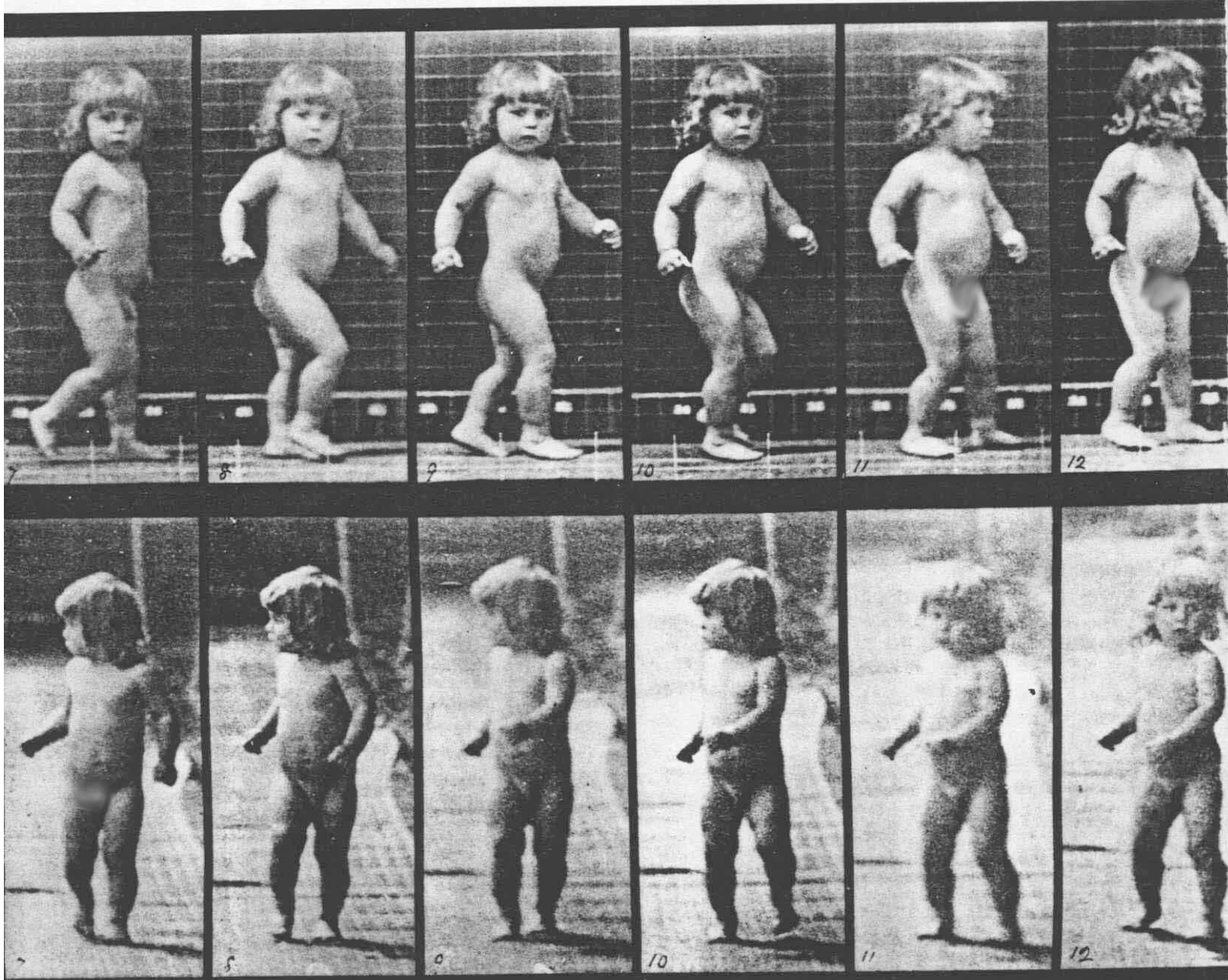


LOOKING AT DEVELOPMENT



Looking at Development

An Observation

It has rained all morning, and the lower end of the preschool playground is now a big puddle. After a long morning inside, the children come running out. They all rush to the puddle.

