

Meets. Revised

Name: Kate O'Brien
Final Grade: 84 Revised

Components inclusive preschool program			Comments
<p>A. <u>Teacher Interview (semi-structured) to gather information about</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> program philosophy, values which are foundational to the program the teacher's perspective on inclusion of children with disabilities (the benefits and challenges to inclusion in their program) description of the children in class/program (ages, disabilities represented) the program's capacity to implement IEP/IFSP (See Appendix H, P. 465) curriculum and strategies utilized to support child development (communication, motor, social, self help, cognition and literacy) the types of assessment utilized in program to inform instruction how family members are involved in assessments team practices utilized in program (i.e., transdisciplinary, multidisciplinary) procedures used for transition planning 	40 points	34	<p>missing, may not have one I would've wanted her philosophy was and what her philosophy was</p> <p>not involved was it a point off if they weren't involved?</p> <p>missing. this was @ Hawaii Kon to/from program limited</p>
<p>B. <u>Observation (2-3 hours) of a preschool class to gather information about</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> program materials that illustrate program practices (see Appendix F) modifications utilized (See Appendix H, p. 464) specific examples of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) specific examples family-centered programming and family participation instructional strategies observed that promote (communication, motor, social, cognitive/literacy, self help) schedule and lay out of the class 	40 points	32	<p>missing limited missing I found no family involvement</p>
<p>C. <u>Written Paper including responses to A and B (above) and</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> your perspective of the Strengths and Challenges of the program. 	10 points	5	<p>Nice poster why do you think name cards worked in their class? - NAEYC accredited - what Kate</p>
<p>D. <u>Presentation (20 minutes) on the observed program. Reflecting on your observations, interview and, the material presented in class and text, describe the strengths and challenges of the observed program in light of class discussions, current DAP and DEC Recommended Practices.</u></p>	10 points	10	<p>Challenges Room too small for WC - Resource Folios are not always available - multi disability - Care Load Issue / Time Issue - Limited / No Parent Involvement - No plans for transition of children - @ Multisession</p>

All day
9:30-5:30
9-3 - cohorts.
18 children

PT
ST
ST
Resource - Spanish Room
12 children w/ disabilities?
How many w/ disabilities?

Strengths
Kids come in at all times
Good Problem Solving w/ Adults

Early Childhood Program Observation and Teacher
Interview
Written By: Kate O'Brien
Special Education 516 T 4-6:50

In order to complete this assignment, I choose to do my observation and teacher

interview at a program called the Hamlet Learning Center in Woonsocket, RI. Hamlet is an inclusive program which has pre-school and Kindergarten classrooms. I was placed in a classroom with children ages 3 and 4. I completed the observation on February 12,

2008 and was able to observe in the classroom for about 2 hours. The day I was there it was to cold to go outside so their center time went on for about 1 hour and a half. I also

witnessed their large group before they went to centers, clean-up and part of their group getting ready for lunch. A little over a week later I completed my teacher interview over the phone where I was able to learn more about the make-up of her class as well as a bit

more about the center. I will break this paper into three parts. Part one will be my

observation, Part two will be based on the teacher interview and part three will be my

perspective of the strengths and challenges of the class program I observed.

Part I: The Observation

I arrived at the school just before 9:00. When I got there, the children were

sitting in large group getting ready to choose the areas they wanted to play in. Their

teacher was verbally telling the children which areas were open for the day. Next, she

held up pictures of the children. When the child saw his or her picture they would get up

and take their picture from the teacher and tell her where they were going to play, then they

would take their picture to the area and hang it in the area they were going. As the

children chose areas I walked around checking out the areas in the classroom. I found

that all the toys, materials and areas were all labeled with words and pictures to assist the

children in locating materials and learning the vocabulary for the objects they are using.

This particular day the areas that were open consisted of trains in the block area (open to

when did you leave?

oh

oaf

4 children), sand table (open to 2 children), creating valentines day cards for their parents at the art table (open to 4 children), counting chips (open to 4 in the math area), creating friendship bracelets at a table being called the yellow table (open to 4) and the house area (also open to 4).

The teachers in the room began to interact with the children as soon as the

children were all settled in their areas. I found that teachers were appropriate when communicating with the children. Both teachers made appropriate eye contact and used

back channeling for example one of the girls was explaining to her teacher something having to do with her friendship bracelets. The girl just kept going on and on without

giving the teacher a chance to say anything. To this her teacher continued to nod and smile. The teachers also used reflective listening, for example I noted that two children

were fighting over a train. The teacher used the phrase "so you were using the train when Johnny came over and took it from you?" With this she helped the child know she was

listening and understood what she was saying.

While continuing to explore the room I noted that the room was filled with age appropriate materials. There were lots of dress-up and imaginary play items in the house

area, blocks for building, manipulatives to work on fine motor, books for reading and many art supplies. Throughout my observation, I was keeping my eyes open for

modifications; however I only noticed a few. One that stood out to me was one child was working on the friendship bracelets. This child was struggling with holding the pipe

cleaner and lacing the beads. The teacher went over and held the pipe cleaner to assist the child finish the bracelet. Another was a child working in the Art Area, the teacher

working with him realized the child was becoming slightly frustrated with the project.

any adapted for varying levels sizes?

