Child Action Research Paper

By

Becky Fang

**Identifying Information:**

* Child’s Name: Ruby Lee
* Date of Birth: September 2nd, 2005
* Age in Years and Months: 6 years and 7 months
* Sex: Female
* Grade in School: 1st Grade
* Childcare or Supervision Arrangements: After school program during weekdays, and babysitter during weekends
* Citizenship: Born in the United States
* English as a Second Language?: No
* Description of Child: Ruby’s family composition consists of her Mother, Father, and a younger brother at the age of 3 years old. Ruby’s family is from China, but she and her brother was born in the United States. Ruby’s role model is her mother as they seem to spend a lot of time together and have great communication between each other. Ruby and her family have not moved around much. Ruby was born in San Francisco and has completed each grade without having to move around to different school or relocating.

**Interview with Parent:**

1. How would you describe your child to someone who has not met him or her?
* Ruby is shy, but very quick to warm up to strangers, as long as she sees the relationship between the stranger and me. She usually gets along with people her age and is more interactive with people her age more than adults.
1. What pleases you most about your child’s development? What qualities or characteristics would you say are unique to your child?
* What pleases me most about Ruby’s development is that she is a very deep thinker. She understands a lot of what I try to tell her even though at her age, she should have a difficult time thinking about it. I just think she is a very smart kid. Physically, she is also growing fast. We try to incorporate good eating habits and she is very active so her physical development seems to be on track.
* I would say some of Ruby’s qualities and uniqueness is her independence. Ruby likes to do things on her own as she is very capable. When we have family time, sometimes we bake, go to the park, or simply do something together like wash the car, Ruby insists she manages the duties. She is a very smart and independent child.
1. Do you see any improvements needed in your child’s development?
* No, I believe Ruby’s development is on track.
1. What is your opinion of the education your child currently receiving; include the strengths and weaknesses?
* Currently Ruby is going to a good elementary school. I’ve met with her teacher on multiple occasions and she is a very well educated, trained, and very passionate with what she does. I believe having a good role model helps in my child’s development and she has one at school. I do not think you can go wrong with having a well-qualified teacher in your child’s education; this includes their passion in teaching children as well as academics.
1. How much television does your child watch in a day? Do you think that your child’s television watching is a positive or influence, why?
* Ruby watches television for about an hour or two before bed. Some days she does not watch the television at all. Because Ruby goes to school until 2 pm, and continues to stay at the after school program until 6 pm, she is usually done with her homework so she is allowed to watch it when she comes home.
* I think Ruby’s television watching can be both a positive and negative influence on her because it depends on how many hours she is watching, what other priorities she needs to do (homework), and what she is watching. She enjoys the informative cartoon shows and other positive children shows on the Disney channel. So far I have not noticed any negative influences that Ruby’s television watching has brought.
1. Please explain your parenting “style” and how you discipline your child when he or she has not behaved appropriately? Is your child starting to develop self-regulation?
* I would have to say my parenting “style” is authoritative. I do not often scold or punish my children. Yes, my kids are not perfect and they make mistakes but they are children, so I let them be that, however, I do not let them do whatever they want, whenever they want. For example, their education and school comes first. I always stress to the kids that they need to finish their homework before they can do something else. For the most part, they are good with that.
1. Please explain how you teach your children the moral and ethical values you believe to be important?
* I grew up in a non-religious home, so in terms of religion, my kids are not in a “religious group.” As each day goes by, I find that there are a lot of ways to teach my children morals and values. I think they are too young to really understand what morals and values are so I do not explain the definition but an example of how I would teach them is for instance the other day we were at a grocery store and an elderly lady dropped her wallet. With my hands being full of bags, I told Ruby to go pick up her wallet and hand it back to her. I explained to Ruby that the lady has valuables in there and she would be quite upset and sad if she lost her wallet. Ruby understood how it felt like to lose something she loved because she has lost quite a bit of her toys before, so I also threw that in when I told her to return the wallet. I can tell Ruby imitates a lot of what I do, so as a mother I set a good example for her. When we are out at restaurants, Ruby’s father and I are very communicative with strangers such as waiters. We are polite and if the waiters give the kids some extra things like juice or crayons to draw with, sometimes they need to be reminded to say, “thank you.” Other ways are to tell them stories. That's how my dad did it. My dad always had stories on how people should act and all that, and although some of the stories he told at the time I did not understand, I do now. I hope to pass this along to my kids as well.
1. Describe the various influences relevant to your child’s development:
2. The child’s immediate surroundings such as family, including parents, siblings, grandparents, and other relatives;
* Ruby’s immediate influences would have to be us, her family. Although her father and I are not married, we live together in our own home. Ruby spends a lot of time with her grandpa while her dad and I are at work. He’s recently moved into our home to watch the kids. Some weekends, her cousins come over and they get to spend time together. Ruby has older cousins so they tend to influence her a lot but so far they have been positive influences.
1. Local institutions such as school, church, hospitals, health clinics, social services;
* I would say the local institutions that influence Ruby the most would be her school, and community. Outside of the home, Ruby spends most of her time at school. At school, she spends time with her teachers and peers. We do not live near any hospitals or health clinics so she does not have any influences on in those institutions but every now and then we take walks in our neighborhood and Ruby questions about the church. As a matter of fact, there has been a time where she was curious as to what was inside a church and asked if we were able to go inside. I took her inside and she learned a few things on religion and had a chance to talk to a gentleman inside the church.
1. The larger social setting, including cultural values, economic policies and political processes, the economic resources of the family;
* Because Ruby spends a lot of time with her grandparents, they teach her cultural values all the time. Some of the things she learns are very traditional being that my parents (her grandparents) are very traditional. I think those influences are good on her because I feel like kids in her generation tend to forget and not be reminded of where they came from. With all the political and economic events going on right now, it is hard to say she is not influenced by this. I am still attending college at the moment and with school classes and work hours being cut it not only influences me, but her as well. I explain to her what is going on with the budget cuts and the money situation with California, and she may or may not get it, but I know she has an idea.
1. Historical influences and conditions, including and parent(s) background;
* Our background definitely has an influence on Ruby because we raise her based on what we learned throughout life. It is because of who her parents are that make her who she is, which we hope we are doing a good job.
1. Influences from peers and friends, neighbors, teachers, and role models.
* Ruby definitely has influences at school. She hangs out with a group of girls who seem to be very good friends. They occasionally have play dates and it’s good because we get a sense of how she plays with her friends and how she acts with them. Ruby definitely likes to be the “team leader” when they hang out. But I do notice that for example if the whole group votes on things that she does not agree on, she will join them in on it as well. I also notice her teachers are also her role models. I am very grateful she goes to a good school with good teachers because she looks up to them. When Ruby comes home sometimes she always tells us stories about her teachers and what she learned from her that day. I am also fortunate that our neighborhood actually has a lot of kids. When Ruby and I go on our walks, sometimes we will see the other kids playing outside. Ruby is very social so she has made friends with them and has occasional play dates with them too. Some of our neighbors are more well off than we are, so when she comes home from a play date she mentions things we do not have.