Peter (three years old) scoops up a handful of gravel and drops the stones one by one into the puddle. He watches the ripples made by the stones and laughs when a stone makes a splash.

Denise (three years old) runs around the edge of the puddle, then slows to a walk. She carefully follows the outline of the puddle, walking as close as she can without falling in.

Martin (four years old) rushes up beside Denise and passes her. He runs on around the puddle, one foot in the water, one foot out. When he reaches the other side, he turns toward the swings but notices that his wet foot is leaving sloppy footprints. Pleased with this, he runs back to the puddle and wets his foot again.

Ramon (four years old) stands talking with Alice (four-and-a-half) at one edge of the puddle. "This car is going to be my boat," he tells her. "It's going to take me to the ocean. To New York and Texas, where Grandma lives."

"It's not a good boat," Alice says. "It's going to sink. Want this piece of wood? It will go on top of the water."

"Uh-uh," Ramon says, "wood doesn't go like a car could. A car goes so it could swim."

Two students, Sandy and Vince, are watching the children.

"Look at that puddle," Sandy says. "It really rained hard for a while."

"Yes," Vince says, "look at those kids run right to it. I wonder why kids like puddles that way? I can remember coming home from school and walking right through every one I could find."

When you are no longer a child, a puddle is not so special anymore. But if you are a child, you have to touch the water in the puddle, splash in it, or use it somehow. You might shout out your discoveries, or show someone else what you have found.

How does the child move from this reaction to a puddle to the older person's more ho-hum reaction? Let's look at two of the points along the way — the three-year-old and the four-year-old.

The child's world changes rapidly from month to month and from year to year. The three-year-olds explore the playground puddle physically. They use it much as they use swings or slides — for exercise, for experimenting with the effect of their own actions. And they explore it mostly on their own, calling out to one another, passing each other as they run. But the four-year-olds play in the puddle “as if” it were an ocean. They still enjoy splashing, but they can imagine themselves beyond the here and now of the playground. They play together, sharing ideas.

Children move from just splashing to splashing for a reason — in this example, the four-year-olds are “on a boat to New York and Texas.” They find things out by poking and pushing, but they also find out by imagining. This process of change is known as development.

- What is development?
- Is it just adding inches and information?
- How does it change a person?
- Does it stop with childhood?

These questions are the topic of this second portion of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD, *Seeing Development*.

Looking Backward

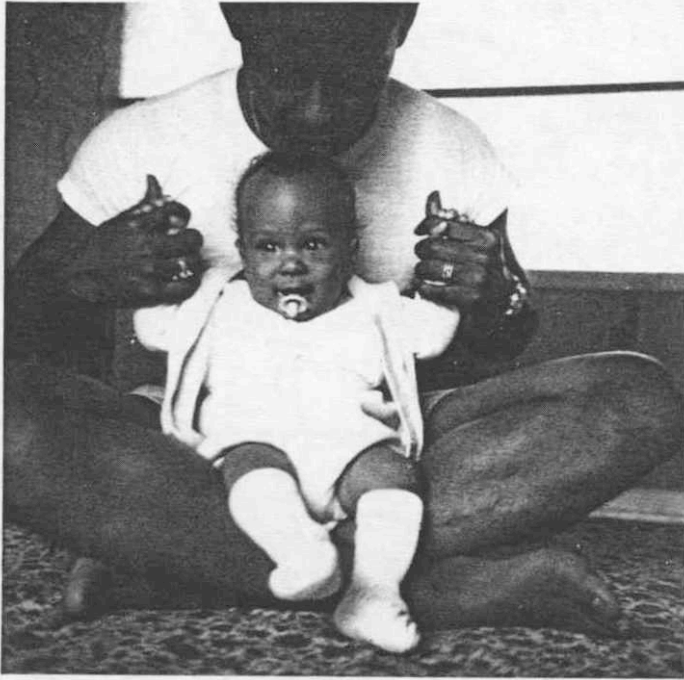
Make a sketch, write a paragraph or two, or find a photograph of yourself as you are now, and as you were at one or two. If you choose to write the “memory picture” of yourself as a young child, ask members of your family if they can recall an anecdote about you at that age. For instance, someone might remember your reaction on meeting a new friend of your own age. Whether your “memory picture” is a sketch, a photograph, or a written piece, it should show you doing things with other people.

