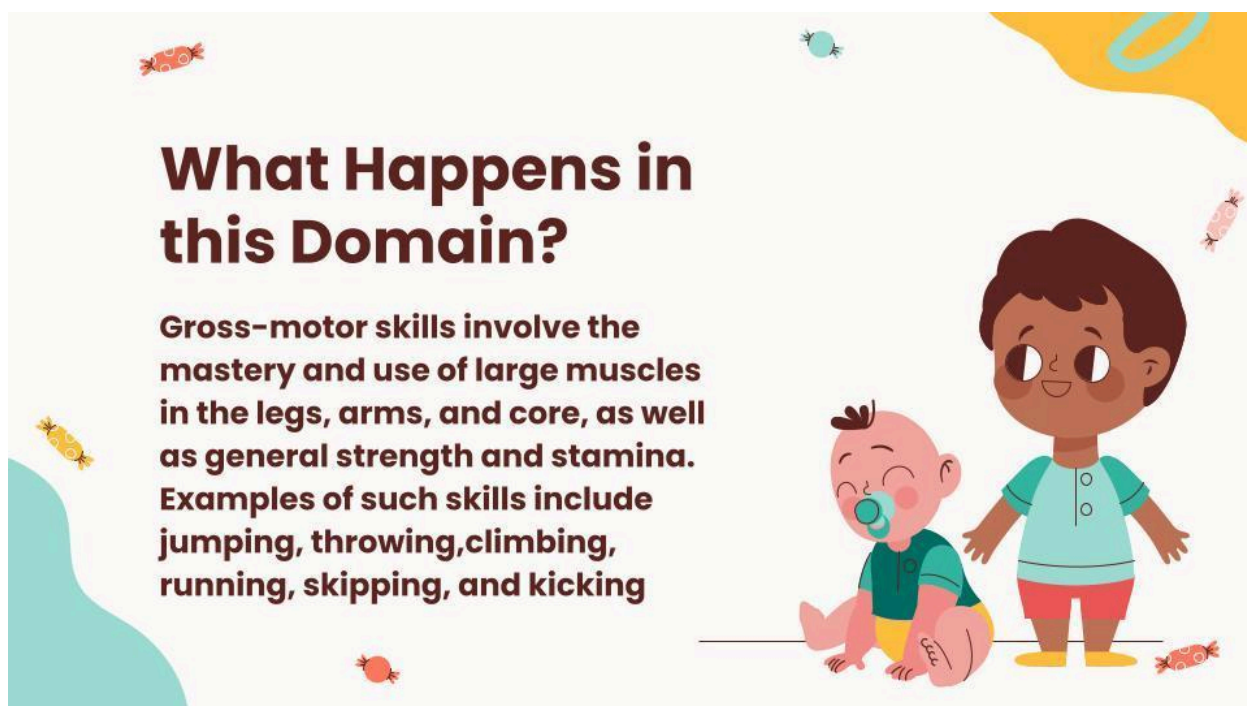
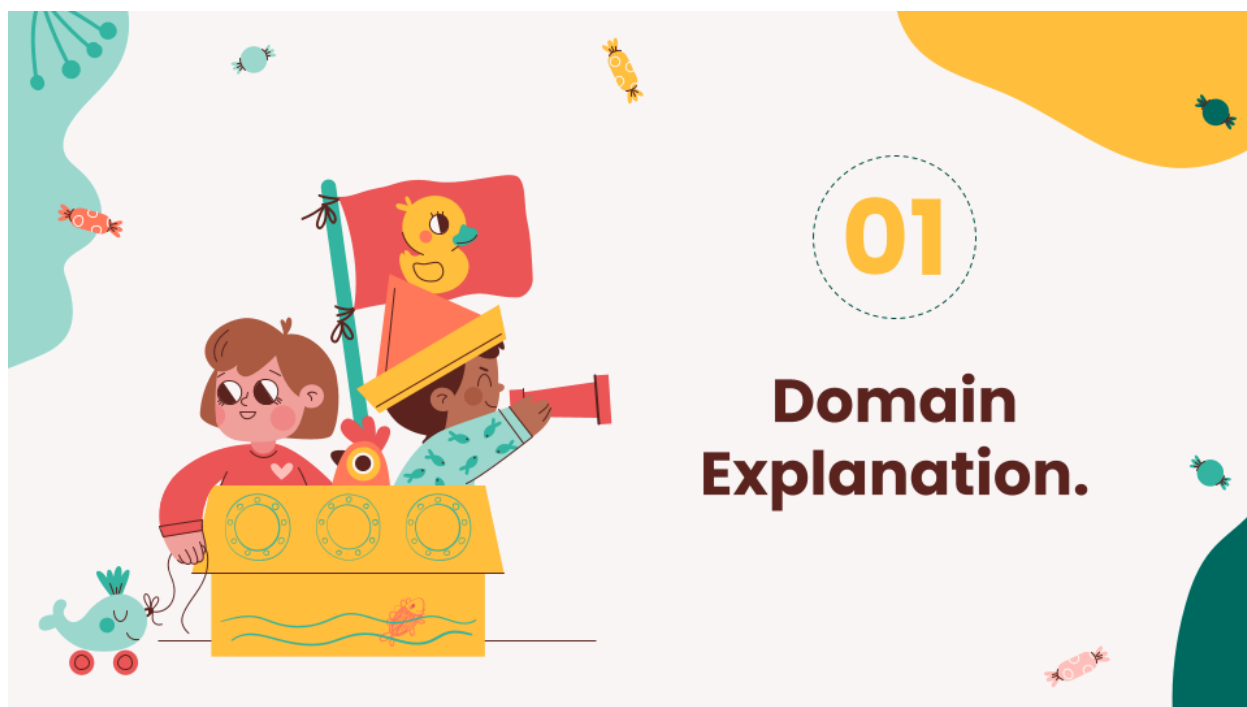
02

