

Jeremy M. George
CNS 748 DG FA 14
Assignment 2.2 - My Virtual Child Questionnaire: Early Childhood
10/22.2014

3 years

1. Describe the development of your child's language and cognitive skills and discuss how these might be affecting his or her interactions with you & your responses.

- Cognitively, Tobias is performing in an average way with regard to quantitative relationships, and his understanding of concepts such as “more or less,” and “longer and shorter.” He is growing in his ability to classify objects. This indicates an increased ability to reason logically. This increasing ability will help him communicate more accurately, as well as in his ability to understand and make sense of his world.
- He is also scoring average in “Language comprehension and production.” This simply means he is able to comprehend situations, describing them accurately, and even adding details that are of particular interest. This will help him in “make believe play,” which will in turn help him develop greater sophistication in his thinking and reasoning abilities. This, also, will help him make sense of his experiences, and his ability to describe them in a meaningful way.
- Finally, Tobias is performing above average with regard to “copying designs, solving picture problems and building block towers to match” which indicates his ability to follow directions is improving.
- Tobias is off to a great start in his life. He is demonstrating greater self confidence in new situations, and even exhibiting leadership in play with his friends. He is developing friendships. We will simply encourage, praise and promote the cognitive gains he has made, while consistently building upon and challenging him beyond what he has been able to attain through direct speaking, reading, imaginative play, and active physical play. Where he lacks the ability to solve problems we will *scaffold* for Tobias, offering assistance where needed. Outside of the home we will be encouraging him to pursue his new found friendships by providing opportunities for play dates.

2. How well is your child adapting to social situations in the home and outside the home? Does your child have any behavior or emotional problems at this point? Why do you think these problems are occurring and what are you doing about them? Refer to the text or lecture as needed.

- Tobias has had to adapt to much lately, including the birth of a new baby sister. He is no longer the only child to which we give our attention. He must share our attention with another. He is very engaging with Maybe Funke George, but is a little more agitated and whiny lately. He also has thrown some temper tantrums when not getting what he wants. This is normal and to be expected. We are going to try and include Tobias as much as possible in the care of his little sister, and give him some focused attention alone when possible, always assuring him of our love.

- Tobias has also started to lie. This demonstrates he is developing a “theory of mind.” This is a discipline problem nonetheless. We will no doubt catch him in lies in the future, and when this occurs, our job is to point out the inconsistency, and discipline him accordingly by using the “*time-out*” strategy. Reinforcement, reward and praise will be the natural consequence of telling the truth, and removal of freedom for a reasonable amount of time will be the consequence for telling a lie. It is our hope that this will teach Tobias that telling the truth builds trust, while lying tears it down. This concept could be explained and demonstrated clearly in the context of building blocks with which he loves to play.

4 years

1. How would you characterize your parenting style (e.g., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or variations or combinations of these styles)? How have your specific parenting techniques changed since infancy? In what ways do you think your parenting style, or any other aspect of your parenting, has been influenced by your cultural background or other experiences?

- I would characterize my parenting style as authoritative. At times I think we were slightly permissive with regard to his interaction with unfamiliar others. We provided a great deal of warmth, and attempted to establish clear, and fair expectations. We also established appropriate consequences for misbehavior. Of course this was all in the context of a loving, trusting relationship. We actively encouraged appropriate autonomy as well.
- Our parenting style hasn’t changed much since infancy. We have adjusted strategy to compensate for a real need, but I would say that our parenting style has been consistent. A specific example of an adjustment in strategy was our commitment to become more proactive in encouraging Tobias toward interacting with unfamiliar others, both adult and children, rather than allowing Him to decide when he was going to “warm up.”
- I would say that we have built into Tobias a strong sense of self confidence which is consistent with our value of *individualism*. We want Tobias to love others and to treat them well, but also to love and like himself as a distinct person from others. I think this value is evident in his cognitive achievement, his relationships and even in his play.