Now think about the story or look at the picture of yourself as a young child. Can this “memory picture” tell you something about what you were like?

- What are you doing?
- Who are you with?
- How do you think you looked to others?
- How do you think you were treated by those others?

Now look at the recent photo of you. What differences are there between the “you” of the younger photo and the “you” of the recent photo?

Look at the sample photos shown here and go over the list of differences one observer noted between the two pictures. Then make up your own list by examining your two photos.



Then

sitting still, held by parent
world must have been giant and scary
with family
dressed in fancy suit, looked cute
like a baby



Now

moving under own power, active
world is not too big, not so scary
with friends
put on old jeans i wanted to, in
charge of myself
like a person

As a class share your information. Based on this discussion, what changes do you see taking place between infancy and adolescence?

- In what ways have you moved from dependence toward independence?
- Are you now able to do things physically that you couldn't do then?
- Do others view you differently now?
- Who makes decisions about your life now — about what you can do, where you can go, and with whom you spend your time?

Looking Forward

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT A NEWBORN?

Working in small groups, make a list of what you think a baby is like at birth. Try to describe: things he is able to do, what he usually does each day, ways he relates to others, how he communicates, and his fears and feelings. Make a list of unanswered questions that you have about babies. Remember in trying to answer these questions that one baby differs greatly from another.



Gabriel Is Two Days Old

In the film a mother and a doctor examine the mother's newborn son, Gabriel. While you watch the film, think over the statements you made about newborn babies and how they behave. The mother and the doctor discuss the remarkable fact of a baby's "completeness" at birth. At birth the baby has a number of reflexes — grasping, turning toward light, shaking off anything that might block breathing, and sucking. Sucking is perhaps the infant's most important reflex, for it allows the baby to get nourishment, and to communicate with another person.

The mother and doctor suggest that Gabriel is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. While he is able to react instantly to bright lights and sudden noises, he does not know where they come from. He has a wonderfully complete body, but he cannot coordinate its different parts. His loud cry is a sign of health, but he still needs to be cared for, to be checked out carefully for birth defects or illness, to be handled gently and with love.

Questions for Discussion

- What does the film add to information and hunches you already had about newborns?
- In what ways does Gabriel seem ready to respond to the world he will live in? In what ways does he seem "unprepared"?
- In what ways are human newborns different from other kinds of animal babies?

GABRIEL — WHAT WILL BECOME OF HIM?

After you have seen the film, try to make an imaginary picture of Gabriel when he is six. Base your picture on the information given to you by Gabriel himself, by his mother, by his doctor, and by his new environment.

Things to think about:

Physical skills — How will Gabriel's body change? How will his movements change?

Relations with others — Who will be important to Gabriel? To whom will Gabriel become important? How will his ways of interacting with others change?

Thinking or solving problems — What new information about the world will he learn? How will his ability to communicate ideas change?

His daily schedule — What changes will there be in the ways he spends his time?

In what ways will Gabriel at six be different from Gabriel at two days old? As a class, make a list that includes all your ideas.

INTERVIEW OF A MOTHER WITH HER BABY

Invite a mother and her baby to class. Ask the mother what the baby is now doing. How has the baby changed physically since birth? In what new ways does the baby respond to surroundings and to the mother and to other people? What and when does the baby eat? When does he or she sleep? What motions does the baby make? In what ways has the relationship between mother and child changed since birth?

Collecting

When growth takes place in a child it shows up in everything that he or she does. Tony has just learned how to do and undo buttons after several months of trying. He talks to his friend Chris about the red buttons down the front of Chris' sweater, and offers to button them up for his friend. He shows another friend that he can do even the tiny buttons on the doll clothes. Much of his play in the housekeeping corner centers on putting on shirts, buttoning them, unbuttoning them, and taking them off. When he takes a turn at the easel, he covers his paper with big spots of paint which he calls buttons.

If you are just listening to the children at your fieldsite, it is sometimes hard to remember changes that take place from day to day or week to week. But you can keep track of children's conversations, the stories they tell, what they build with blocks, what they paint, or what questions they ask. By doing this, you can "map out" changes in behavior and begin to see development as it takes shape.