**Styles and strategies used to shape and modify behavior:**

Ruby’s parent’s parenting style is authoritative. She has even mentioned that during the interview. I would also agree that that is her parenting style as well. During the time I spent with Ruby and her parents, I noticed that they set rules for their kids, but they are not over harsh or strict on them. For example, Ruby’s parents allow their kids to watch television after her homework is done. Although Ruby sometimes disagrees or takes longer than she would to do her homework, Ruby’s parents enforce the rule of no television before homework. Ruby’s parents see that she needs a push or simply needs some help on her homework. They help her with it so the homework process is faster. Authoritative parents are often communicative with their children. They enforce their rules but are flexible and understanding with what their children’s opinions are as well (Berger, 2009, pg. 289). Throughout the time Ruby and her parent’s spent together, I also noticed that her parent’s respects her and treats her as if she was an adult. They never portrayed themselves as higher ups, such as authoritarian parents would. They always helped them and guided them in activities or deeds that had to be done. Authoritative parents do not see themselves as authorities or friends such as authoritarian or permissive parents would (Berger, 2009, pg 289). This parenting style influences Ruby in a positive way. Ruby’s parents are very affectionate and they are often involved in a lot of what their children do. Ruby is very attached to her parents and because of her parent’s parenting style, Ruby is very social at school and in her community. She seems to be very independent and has high self-esteem (Berger, 2009, pg. 290).