2. How would you characterize your child's personality? Would you say that your child is primarily over-controlled, under-controlled or resilient? Support your argument. Recall that the Virtual Child's behavior at age 3 and 4 is designed to resemble one of three personality types: 1) Over-controlled (correlates to Slow-To-Warm-Up), 2) Under-controlled (correlates to Difficult), and 3) Resilient (correlates to Easy). The personality types combine some of the temperamental traits with which you are already familiar. The over-controlled category refers to a child who is cooperative and follows the rules, but is shy in social situations and anxious and clingy under pressure. The under-controlled category refers to a child who is uncooperative or even aggressive, does not follow the rules, may or may not be shy in social

situations, and has a tendency to become distracted and overly emotional, particularly when under stress. The resilient category refers to a child who is cooperative and follows the rules, is friendly, non-aggressive and outgoing, able to focus on tasks without being too distracted, has good regulation of his or her emotions, and is adaptable to new situations.

- I would say that Tobias exhibits a strong sense of *resilience*. I believe this for several reasons. First, he has adjusted well to important life altering realities, most significantly the birth of his new sister. He has experienced a wide variety of stressors, such as entering a new pre-school, a new play group, witnessing an argument between my partner and I, falling in a pool, as well as being lost in a store. He has exhibited normal adjustment patterns to these events, and exhibited appropriate emotional responses. His fear, worry, anxiety and concern have not lingered as he has been able to retreat to a warm, loving, and supportive family environment.
- Second, Tobias has enjoyed firm boundaries that are set for his protection and benefit. He has wandered outside of those boundaries and discovered what the consequences will be, and can depend that the results will be the same if he chooses to do so again. He has not been harshly treated and can trust that any discipline he faces is for his benefit and meant for his good. As a result, he focuses on tasks well, and follows directions consistently.
- Third Tobias is extremely social. This not how he began. Initially, Tobias was “slow to warm up,” to unfamiliar people. He no longer shows this tendency, getting along with both children and adults, and having the ability to make new friends quickly in new social settings. Tobias is not clingy, but curious about his environment and eager to explore it, at times needing to be reigned in.
- Finally, Tobias is also able to control or self regulate his emotions. He can be whiny at times and demonstrate jealousy toward his sister. These emotions are very normal responses in these kind of circumstances, and quickly abate when involved in the care of his sister and given an appropriate amount of attention to compensate for the deficit he feels. He rarely becomes tense in social settings, but remains pleasant most of the time.

Questions that go with either 3 years or 4 years, or both

- 3. How might your child's development have been different if s/he was raised by people with a different socioeconomic, ethnic or cultural background? Base your answer on specific evidence of SES/cultural differences from the textbook and class discussions. Note, if your cultural background differs from the predominant culture in the U.S., how might you have raised the child differently or made different decisions based on your own culture (e.g., being stricter or more lenient, emphasis on assertive/independent vs. cooperative behavior, emphasis on family relationships vs. relationships outside the family).**
- 15% of Americans are affected by poverty. That represents about 46 million citizens of this country. In a setting like this, “joblessness, a high divorce rate, a lower remarriage rate, widowhood and inadequate government programs are responsible for these disheartening

statistics.” (Berk, p. 62) If Tobias had been raised in poverty, the stresses that result from these issues on families could have changed outcomes for Tobias. Issues like attachment, cognitive and language development all could have been directly affected. In *Erikson’s* stages, the important task of resolving the conflict between *basic trust vs. mistrust* would more than likely been interrupted, as well as that of *autonomy vs. shame and guilt*.

- Culturally, things could have been different for Tobias as well. If Tobias had been raised, for example, by a family in western Europe, he may have developed more of a “we” mentality vs. a “me” mentality. This is based on the fact that western European countries have a strong sense of community, and *collectivism*, (Berk, p. 65), The culture in the US is more *individualistic*. This no doubt has affected the way my partner and I have parented Tobias, and has no doubt affected his development in that context.