One way of "keeping track" is to make collections. Your collection should be made over a period of at least several weeks, and can be put together in any number of ways. For instance, if you choose to make a collection of a child's questions, you could write down each question when you hear it. If you choose to collect drawings, that would be easy, as long as the child was willing to lend you his drawings and paintings – but be sure you return them when you are finished with your collection. If block structures interest you, take a camera to the fieldsite and photograph the structures or make sketches of them. A tape recorder could help you collect stories children tell or things they say. Collections can help you look at growth by:

- keeping track of what happens with one child over several weeks or months;
- comparing two or three children of the same age over a period of time to note differences and similarities in how they learn something new;
- comparing what children of different ages do.

NOTES ON MAKING A COLLECTION

1. Decide what it is you want to watch.

It might be children's changing ideas about people's roles as shown in their stories.

It might be children's ability to make their ideas understood to other children in the games they play, or their ability (or lack of it) to play a game by the rules.

2. Decide whether to look at one child, two or three children, or children of different ages.
3. Decide how you want to collect.

You might choose to keep drawings, tape stories, write observations of play. (Be sure to label what you collect with name of child, age, and date.)

4. Collect. (This phase may cover a few weeks or several months. The longer you are able to collect, the more evidence of development you will see.)

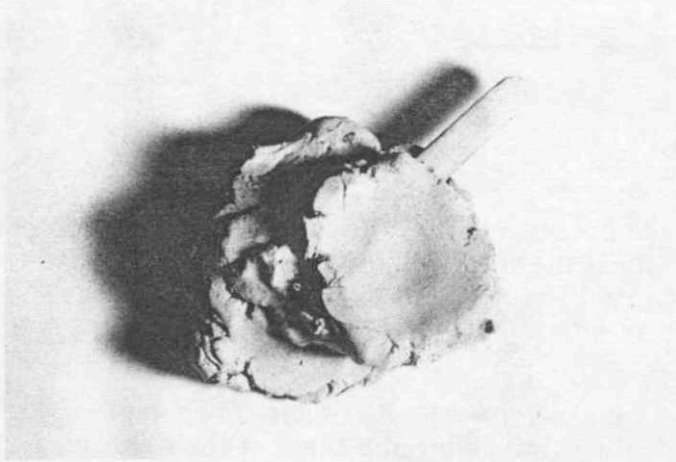
5. Review your collection.

Arrange it from a child's earliest story to his latest, from the drawings of younger children to those of older ones.

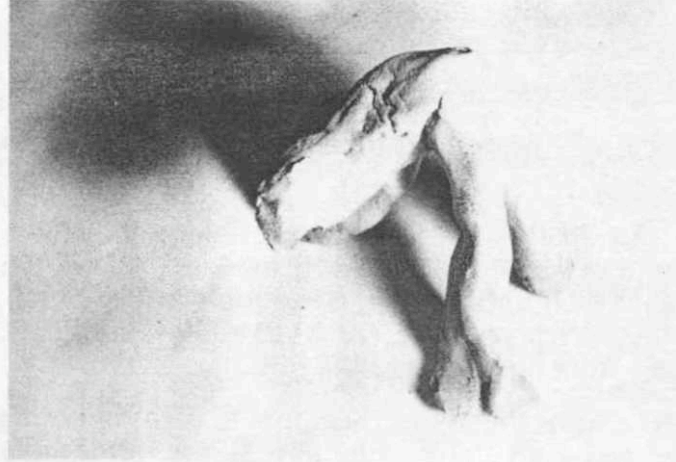
6. Are there any changes? What are they? When your collection is complete, you can compare the changes you find with those other students have found.