 Ruby’s parents are more consistent with their guidance than discipline. As authoritative parents, they believe that in raising a child, they need to be a support system to their children. In guiding their children through life, they will need to set themselves as their children’s role model and instruct, reinforce, and give positive feedback to their children (Berns, 2010, pg. 148). Because Ruby’s parents do not want to be passive parents and allow their kids to anything that they want, they are firm with their rules, and stress that there will be consequences. For the hours that I spent with Ruby and her family, Ruby’s parents discipline methods are more likely to be a punishment, to take away privileges, or correction, to require their child to apologize when they did something wrong,” rather than ignoring their behavior. They also do not believe in “time out” (Berns, 2010, pg. 147). Her parents try to guide them more than using punishment as a way of raising their children.

**Cognitive Development**

**Classification**

In doing these experiments with Ruby, her thought process was in the concrete operational stage. In the first experiment of classification, I had Ruby put shape templates into groups. I had three different shapes; squares, rectangles, and hexagons. Each set of shapes, had four different sizes and colors; red, blue, yellow, and green. Before I gave instructions to Ruby, she spread out the shapes on the table. I proceeded to ask her to separate the shapes into groups. She asked, “How many groups?” I replied, “However many you would like.” She continued to classify the shapes into colors. She put all of the reds with the reds, the blues with the blues and so forth. I gathered the shapes together and mixed them up again. I asked Ruby to group them differently this time. This time around, Ruby groups them into the same shapes. This concept of classification shows that Ruby is aware that objects can be placed into group or classes because those groups have characteristics in common (Berger, 2009, pg. 338). For the second set of shapes, circles and rectangles, Ruby arranged the shapes by size. She put the largest circle and rectangle in a group and by each sequence in size, she placed them accordingly. Ruby can visually see that the shapes are not all the same size and as she separated them into groups, she started out with the biggest one and placed it on the side, she looked for the next biggest size and grouped those together as well. This shows that Ruby understands serial order operations in which she can arrange objects in increasing or decreasing order (Pulaski, 1980, pg. 59). In all, Ruby was able to classify these shapes in three ways; by shape, size, and color.

 My next experiment included play dough. I presented two balls of dough of the same size. I asked Ruby if it seems that the two balls have the same amount of dough. She looked very carefully and answered, “Yes.” I took one of the play dough balls and rolled it out into a log shape and set it aside next to the ball. I proceeded to ask her, “Now, which one of these have more dough?” Ruby did not answer me right away but eventually said, “They are the same.” I asked her to explain her reason and she was able to explain, “Just because you roll out the play dough doesn’t mean it has more because it started out the same.” In this process, Ruby was able to understand that although visually the play dough looks longer, it still has the same amount of dough as it started because there were none added (Pulaski, 1980, pg. 56). Ruby was able to show her understanding on reversibility (Berger, 2009, pg. 339).

**Metacognition**

 For this section, the activity I did with Ruby was for her to solve basic word problems. I wrote down a few problems such as, “Laura and Max went to the grocery story. Laura bought three apples, and Max bought five apples. How many apples did they buy all together?” Before Ruby started to solve this problem, I asked her what approach she was going to take into solving this problem. She explained that the question was asking her to figure out how many apples are all together. Ruby then drew out the question by making two stick figures; one of Laura, and one of Max. Under each figure, she drew the amount of apples and counted them after she was done drawing. In conclusion, she successfully determined the amount of apples that were bought by both Laura and Max. In doing this strategy, Ruby was able to track down and visually get a sense of what the words were asking her. She explained, “When I draw the apples, I can count them better.” This way, Ruby’s metacognition skills allowed her to monitor the task and performance. She drew out the picture from a word problem to evaluate it (Berger, 2009, pg. 345).

