

PAPER 2: CHILD DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Before carrying out the Child Development Study candidates should have detailed knowledge of all the developmental areas, e.g. Physical, Intellectual, Language, Emotional and Social. The child/children being studied must be aged 0-5 years. Candidates are required to focus on the area(s) of development that is suitable for the age of the child/children being studied. Focusing on one area of development is going to be more accessible for all ability candidates rather than looking at all the areas of development.

Information related to the child must be confidential; therefore no surnames, addresses or personal details should be disclosed. Candidates are required to have contact with a child or group of children and to carry out observations of the development of the child/children over a period of time. These observations should then be recorded and related to current theories of practice.

Assessment criteria for Child Development Study

Introduction and Planning

(a) Planning of the Study

This should include:

- The number of observations/visits to be made (six would be an acceptable number)
- A projection of the details of where and when these will be made
- Activities which are appropriate to the area of study that may be carried out with the Child/children
- Details of what equipment may be required to carry out the study e.g. camera, note pad, sketch pad etc.

The final format may take the form of a chart, in paragraphs for each observation/visit to be made or a time plan.

(b) Background information

This research would be undertaken during the 'preliminary visit'. It would include:

- Information about the child/children (age, position in family etc.). Care should be taken to preserve confidentiality of the child and its family by not including surnames, addresses, etc.
- Activities/play enjoyed by the child/children
- Amenities in the area the child/children live
- A 'tick chart' showing a comparison of the developmental area/s of the child/children with the average child of the same age at the start of the study, conclusions can be made from this

(c) Explanation of development area chosen

The area of development chosen should be explained with the starting point at the age of the child/children at the start of the study, and culminate at the age of the child/children at the end of the study (a span of probably six months). The sources of information would be acknowledged e.g. "Pamela Minett says in Child Care and Development..." Reasons for choice would be those considered before the start of the study – based on the age of the child/children and reinforced by the results from the 'tick- chart' in (b).

Application

(a) Written record of each observation made

This should initially be written during the observation and should include:

- What was actually observed during each visit, particularly the areas which are relevant to the chosen topic?
- Drawing/sketches/photographs made during the visit by the student
- Any materials produced by the child/children during the visit (if appropriate)

(b) Application of knowledge and understanding

After the visit, the student can re-write the notes taken – this is not essential if they are legible. Those aspects observed in relation to the area of development being studied should then be identified either by underlining in colour or highlighting. The student should then explain these aspects showing the understanding of the development theories. The observation and application to each visit should be dated and/or kept together in chronological order. This enables students to make reference to steps in the child/children's development from earlier visits.

(c) Comparison of evidence

The students should carry out this comparison as an additional aspect during the last visit. The logical format would again be a chart, followed by a summary in the 'application of knowledge' of this visit.

Some students may want to make a similar comparison part way through the observation period. This can be credited here, but a final comparison must be made so that the student can see the progression of development made during the six months.

This comparison should be made with the accepted norms for this age group or with other children of the same age.

Analysis and Evaluation

It is very important that time is spent on this section. Often students feel the work is over when completing the observations. A potentially good mark can be lost if time is not spent on this section. In this section, candidates need to look at how they carried out the work and suggest where improvements could be made.

(a) Comment on appropriateness

The student will consider the Introduction and Planning together with the Application when making comments on the way they carried out the study.

(b) Identification of strengths and weaknesses

Specific strengths of the study should be identified, and any weaknesses (or aspects that could have been improved further) should be stated, together with how they could have been improved. The words 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' should be used.

Candidates should consider all areas of the work.

(c) Awareness of opportunities for further developments

The student should identify other areas of development which have proved interesting during the study and could form the basis for further work. Alternatively, further important milestones in the area of development being studied could be identified for future study.