Some ideas for collections might be:

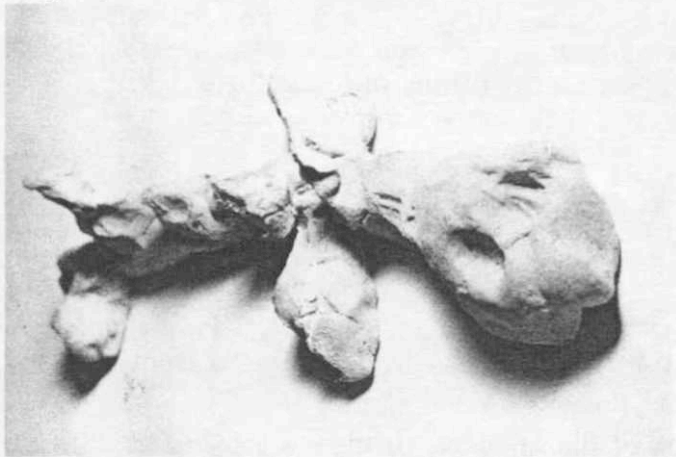
- children's drawings of themselves
- samples of children's conversation
- what children do with a musical instrument
- children's explanations about how things work
- situations in which children show that they understand the feelings of others
- games children play
- movements children can make
- ideas children have about time



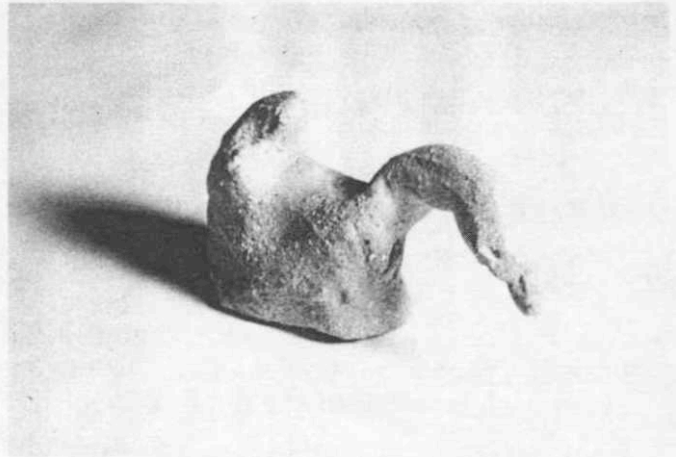
3 years



4 years



5 years



6 years

Here is a collection of photographs of clay work by children ranging in age from three to six. They are spread out in order just as a collection you make might be. Go over the photographs. What changes do you see?

Setting Up a Situation

“My mommy is my sister, too, because she is a girl like me.”

“No, he’s not my father, he’s my daddy.”

“When I get bigger, I will be my big brother.”

How do children come to understand the relationships between people? How do they see their mothers and fathers and themselves? Often you overhear the things children say and you realize that their understanding of people and situations is very different from your own. By the time they reach your age, they will understand things pretty much the way you do, but how do they get from one point to the other?

You have already learned how to gather information by observing. Up to now, you have observed what children did in response to the situations they find all around them at the fieldsite. But you could also *set up a situation* so that children share certain understandings with you, show you what they can do, or let you know how they think. First, of course, you will need a specific question – one that can be answered by seeing how the children respond to your situation. Below are some questions that might occur to you after working in the fieldsite. With them are some ideas about situations you might set up to help answer your question.

What do children feel or know about families?

You could:

- Ask children to tell you a story about a family. Tape-record what they say. Play their stories back at a time when you can listen to them carefully. What ideas do the children seem to have about each member of the family?
- Compare the stories told by two or three children of the same age or the stories told by children of different ages. If you decide to study children of different ages, ask yourself, What changes are there in the child’s ideas about families as he or she grows older?
- Ask a child to draw a picture of a family all together, then collect the drawings. What does a child appear to do in a family? What is the child’s relation to the parents? to brothers and sisters?

What are children of different ages physically able to do?

You could:

- Take children of different ages onto the playground. Ask them to play with different kinds of equipment and make notes on what each does. Compare the activities of children of different ages.
- Or, set up an obstacle course outdoors. (Confer with the fieldsite teacher about the right kind of “obstacles.”) Ask children of different ages to try going through the course. Make a game of it. Take notes on how children of different ages navigate the course.

Planning Your Situation

- Choose a question that interests you.
- Plan a situation that would help you answer the question.
- Carry out your plan at the fieldsite.
- Make notes on the children’s responses.
- Think over what you’ve seen.