**Selective Attention**

The selective attention activity Ruby and I conducted also included her mother. Before this activity I told her mother to call out Ruby’s name every so often to try to get her attention while Ruby and I played the classic card game, “Slap Jack.” This game requires both players to keep our eyes focused on the pile of cards as they are presented one by one. Every time a Jack appears, the players are to place their hands on the card to cover the Jack as fast as they could. In the span of the first round which lasted about two minutes, Ruby’s name was called four times. During this round, Ruby was not able to hear her mother call her name. During the second round, Ruby’s name was also called four times, but she answered to the fourth one. Ruby’s focus on the game made it difficult for her to hear her mother call her name. The selective attention was focused on the cards as she ignored her mother’s calls (Berger, 2009, pg. 322).

**Memory Strategy**

 For this activity, I used the basic memory card game. There were five sets of duplicate cards used in this game. Each duplicate card had matching colors. We used white, blue, red, green, and brown. We placed all of the cards faced down as we mixed them up. As ruby picked up the cards, she placed them back but in different spots from where she picked them up. Within the first few tries, she managed to match the colored cards from the memory of where she placed the card. I asked her how she knew so quick that the white card she placed furthest away from her was going to be white. Her reply was, “Because when I see white it reminds me of clouds, so I put the white up there like it’s a picture. Just like how I put the green on the bottom because grass is on the floor, so I put the green on the bottom. I thought it was interesting that Ruby used her imagination of the colors to represent a whole picture. She used those colors in replacement of where objects would be so she knew where to find them when she found the other match.

**Social Cognition and Influence of Ecological Factors based on Ecological Models**

Ruby’s cognitive development has been molded by the ecological factors in her life. The main influence of her development is the most basic structure, the microsystem which is her immediate surroundings with relationship or activities that she does. For example, Ruby comes from a very affectionate and nurturing family. Due to Ruby’s parent’s belief in positive guidance, she has grown to have positive interactions with the people in her surroundings, but when children are exposed to a dysfunctional family, the child can possibly grow to have developmental problems (Berns, 2010, pg. 19). On free days when her mother or father does not have enough time to take her out to the park, they walk around the neighborhood and get familiar with the community. This allows Ruby to learn about the world, outside her home and also allows Ruby to learn about socialization (Berns, 2010, pg. 20). Ruby is quite social when she is outdoors. She befriends easily, and is very talkative. The interlink of her microsystem and mesosytem also has a big influence on her development. Due to the positive relationships of her parents and teachers, family to community, Ruby’s positive behavior continues on at the school and outside the home because she sees the similarity between connections (Berns, 2010, pg. 21). For example, if Ruby grew up being rejected or neglected, Ruby would have had a difficult time developing positive relationship as well as have trouble socializing with friends and peers. In this case for Ruby, it seems to be the opposite.

**Detailed Recommendations**

 In order for Ruby’s cognitive development to progress, her parents need to continue to support and guide her through her life changes, and possible obstacles she may encounter in the future. Ruby’s development is mostly influenced by her immediate surroundings, therefore having her family and school settings be a positive experience will allow her development to be healthy (Berns, 2010, p. 19). It seems as though her parents understand that being a support system rather than an authority figure will also be a positive influence in her life.

**Emotional and Social Development**

Aggressive vs. Pro-social Behavior

 Ruby’s developmental interpretations of being aggressive versus pro-social behavior do not come off as an aggressive child. Due to the parenting style, Ruby’s parents never used fear or aggression as an option for discipline. Ruby’s parents also stated they did not grow up as aggressors either. Ruby’s community and school, which she spends most of her time is in a “good” area. Ruby’s parents also monitor what she sees on the television so that she is not exposed to violence and crime. Her parents use positive reinforcement, therefore, they give her attention when she does a good deed, rather than give her attention when she does something unpleasant (Berns, 2010, pg. 451). Her parents encourage pro-social behavior by positive reinforcement.

**Moral Development**

Ruby’s parents have made a big impact in her development on morals and values. During the interview, Ruby’s mother stressed that she wanted to raise Ruby to do the right things in life. Although Ruby may be young, her parents communicate on morals all the time so that when she grows up she will know that that is what her parents were referring to. Of my interpretations on Ruby’s actions, I noticed she wants approval from her parents, therefore at times, she may do things to get reassurance of acceptance. Ruby presents Kohlberg’s three level of moral reasoning, conventional moral reasoning, at stage three. In this stage, Ruby is looking for social acceptance from her parents. She believes having good behavior and doing good deeds will please other people (Berger, 2009, pg. 400).