The teacher said "why don't you go to another area and then come back later if you would like." The teacher was able to foresee the breakdown and help prevent it. While listening to this conversation, I thought to look for examples of family participation. Aside from the children making the cards for their parents, I saw no sign of parent involvement. As I was getting ready to go I also witnessed the teacher settling the group on the rug. She appeared to be purposefully placing children on either side of her. I observed as she would touch a child's shoulder to bring his attention back to the circle. As well as watching for modifications I also watched for developmentally appropriate practices. I noted many throughout the day but there were a few I thought were worth mentioning. First I saw the children were allowed to choose an area to play in. When the area was full on of the children became agitated. He really wanted to play there. In this situation the teacher had to take more of a directive role and make another choice for him because it was clear he was unable to make his own. Second the areas were designed where more than one child was able to play in each area. This set up places a real emphasis on social interactions with all children. Finally, during group time the teacher initiated singing songs that the children actively engaged in. She also read a story asking questions as she went along encouraging participation as she went along. Instructional strategies used to promote communication and social behavior was a big event that I observed. At the ages of three and four the children are still learning how to communicate what there wants and needs are. When other children had what they wanted, I heard the teachers saying "use your words." "Tell him what you want" "How can we solve this problem". Another specific instance I noticed was in the house area. A child dumped the entire contents of the fridge onto the floor. The teacher went over and



Part 2: The Interview

said, "let's clean up the food on the floor, when we're done I can help you come up with ideas on how to use the food." Children were also using peg boards and creating friendship bracelets which the teachers put out to promote fine motor skills. I also observed their classroom was full of words and pictures helping to promote literacy.

Although when interviewing the teacher she was unsure of the program if not - what are your thoughts @ philosophy she was very sure of her own philosophy which she uses daily in her planning So, is there one?

and assessments. She told me her philosophy is that all students grow and learn through play. She explains that "as a mother of two children with special needs, inclusive pre-schools were her children's first introduction to the real world." Well said!

pre-schools are very beneficial in the fact that children with special needs are able to be more productive when they have models to observe daily. This teacher did acknowledge that there are certain challenges with inclusive pre-school as well. She thinks that some teachers may not be patient enough with the special needs students or that the students may move slower than the other children.

As I mentioned before this classroom has 18, 3 and 4 years old, children with a total of 6 IEP's. The IEP's are mostly for speech, 1 receives OT, 1 receives PT and the other has Down syndrome. Unfortunately, the head teacher in the room was unaware of what an IFSP was. She stated she did not have any in her class. she wouldn't know! kids are 3 & 4 years old.

The curriculum they use at Hamlet is the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards.

The standards are broken into 8 domains: Approaches to Learning, Social Emotional Development, Language development, Literacy, Math, Science, Creative Art and

Physical Health and Development. Weekly the teaching team uses the standards to

18/6

support child development. Once goals are chosen from the standards, activities are developed around the goals to advance a skill. For assessments the teachers use the creative curriculum checklist, which follows similar goals as the RIEFS, and helps assess development. Each teacher at Hamlet also keeps portfolios of the children's work, running records and anecdotal records to assess each child's development. The only time the family members are involved with assessment of their child is when the teacher shares her findings with the parents. Never before this are the parents opinions asked. Hamlet according to the teacher I interviewed works as a multidisciplinary team. She feels as though teachers do assessments and testing to decide if a referral is necessary. Next, the referrals are sent to the school department where their team decides if further evaluations are necessary. If the evaluations are deemed necessary the school department completes them then shares their findings with the classroom teacher and the parents. Next, if necessary, an IEP meeting is set up. After that the school department comes in during class time to give the children their services. The teacher I interviewed says that she may informally share information about some children with educators from the school department, but there is never a set meeting for all the people who work with a child to discuss information. The teacher feels that having the school department come into their school at least 4 times a week (resource 2 days, speech 2 days, OT 1 day, PT 1 day) is great for their program. "This way there are professionals who have a better background to handle the disabilities giving children individual attention plus the children with disabilities still get to be in an inclusive classroom." When the school department people aren't there she feels she is still able to help the children with disabilities learn and grow. She says she uses pictures and gestures to communicate

when necessary and she knows the children who may need extra time to answer a question. When looking at the transitions in her daily activities she feels they are very smooth. She uses warnings before the transition and cues the transition by singing different songs for different transitions.

Lastly, Hamlet uses self assessments for teachers and the agency. An outsource that evaluates the program is NAVCE. They come in every 5 years to assess the overall program.

Part 3: Strengths and Challenges of the Program

The teacher I interviewed seemed very proud of her classroom, program and its components and abilities. I saw while I was there and when speaking with her that she ran a very nurturing classroom. The children were well taken care for and the teachers were attentive to the children's needs. However, there were things about the program that could be better. The challenges I see did not come from my observation but from my teacher interview. I think it is really important to add a stronger family aspect to the program. Having the parents involved in their child's education even at a young age is important. As well as involving the parents more, the interactions that the teachers and the school department have needs improvement. If both could get together on a more regular basis, both the child and adults could benefit. Overall, the center was clean and the children seemed to be learning and happy.

Other challenges?
Other strengths?