

Case Study: Keegan

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**Introduction:**

Keegan is a four year old boy and is one of the youngest in his class having just turned four in January. In appearance he is smaller than the rest of his classmates, and he knows this and it has seemed to bother him from time to time. He lives with both of his parents, and his mother actually works at the daycare center he attends. He has two siblings a brother in sixth grade and a sister in second grade. He has a pet dog, which he has not talked much about (Interview). He is a perfectionist already at this young age, when cutting out shapes his tend to be perfectly cut on the lines and smooth unlike some other children his age. He has a difficult time realizing his placement, for example when the teacher dismisses a table by the people sitting at it, he only moves when it is him or the person sitting next to him. He does not move when it is the person sitting across from him. He has a difficult time finishing patterns also, he can start them well but at the end he had mixed up the pattern, whether this was because of boredom has yet to be discovered. He does not like to be confused! He wants to know what is going on at all times and why we are doing it.

**Physical Developments**

Keegan's physical development seems to be normal with the exception of his size. His motor skills appear to all be up to speed. The average child begins crawling between 8-10 months, and it is believed that Keegan qualifies as an average child (Feldman, 143). By believing this one is led to believe that he began walking with out assistance by the time he was around one year old (Feldman, 143).

His fine motor skills are impressive, he can use scissors with remarkable precession. During a cutting exercise, in which they were cutting out puzzle pieces and then gluing them on a different piece of paper in the correct order, he was the last one done but his pieces were cut

out with near perfection. However, his writing skills are behind, he has yet to learn how to write his own name, or make his letters correctly; often they are just circles that he believes to be his name. This puts him into the category of the pre-writing stage of emergent literacy (Tompkins, 126). He has asked assistance in tying his shoe, which has led to the belief that he does not know how or has yet to master this fine motor skill.

His current gross motor skills seem to be developed to be average for his age. He can hop, jump and run as well as walk without much trouble. When he was read a book about ducks and how they wandered out to play, he was asked to waddle, and he said he could not do it. Even after being shown how to waddle he insisted on not doing it, so the subject was dropped. During physical activity time he did well with handling the ball and moving it in the same direction that the leader did, this was during sit and stretch time using the ball to move in different directions.

### **Cognitive Developments**

Keegan's cognitive development is on track for his age, but in his class he seems to be slow. He's the youngest in his class by far. Research shows that most children begin talking around ten to fourteen months (Feldman, 187) and sentences begin around eighteen months (Feldman, 189). Keegan has mastered most of the words he needs to communicate, but there are still a few that he struggles to get across and make known the meaning of what he wants.

He is able to identify pictures and a few letters. He does have trouble with many letters insisting that they are what they are not. An example of this would be the letter C and the letter G. Yes, it is a common mistake, but even when they are placed side by side he does not see the difference. He can work on patterns for awhile then at the end of the pattern he will mess up,

whether this is because he is tired of the redundant activity or because he forgets the actual pattern it is not known.

He is aware of who is around him but has trouble relating to himself to the person across the table. If the teacher were to dismiss the table by naming him or the person sitting beside him he would know that it was his turn to get up. If the teacher were to dismiss the table by naming one of the people sitting across the table he has a hard time realizing that he has been dismissed.

### **Emotional/Social Developments**

Keegan's emotional and social development from what can be told by simple observations was nurtured through out the critical periods prior in his life. He tends to be a fairly happy child, but still uses a lot of social referencing to make it through the day. Social referencing is looking to others to see how he should be feeling or acting (Feldman, 204). In the classroom he tends to strive for attention. There is another boy in the class that gets much of the teacher's attention for misbehaving and sometimes Keegan begins copying the behavior. Feldman calls this "modeling" (Feldman, 308). Feldman uses this term as a positive thing, but it can easily be thought of children modeling negative behaviors of those around them, especially if those negative behaviors are rewarded with attention.

Keegan is not an aggressive child at all. Although after not observing him for three weeks he was not thrilled with the idea of working again with his tutor, but he quickly got over it. Thus, he was showing that he had the ability to control his emotions, also known as emotional self-regulation (Feldman, 310). He was able to have a fun time the first day his tutor was there and then it appeared that he enjoyed the second day more.

Keegan's play style is still somewhat of a functional play, he seems to be doing things just for the sake of doing them (Feldman, 300). Although, a few times he has shown that he had

a goal in mind when he was playing. One example of this he was placing pegs in to a board but he was only using two colors, purple and yellow, he did not use any of the other colors. His favorite types of play appear to be parallel, no interaction, and associative play, few interactions but not playing together (Feldman, 301).

Keegan has yet to master social skills that would make him a more social child. He interacts with his classmates but not as much as they interact with each other he tends to be the one off playing by himself, while the other kids are playing together. Keegan will grow into playing with others, but he has not yet reached that stage. It would be interesting to see how far he will come by the end of the next three weeks.

### **Reflections**

I have had experience writing case studies before but this has helped me focus more on the development of the three areas of development, physical, cognitive, and emotional stages. Based on what I have observed Keegan is normal in all areas of development except physical development. All of his physical skills are there and are normal; his size is what is below normal. By writing this case study I have learned to detect the small developments and what is “normal” development. This will be beneficial in my career as a teacher because I will know how to observe my students to see if they are below “normal” in any of the three stages. I will also refer to the stages when I have my own kids, some day of in the future.

**Works Sited**

Feldman, Robert S. Child Development 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004

See, Jenny. Personal interview, 7 March 2005.

Tompkins, Gail E. Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2004