

## Chapter 2      The Teacher's Role

### OBJECTIVES

*After studying this chapter the student should be able to:*

- Determine a child's developmental levels
- Describe the 3-M method for observing children's development levels: manipulation, mastery, meaning
- Observe and record children's interactions with materials
- Observe and record children's interactions with one another using Parten's play categories
- Record on the Child Interaction Form
- Discuss recommendations for the appropriate use of technology and media
- Respond appropriately to children as they work and play
- Serve as a behavior model for children

### Teacher

(March in place making motions)

Good morning, teacher  
How do you do?  
Good morning, teacher,  
I'm fine, too!  
Good afternoon, teacher,  
I want to state:  
Good afternoon, teacher,  
I feel GREAT!

### ESSENTIAL CONTENTS

1. Developmental levels
  - Determining children's developmental levels
  - Children's spontaneous exploratory interactions with materials
2. The 3-M method for observing
  - Observing and recording children's interactions
  - Making focused observation of specific child in learning centers
  - Determining at what level child is interacting
  - Recording child's interaction level with materials on Child Interaction Form
3. Responding to individual children
  - Giving child support, encouragement, and direction
  - Making comments that reflect child's actions

4. Becoming a facilitator of learning
  - Serving as a behavior model
  - Letting the environment do the teaching
  - Show delight in what child is accomplishing

## RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

1. **Small group presentations of end-of-chapter "Try It Yourself" activities.** Class members sign up for one of five small groups and presentation date.
  - a. *Classroom floor plan:* Make a large classroom floor plan for your program showing learning centers arranged according to ideas presented under “Locating and Spacing Learning Centers.” Present using overhead transparencies.
  - b. *Observe children at mastery level of interaction:* Observe three children who seem to be at the mastery level of interaction with materials. Record on Child Interaction Forms (Figure 2–1) giving specific details. Also record evidence for their levels of social interactions. Present with handouts or PowerPoint.
  - c. *Observe children at meaning level of interaction:* Observe and record three different examples of interaction at meaning level. Try to capture on paper or tape recorder conversations as well as actions. Also record evidence for social interactions. Present with handouts or Power- Point.
  - d. *Response for manipulative-level children:* Report how you responded (or would respond) to three children at the manipulative level, giving details of your support for how they were interacting and any new materials you might suggest. Present with handouts.
  - e. *Response for mastery-level children:* Report how you responded (or would respond) to three children at the mastery level, giving details of your support for how they were interacting and any new materials you might suggest. Present with handouts.
2. **Field trips to observe two teachers:** Observe an early childhood teacher in a self-directed learning environment and a teacher in a traditional early childhood classroom. How are their roles different? Refer to tasks of self- directed teachers in this chapter. Give details of how they handled similar situations. Present using handouts.
3. **Montessori and Piaget:** Research information on what Montessori and Piaget had to say about young children’s repetitive actions. Why did they think these actions were important in young children’s development? Report on handout giving sources, or show film.

4. **Children's social interactions:** Research information on social interactions of children 3, 4, and 5. Be sure to include information from Parten, Kemple, or Corarso. How are these social interactions another important indicator of their development? Report on handout giving sources.
5. **Levels of development:** Make a chart showing the levels of development of six children in your classroom. Describe how you were able to determine each of these levels. Describe how you would set up activities in one or two of the learning centers to meet the needs of these children. What would your role be in these two centers? Present using overhead transparencies.
6. **Group discussion on media and technology:** Members of group should demonstrate how they would or would not use with children, digital cameras, TVs, cell phones, CD/cassette recorders, CD-ROMs, CDs, DVDs, whiteboards, and touch tablets, based on NAEYC recommendations for their appropriate use.
7. **View Films:** Have teams preview various DVDs or CD-ROMs on observation of children. Write up critiques. Show films in class and lead class discussion on what ideas they liked and why.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is the role of the teacher in a self-directed learning environment different from that of a teacher in a traditional classroom? Which is better?
2. How can we meet the needs of each of the children in our classroom if they are all at different levels of development? Give examples.
3. How can our observations of children's interactions with materials in our classroom help to determine their developmental levels? Give examples.
4. Why do you think both Montessori and Piaget believed that repetitive actions are important in a young child's development? Do you agree?
5. As a behavior model for the children in your classroom, how should you act when children get out of control? Give examples.

## MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES FOR VIEWING AND PRESENTING

*Appropriate Curriculum for Young Children: The Role of the Teacher* (DVD) from NAEYC (1-800-424-2460). Shows adults' important roles in helping young children learn through play and child-initiated activities. 28 min.

*Children at the Center* (DVD) from Redleaf Press (1-800-423-8309). Reflective teachers shift their thinking and practice to be more authentically child-centered by reconsidering their environment, routine, materials, and curriculum. 24 min.

*Focused Observations: How to Observe Children for Assessment and Curriculum Planning* (DVD) from Redleaf Press (1-800-423-8309). This film offers classroom-tested methods for observing that will help you assess children's development and develop curriculum that addresses children's capabilities. 74 min.

*Observation I: The Eyes Have It!* (DVD) from Redleaf Press. Explores techniques in preschool settings to document children's growth. 27 min.

*Setting the Stage* (DVD) from Redleaf Press. Shows how children can be observed within the context of their play and culture. 24 min.

*Growing through Play* (DVD) from Redleaf Press. Shows how Parten's stages of play connect to the learning styles of children at different ages. Real footage of children at play. 30 min.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

Ahola, D. & Kovacik, A. (2007). *Observing & Understanding Child Development: A Child Study Manual* (+ CD-ROM). Clifton Park, NY: Thomson/Delmar Learning.

Anderson, G. T. & Robinson, C. C. (2006). "Rethinking the dynamics of young children's play." *Dimensions of Early Childhood* 34(1), 11–16.

Beaty, J. J. (2010). *Observing Development of the Young Child*. Columbus, OH: Pearson.

Carter, D. & Curtis, M. (2011). *Reflecting children's lives*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Chatin-McNichols, J. (1992). *The Montessori Controversy*. Clifton Park, NY: Thomson/Delmar Learning.

Corsaro, W. A. (2003). *We're friends, right? Inside kids' culture*. Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press.

Dombro, A. L., Jablon, J. R. & Stetson, C. (2011). *Powerful interactions: How to connect with children to extend their learning*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Frost, J. L., Wortham, S.C. & Reifel, S. (2012). *Play and child development*.

Columbus, OH: Pearson. Kemple, K. M. (2004). *Let's be friends: Peer competence and social inclusion in early childhood programs*. New York: Teachers College Press.

McManis, L. D. and Gunnewig, S. B. (2012), "Finding the education in educational technology with early learners." *Young Children* 76(3), 14-23.

Parten, M. B. (1932). "Social participation among preschool children." *The Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology* 27, 243–269.

Piaget, J. (1962). *Play, Dreams, and Imagination in Children*. New York: Norton.

Shifflet, R., Toledo, C., and Mattoon, C. (2012). "Touch tablet surprises." *Young Children*, 76(3), 36-41.

Vygotsky, J. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

### **Self-Evaluation**

Fill out form at end of Chapter 1.

## CHILD INTERACTION FORM

Child \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Center \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### CHILD INTERACTION FORM WITH MATERIALS

Manipulation Level \_\_\_\_\_

Actions/Words \_\_\_\_\_

(Child moves materials around without using them as intended)

Mastery Level \_\_\_\_\_

Actions/Words \_\_\_\_\_

(Child uses materials as intended, over and over)

### WITH OTHER CHILDREN

Solitary Play \_\_\_\_\_

Actions/Words \_\_\_\_\_

(Child plays alone with materials)

Parallel Play \_\_\_\_\_

Actions/Words \_\_\_\_\_

(Child plays next to others with same materials but not involved)

Cooperative Play \_\_\_\_\_

Actions/Words \_\_\_\_\_

(Child plays together with others with same materials)