

Observer _____ Date _____ Time _____ to _____
Location _____ Child _____ Child's Age _____

10 Adult Signature _____

Level 1

OBSERVATION 1

Overview of Physical Development

During the preschool years, children continue to grow in height and weight and refine many of their physical skills. Although children follow the same general pattern of physical development, they vary in the age at which they accomplish different motor skills. Also, their abilities in one area may be more developed than in other areas. For example, a five-year-old might not yet be able to skip (a gross motor skill) but may be very good at drawing (a fine motor skill). When observing children's physical skills, keep in mind these variations in development.

Observation Objective: To identify and interpret one child's physical development.

Directions: Observe a child age three to five in an early childhood education class or a child care program for at least 20 minutes. (If possible, find out from the teacher or caregiver the child's age in years and months.) Read over the questions that follow before you observe. Take careful notes during the observation. Review your notes and answer the questions as soon as possible after you observe.

Observation Tip: This observation requires you to compare the child you are observing to other children in the group in several areas of physical development. Although your focus should be on the child you are observing, occasionally watch some of the other children as well to get an idea of how their development compares to that of the focus child.

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PART 1: Physical Size. From ages three to five, children grow from an average of about 3 feet tall to 3 feet 7 inches tall. During this time, their weight increases from an average of about 31 pounds to about 40 pounds. Naturally, children vary widely in size and rate of growth, so many children's height and weight are above or below these averages.

1. How does the child's height compare to that of other children the same age? Describe the child's body type—is it slight, average, chubby, heavy? How does the child's body type compare to that of others the same age?

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Thinking It Through

Identify at least three factors that might be responsible for the variations in size and body type among children of the same age.

15 **PART 2: Self-Care Skills.** Throughout the preschool years, children become increasingly able to care for their personal needs, such as washing themselves, getting dressed, brushing their teeth, and toileting. Sometimes they need reminders to do some of these things, and they may need help with the more difficult tasks, such as fastening small buttons. Most children are very proud of their growing ability to do things for themselves.

2. What self-care tasks did you observe the child doing? Was the child able to complete these tasks independently? Explain.
3. Were the child's self-care abilities similar to those of other children the same age? Explain.

Thinking It Through

What factors might hinder a child's ability to perform self-care tasks? How might a parent, teacher, or caregiver encourage a child to become self-sufficient in personal care?

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