In the example below, Marcia, a student, has noticed that certain children at her fieldsite seem to get left out of things more often than others. She decides to set up a situation to help her answer the question, “How do young children handle being left out?”

Marcia made the following notes in her journal:

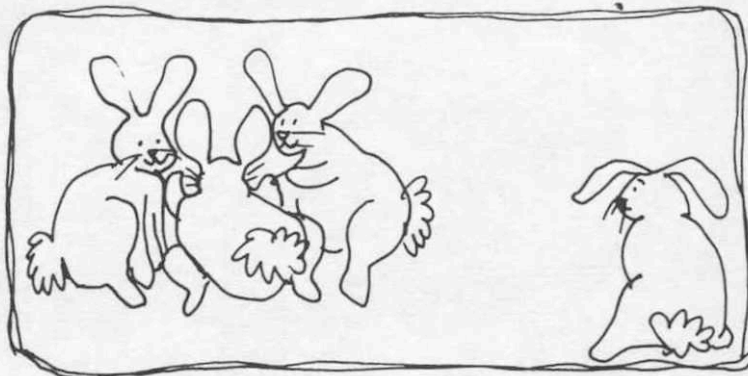
Feb. 4, 9:00: Darrin, Pierre, Eduardo and Clara, all 3, at the reading table.

MARCIA USES A FINISH-THE-STORY ACTIVITY TO ENCOURAGE THE CHILDREN TO TALK ABOUT HOW IT FEELS TO BE LEFT OUT.

Decided to start with three-year-olds since that’s who I’ve been observing most.

Thought that doing it one at a time would be less confusing.

Showed the kids – one at a time – this picture:



and told them we were going to play a finish-the-story game.

Some of the kids weren't sure how to start.
Said things like:

"What did she say to the other rabbits?"

"How did Rheba feel? Was she happy or sad?"

"What did she do next?"

were helpful.

What do these stories mean?

Once upon a time, three little rabbits were playing with blocks. They were trying to build a long tunnel. Then Rheba rabbit came over and said, "Can I play too?" The other rabbits said "No" and chased her away.

Then I asked them to tell me the rest of the story. Here's how the four of them finished the story:

Darrin - "Then she had a birthday party with lots and lots of ice cream and she said you can't come to my birthday party and then her mommy came home and then she blew out the candles and she made a wish."

Pierre - "I don't know that story."

Clara - "Then the farmer came and made them all go away and took the blocks inside the fence."

Eduardo - "Then the mommy came and spanked the mean rabbits and said to go to your room and the other rabbit made a big big city all by herself."

MARCIA COMBINED HER FINISH-THE-STORY SITUATION WITH SEVERAL CLASS PERIODS OF OBSERVATION OF WHAT VARIOUS THREE-YEAR-OLDS DID WHEN THEY WERE LEFT OUT.

I'm finally getting the kind of information I want.

Looks like kids who've been left out get happy faster if they become involved with someone else right away

Feb. 6, 9:30: Dwight (3), David (4), Clara (3) at the water table.

Spent my half-hour at the water table. Saw Dwight get pushed away by a group of 4's when he asked if he could sail his boat with them. David marched over with a piece of thick rope, yelled "Here comes the deadly snake," and began playing at the water table with the others. While playing snake David and the others first ignored Clara, then, moving around the table, pushed her out. Clara walked over to the window, looked out it for a minute, then started working in the art area.

Feb. 10, 9:00: Charles (3), Emma (5), and Lester (4) in the dress-up corner.

Charles went to dress-up corner saying "I'll be the daddy."

Emma said, "We have two daddys already and that's too many."

Charles looked like he was going to cry, but then Lester came along and asked him if he wanted to play trucks. They both ran off.

9:10: Saw from a distance that Michael and Don wouldn't let Darrin play spaceship with them and that another group was keeping Clara out of the kitchen. Missed the details.

WHAT MARCIA SAW HAPPEN WITH LESTER AND CHARLES HAS GIVEN HER AN IDEA FOR HOW SHE MIGHT HELP THE CHILDREN SHE SEES BEING LEFT OUT.

Getting somebody who's been left out quickly involved with something else seems to work – and it really makes them feel better.

