Infant Observation

By

Becky Fang

**Name, Age, and Settings**

For the infant observation, I observed Jimmy, an eleven-month-old male at his home.    Jimmy's home was a small one-story house.  For the majority of the observation, we spent our time in the living room, bedroom, and kitchen.  Upon entering their house, I noticed the living room and kitchen area were connected.  I have not seen Jimmy in a long time, so he was curious and shy when he saw me.  It was about 9:00am and Jimmy was being fed breakfast on a high chair in the kitchen.  I was greeted by his mother, with excitement.  I slowly walked over to Jimmy and introduced myself again, knowing he probably did not recognize me from when I met him the first time.  I said, "Hi, Jimmy.  Remember me?"  His mom added, "It's Auntie Becky.  She's here to play with us today, ok?"  Jimmy starred back and forth between his mother and I while smiling and continued eating.  He was trying to feed himself the baby cereal with a spoon but found it very fun that he had the food all over his hands instead.

**Relationship Between Caregiver and Infant**

The relationship between Jimmy and his mother was a loving one.  Although while Jimmy showed attachment to both the parents, I can sense that he preferred his father's attention more as I observed.  Five minutes before Jimmy's dad came home, his mother received a phone call from him, asking her to help him open the front door.  While they were conversing, Jimmy stared at his mom talking on the phone.  He grabbed a toy that had a shape like a telephone and put it by his ear.  At Jimmy's age, he is more likely to imitate actions as he sees them occur, especially if it is the first time he is seeing it (Fogel, 2009, p 381).  His cognitive development skills allow him to the link between an object and the event.

  When Jimmy's father came home, Jimmy showed much excitement and joy.  Jimmy's mother carried him over to his father while he was laughing and screaming for his father, "Baba!"  Jimmy received hugs and kisses and was put down on the floor.  While Jimmy's father walked away to put the groceries down, Jimmy followed him everywhere, even tugging at his pants from time to time. During diaper change, both Jimmy's mother and father helped change him on the bed.  Jimmy was uncomfortable due to a diaper rash he had, and tried to scratch the rash area.  While his father was changing him, his mother held his hands and tried to distract him by talking to him, and making cooing sounds.  Jimmy kicked his legs and swung his arms around while he was being changed.  It was apparent that Jimmy was feeling discomfort, so his parent's changed him as quickly as possible while trying to call him down.  His parent's showed Jimmy they understood he was not comfortable so they kept assuring him it was almost done.

Signs of physical and motor development I observed with Jimmy was when Jimmy's father put the groceries bags on the floor.  Jimmy was curious to see what was in the bag so he reached his hands in while peeking through the top.  Jimmy's father asked if he wanted to help him put away the groceries by showing him the fruits in the bag.  Jimmy quickly reached up and grabbed the fruit.  The communication between father and son was very educational.  Jimmy's father would say the name of the fruit, the color, and ask if it was either sweet or sour.  Although Jimmy has not developed much language skills yet, he managed to babble his answers to his dad.  For example, when Jimmy's father handed him some grapes, his father said, "These are grapes. Are grapes sweet, Jimmy?"  Jimmy laughed and babbled the word, "yeah" and then proceeded to throw the bags of grapes onto the lower level of the refrigerator.  This coordinated joint attention will increase Jimmy's skills in language development because with emphasis on the words and familiarity of the object, Jimmy will be able to recognize the object as he hears the word (Fogel, 2009, p 438).  Jimmy's physical motor development impressed me as I spent more time observing him.  For an eleven month old, he seemed to be very independent.  He was very active and walked everywhere without support.  At times, he tried running but was only successful in a few steps.

**Evidence of Attachment**

The observation was done on a weekend while both Jimmy's parents were home, but the first few hours, his mother was home watching him, while his father went out to run errands.  There was a moment when Jimmy and his mother were watching television and she got up to get water.  Jimmy called for her to come back but he did not try to chase after her.  He did this a few times as she also got up to get milk.  As soon as his mother got up, Jimmy would fuss and get her to stay but in a gentle voice, his mother would calm him down by saying, "I'm going to get you milk. Do you want to drink milk?"  Jimmy understood the word "milk" so he continued to play with his toys while she prepared it.  While his mother was walking back from the kitchen, he noticed she was coming so he quickly stood up and walked over to her for comfort upon arrival.  This showed Jimmy's secure attachment behavior because when his mother walked away, he showed frustration in not wanting her to leave, but when she came back he was happy to see her, and soon continued to play independently (Fogel, 2009, p 407).

I found observing Jimmy while he was alone with his toys quite interesting.  The look on his face while he was playing was very focused.  Jimmy took, what seemed to be his favorite toy, around everywhere.  It was a stuffed animal that was dressed up as a fire fighter.  The hat on the toy can be taken off and put back on.  Jimmy had fun experimenting with the hat by taking it off. According to Piaget, Jimmy presented the sensorimotor development stage, coordination of secondary circular reaction, by exploring the position of where the hat belonged (Fogel, 2009, p. 59).   He tried putting the hat on the stuff animal’s arm that fell off quickly, then proceeded to put the hat on the shoulder and got the same result.  Jimmy eventually reached his goal but putting the hat on the animal’s head and showed a sign of fulfillment as he laughed when the hat stayed on the head.