**Child’s rating of stressfulness of life events**

Due to the low level of mobility, Ruby’s life events has not dramatically caused any stress on her. Ruby has never moved, has never had any pets, or lost a family member so she has not accumulated much stress (Berger, 2009, pg. 377). Although Ruby’s parents are not married, they live together, and provide to her as good role models.

**Gender Awareness and Distinctive Pattern in Play**

Ruby has the concept down of gender awareness. She also learned this by having a younger brother whom she takes care of alongside her parents and grandparents. In terms of gender-related play, Ruby sees at home that her mother cooks and cleans while her father does the heavy maintenance duties such as house work, or yard work. When her mother is out getting her nails done, Ruby often follows her and gets them done as well. Through this, Ruby learns socially that it is appropriate gender behavior to desire a day at the spa (Berns, 2010, pg. 44). Her mother never takes her younger brother because she was told, “boys do not get their nails done.” While Ruby does some role playing at home, she plays the role of being a mother and does deeds she sees her mother do; wash dishes, cooks, and cleans the doll house. It seems as though Ruby has socially accepted that females are to do house work, while males do the heavy duty work.

**Emotional and Social development based on Ecological Model**

Due to Ruby’s positive and supportive ecological systems, she has been able to have positive emotional and social developments. Ruby’s parents have tried to expose the world in a positive way in all factors in her life. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model explains that child’s development is guided by the biological model of human development (Berns, 2010, p. 17). It is important that Ruby continues to have support from her family, school and community because if she does well in one setting such as at home, her development will also reflect onto her school work and enhance her academics (Berns, 2010, p. 21). Therefore, due to my interpretations, Ruby is able to receive guidance through her family so it allows her to be confident in her school work.

**Detailed recommendations**

While Ruby continues to grow, it is important that she gets the emotional support and guidance from her parents. During this time in her childhood, she will begin to have more opportunities for increased interactions with peers and friends. By helping encouraging Ruby, she will learn to build self-esteem to increase her emotional development (Berns, 2010, p. 274). To have Ruby progress in emotional and social development, her parents need to continue to communicate with her. They need to set good modeling behavior because children act out what they see (Berger, 2009, p. 293). Her parents also encourage Ruby to help others or display acts of kindness without having a reason for self-benefit so that she will learn about pro-social behavior, which will allow Ruby to have a healthy development emotionally and socially (Berger, 2009, p. 294).

**References**

Berger, K.S., 2009. The Developing Person Through Childhood and Adolescence. New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Berns, R.M., 2010. Child, Family, School, and Community: Socialization and Support. California: Wadsworth Publishing.

Pulaski, M.A., 1980. Understanding Piaget: An Introduction to Children’s Cognitive Development. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers.

**Activity Log**

**Activity One**

- March 10, 2012

- 12:00pm – 1:00 pm

- Ruby’s home

- Classification of shapes: Ruby had fun with this experiment because the shapes with colorful, and of different sizes. She did not see this as an experiment but more so a game.

**Activity Two**

- March 17, 2012

- 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

- Ruby’s home

- Metacognition: Word Problems: Ruby’s response to this in the beginning was that she did not want to do it. She explained the words were a little difficult, but I helped her along with reading and she eventually enjoyed it.

**Activity Three**

- March 24, 2012

- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

- Ruby’s home

- Play dough: Ruby’s response to this activity was a positive one. She enjoyed this the best because she actually was able to make the play dough with me, so she also learned something new.

**Activity Four**

-March 31, 2012

- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

- Ruby’s home

- Selective Attention: Slap Jack. Ruby has played this game before so she knew the rules and was eager to play. She did not hear her mother calling her during the first round, but was able to catch her name during the last time.

**Activity Five**

- April 6, 2012

- 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

- Ruby’s Home

- Memory Strategy: In completing this game, Ruby had to match 5 sets of duplicate cards according to the color of the card. She played this game very well, and used realistic objects to determine where to find the card.