Feb. 12, 9:10: Dwight (3), Eduardo (3), Nina (5).

Nina and Eduardo playing with cans in sand. Dwight came up, said, "Can I play?" and Eduardo said, "Go away, you're not my friend. You can't play."

Dwight left the table and gave a chair a good kick. I asked him if he wanted to do some fingerpainting and his face perked up. As he worked, he talked about the big sea monster he was making. He said it lived on the bottom of the ocean where no one else was. I asked if the monster was a sad or happy one, and Dwight said "Happy, because he has all the toys he wants to play with all the time."

MARCIA FELT THAT HER OBSERVATIONS AND FINISH-THE-STORY SITUATION HAD HELPED HER SEE A NUMBER OF THINGS ABOUT CHILDREN WHO GET LEFT OUT AND HOW TO HELP THEM.

Things I've Found Out

A child gets happier faster if another child comes over to talk/play rather than an adult.

Children who just join in are more likely to be accepted than those who ask if they can play.

Children show in different ways that they are upset – some cry or go off by themselves, others get very angry and hit, bite, yell, or ruin what the other kids were doing. They usually stay unhappy until they start playing with something/somebody else.

When these three-year-olds tell stories about a child who got left out, they usually have the kids who left the other one out get punished.

A child who got left out needs to start doing something else, and get his mind off his problem.

Directions in Development:

Using Your Data Poster

Included in the materials for this unit is a data poster, "Directions in Development." The poster maps out some aspects of growth in children. "Areas" of development are listed along the left side, and ages are marked along the lower edge

THE POSTER CAN GIVE YOU TWO KINDS OF INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN:

1. What are children like at different ages?

What, for instance, is a two- or three-year-old child like? What kinds of abilities does he or she have? By reading *down* the band of the poster marked "toddler" you can examine what motor skills, language abilities, understandings, social skills, fears, and daily habits are typical of many toddlers. By putting all this information together you can begin to build a picture of what working with a child this age will be like. The picture you will form is a very general one. It can't tell you very much about any one child, only something about children in general. You will see that:

- development can be uneven. At any one time a child can be moving ahead quickly in some areas, slowly in others.
- children respond to their surroundings. Maryanne's older brothers may be strong and active; to keep up with them, Maryanne may be very skilled at running and tumbling. Dawn's father and mother may spend a great deal of time reading her stories and teaching her to write. Though these two girls are the same age, they will have difference skills and interests.
- when children are excited, eager, intensely involved, they can often do things they could not do before. On the other hand, when they are tired, uncomfortable, sick, or upset, children may have a hard time doing things that are usually easy for them.

2. How do children develop?

Suppose you are interested in knowing how a child develops the ability to speak. By reading *across* the chart in the area marked "language abilities," you will see that development at one age builds upon what the child learned earlier. For example, children go from "stringing sounds together without much meaning" during infancy to learning to relate sounds to people and things as toddlers; there is an *order* in which development occurs.

Reading the entire data poster may give you a sense of the direction all areas of development take. You will see, for example, that:

- development takes children from a time when they are focused on themselves (their own bodies, their own desires, needs and fears) to a time when they can understand others as well.
- development means that children can think through and carry out more and more complicated plans.
- at first children live only in the present; gradually they come to remember the past and to think about the future.
- early in their lives, children are aware of things that affect their senses – things they can actually feel, see, touch, taste, or smell. As they mature, memories, expectations, ideas, come to affect their behavior.

ADDING TO THE DATA POSTER

The data poster provides examples of child development in several areas, like motor skills and relating to other children. As you work with children in your fieldsite, collect observations of their behavior, samples of their speech, play, fears, on 3 x 5 cards. Make a file, using the same categories as the poster, and keep it near the poster. Arrange your cards by ages within the categories. You can work as a class to build up a picture of what the children you work with are like. Or, if members of the class have special interests, the class can be divided into small groups of students whose interests are alike. Each group should look closely at some particular aspect of development in the children you know. One group might study the differences between what a three-year-old talks about and what a five-year-old talks about. Another group might look at the ways younger and older children use free play time.

read down to learn what occurs at each age

read across to learn some ways children's activities and abilities change as they grow