Toddler Observation

By

Becky Fang

**What are the major means by which the toddler and parent interact with each other?**

The major means of toddler and parent interaction is communication. Throughout the shopping experience, the toddler, Marvin, voices his feelings and desires. For the majority of the experience, the mother, Briana, only ignored Marvin’s call once. Seems as though in each different food department, Briana tells Marvin which type of food it is and usually Marvin would repeat what Briana says. At this age, Marvin’s language development increases quite rapidly, however, he may not be able to pronounce words fully such as the word “orange” or “milk” throughout the experience (Fogel, 2009, p. 486). When Marvin was unable to pronounce the word, “orange,” Briana did not tell him it was pronounced wrong. She simply repeated the word correctly. By doing so, Marvin will not be discouraged to say the word, rather he will hear it and will help promote his speech development. (Fogel, 2009, p. 490). Children who are about Marvin’s age will notice the difference in words that are mispronounced (Fogel, 2009, p. 491).

As Briana pointed out the cereal box while politely asking Marvin to help her get it, Marvin presents the understanding of “Yes” and “No” as he picked out the wrong box during his first attempt. Pointing out the object that is being requested will allow Marvin a greater opportunity to learn the word. Between seeing the object and hearing the word, it helps Marvin realize the connection with the word and object, thus, children are more likely to learn their vocabulary this way (Fogel, 2009, p. 491).

Distraction plays a big role while trying to get Marvin’s attention and trying to discipline him. Briana knew that there would be a possibility that Marvin may need some distractions to make their shopping trip smoother, therefore, she brought a toy from home with him. A form of distraction that Briana used were her own emotions while pointing out bright objects and handing him new ones when he got fussy. The first distraction was the apple when he wanted to get yogurt. As Marvin called out for yogurt, his mother explained they had some at home, but Marvin did not understand that. She took a shiny red and green apple out of her cart and showed Marvin how exciting it was that the colors were mixed together. “Wow, Marvin! Look at all these pretty colors! What color is there? Red and green? Which one is the red one? Which one is the green one?” Briana pointed out the colors on the apple as she emphasized the words as well as asked questions, caught the attention of Marvin. Having a positive and calm tone allows the child to emotionally control his feelings as well. For example, if Briana had actually yelled at Marvin and said, “No! You cannot have that!” while raising her voice, it may send a shocking emotion to Marvin, which may lead him to cry (Fogel, 2009, p. 492). During check out, Marvin did not want to be in the shopping cart because he wanted to walk on his own. A form of positive communication Briana presented was using a balloon as a distraction. Her laughter and interest in the bright balloon allowed Marvin transition his emotions from being fussy to interested and positive as well (Fogel, 2009, pg. 524).

**Does the parent or the toddler make more compromises? What effect does compromising seem to have on subsequent interchanges?**

During this shopping experience, there was not much compromising made for either the toddler or the parent. The closes incident where Briana had to make a compromise was when Marvin wanted to be let down on the floor. Marvin’s motor development, at approximately two years old, know how to walk and is slowly learning to run (Sands, 2012, p. 27). Grocery stores are quite hectic, therefore, in order for Briana to have Marvin follow her, she asked him, “You want to come down? If you come down and walk with me, you have to help me get groceries, ok?” Marvin nodded his head, and said “K.” In making this compromise, Marvin was able to help get some groceries and not run around the store. Compromising also let Marvin know he was to help his mother do something if he was let down on the floor. There were times when he did walk off, but his mother kept a close eye and said, “Hey Marvin, you are supposed to help me, can you come here, please?” Marvin would then come back and help with picking up some groceries.

**Are there any inconsistencies in either the way the toddler acted or the way the parent acted?**

For the majority of the shopping trip, both Briana and Marvin were consistent with the way they acted. From the beginning of the observation, it seemed as though all Briana wanted to do was to keep Marvin occupied so that he would not run around the store or make a big fuss. Throughout the trip, she kept communication strong because she knew if she gave him the attention, he would be more focused on what they were doing instead of going off on his own. Briana also took the opportunity during this trip to teach Marvin by verbally explaining and repeating words. By allowing interacting with Marvin through communication and exposure to different types of objects, his developmental skills will positively increase and play a role in later intelligence (Fogel, 2009, p. 596).

During check out, as Briana and the cashier are talking, Marvin wanted her attention and to get out of the cart. Briana ignored him until she was done with the transaction. During this phase in Marvin’s social development, he does not understand that she is busy but he still wants her attention and is more demanding as well (Fogel, 2009, p. 498). During this time, Briana should have simply explained in a calm manner that she is talking to the cashier, and after that was done, they would go home. Distraction seems to help divert the attention on one emotion to another, therefore, instead of allowing to Marvin to fuss, Briana should have gave him his toy from home as a comfort tool, as well as tell him they are going home as soon as they were done with the transaction. In that moment of stress he was feeling, he could have had something to rely on while his mother was busy, in which would also help with his emotional development; to help cope or control his feelings (Fogel, 2009, p. 481).

**References**

Fogel, A. (2009). *Infancy: Infant, Family, and Society*. Cornwall-pn-Hudson, NY, Sloan Publishing

Sands, B.L. (2012). CFS 323 Infant/Toddler Development Course Guide (p. 27). San Francisco, CA.