Early Childhood Assessment: Play Skills
Est. Time: 6 Hours

Objective

Use play taxonomies to observe, measure, and analyze children's play.

Overview

Children engage in many different types of play, an important part of their daily routine. Not only is play a central behavior of young children, but it is also a context in which other skills can be taught. Play can involve the use of fine or gross motor skills, communication skills, social skills, and cognitive skills. Assessing play can serve an important role in planning suitable interventions for young children with disabilities.

Activity

Use the steps outlined below to complete this activity. To avoid issues with confidentiality, use the child's initials or a pseudonym instead of the child's full name on the forms you complete.

1. Identification

    a. Identify a child with a disability to observe.
    b. Identify times of day during which it is appropriate for the child to engage in play.

2. Observation

    a. Review several taxonomies of play (see box to the right) and select at least two that are appropriate to the child.
    b. Assess the child using the guidelines for the observational taxonomies.

> **Examples of Play Taxonomies**
> - Smilansky (1968)
> - Chance (1977)
> - Wehman (1977)
> - Sutton-Smith (1970)
> - Parten (1932)
> - Malone, Stoneman & Langone (1994)
> - Sheratt & Peter (2002)

3. Data Analysis

    a. After the observations, analyze the data as suggested by the methods used.
    b. Analyze the data to identify objectives for prompting play skills.

4. Report

    a. Write a report using the headings identified in the table below. Keep in mind:

       ▪ Only one report should be submitted for each group.
       ▪ Each report should include all of the required information outlined in the table.
       ▪ The report should be written in a style that is professional yet can be understood by individuals without advanced training.

    b. Attach the completed data sheets and other notes (raw data). These do not have to be typed.

Early Childhood Assessment: Play Skills

Headings	Required Information
Identifying Information *Who was observed?*	Using a column format, list the child's: • Name • Gender • Date of birth • Age in months • Disability
Methods of Observation *What did you do?*	a. Using a table with the dates as rows, record the context of the measurement: • Dates • Observer/tester • Purpose of observing/measuring (e.g., toy play) • Activities and routines observed • Where the activities occurred • How many adults and children were present • Beginning and end times of each observation b. Describe the two taxonomies used. • Define the behavioral categories of each taxonomy. • Describe the measurement system employed.
Results *How did the child do?*	Describe the child's play in a manner that is appropriate for the taxonomies used. • Include a table for each taxonomy as well as a narrative description. • Place the toy play results in the context of the major play outcomes discussed in class.
Recommendations *How would you use the data?*	Based on your analysis: • List two objectives that could be established. • Provide a three-to-four sentence rationale for each objective. • List at least one intervention practice for each objective.