**Explanation
of Skills and
Processes.**

03

**Children
Comparison.**





Why is it important for Child Development?

Why choose this Domain?



02

**Explanation
of Skills and
Processes.**

Child development

Infant

Lifting head while on tummy (around 1–3 months)
 Rolling over (around 4–6 months)
 Sitting without support (around 6–8 months)
 Crawling (around 6–10 months)
 Pulling to stand and cruising (around 9–12 months)



Toddler

Walking independently (usually by 12–15 months)
 Climbing onto furniture
 Running (develops more smoothly around 18–24 months)
 Kicking a ball
 Jumping with both feet off the ground



Preschool

Hopping on one foot
 Skipping and galloping
 Riding a tricycle or bicycle
 Climbing playground equipment with coordination
 Throwing and catching a ball with accuracy



Child and Teacher Relationship and how to foster development of Gross Motor skills.

Teachers must stimulate toddlers and infants and encourage the development of gross- and fine-motor skills. For example, teacher can stimulate physical development by holding a toddler upright while moving each leg to imitate walking. Eventually, the child will become accustomed to the balance and muscle movements that are required to walk and be able to do it on his own. Infants and toddlers depend on their teachers to meet their needs for safety and security. When infants and toddlers receive consistent, responsive care and attention from nurturing adults, they are able to establish a sense of trust in the world. This sense of being loved and feeling safe is essential to stimulate areas of development, including physical development. When they feel safe and secure, infants and toddlers use their brains, muscles, and senses to explore the world around them.





Video observation comparison		
Sharon	Samantha	Jasmine
Crawling Rolling to her sides Flinging/flailing arms and legs to move around Reaching and passing toys while laying down Sitting and standing with assistance	Walking Shifting weight from foot to foot Reaching on tiptoes to stack Adjusting stance while building a tall block tower Stepping back and assessing balance of the tower	Shifting body weight to move a playground spinner Balancing on one foot Climbing and maneuvering on slide bars and monkey bars Walking and running Swinging, including twisting swing chains Playing in the sandbox and carrying sand Running toward playground equipment Jumping onto and off equipment



Thanks!



Do you have any questions?
AURORA.VILLAGRA65@stu.bmcc.cuny.edu

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