



General Certificate of Education

Health and Social Care 8621/8623

HC04 Child Development

Report on the Examination

2008 examination – June series

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Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

HC04 Child Development Principal Examiner's Report

General comments:

In this series, candidates generally showed a better understanding of some of the concepts that had caused difficulties in past series, such as 'agents of socialisation' and 'maturation'.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates scored well on this question, and marks of 12 or over were common.

(a) and (b) Candidates seemed to find it quite easy to pick out the gross motor and fine motor milestones, and to rank them in order of appearance. The most common error was to mistake the order of appearance.

(c) Most candidates were able to name at least two types of play equipment useful for gross motor development. The most frequent errors were to suggest equipment more suitable for fine motor development, and to describe play activities rather than equipment.

Question 2

(a)(i) Almost all candidates correctly identified the example of anti-social behaviour given in the scenario.

(a)(ii) Many candidates identified turn-taking and helping as pro-social behaviours, while some mistakenly thought that telling a child off, or simply playing hopscotch, were examples.

(a)(iii) Most candidates named the two agents of socialisation in the scenario. Common mistakes were to name an agent not represented in the scenario (usually a parent) or to describe behaviours instead of answering the question.

(b) Some candidates suggested modelling and reinforcement as ways of helping children to develop pro-social behaviour, although answers were often rather vague. Some candidates gave answers in terms of the inhibition of anti-social behaviours (usually by punishment of wrongdoing). This is not the same as the development of pro-social behaviours. Some of these candidates seemed to overvalue punishment as a means of developing behaviour.

(c) Many candidates were able to suggest risks associated with a paddling pool installed in a park – commonly drowning and injuries resulting from falls. Most also suggested at least one appropriate precaution (almost always supervision). A common error was to fail to specify a risk, for example by saying only that the water might be dirty or the pool crowded.

Question 3

This was found to be the most difficult question.

(a) Most candidates gained at least 1 mark in each section of this question (about growth relative to a mean), though full-mark answers were rare. One common error was simply to

restate the table data in words, rather than drawing conclusions. Another error was to compare the two girls, rather than to assess the development of each one relative to the mean.

(b) Most candidates showed understanding of biological factors that might lead to individual differences in growth. Valid answers related to genetics/maturation, disease and nutrition were frequently given, although explanation was often lacking.

(c)(i) Longitudinal study design is evidently not well understood. Few candidates stated that the same participants were studied on several occasions. Most suggested that longitudinal meant 'over a long time', which might be true of some studies, but is not the essential feature of this design.

(c)(i) Most candidates suggested an appropriate measure of growth – usually weight. Note that body mass index (though very rarely given as an answer) is not itself a measure, but a function calculated from two direct measures.

Question 4

(a)(i) A large minority of candidates gave a clear and accurate definition of conservation. Relatively few tried to answer by saying it was 'when a child can conserve'.

(a)(ii) There were many accurate descriptions of conservation tests – most commonly of liquid volume. Weaker answers tended to omit the fact that the two beakers in the initial state were identical (in size and shape), or to suggest that only different shaped containers were used. There were also quite a lot of inadequate versions of the conservation question, such as 'Are these beakers the same?' (which fails to mention the liquid), or, "Which of these beakers has the most in?" (which is a leading question).

Few candidates made the mistake of describing a test for something other than conservation.

(a)(ii) Most candidates gave a plausible age for the achievement of conservation, although there was a significant number of answers under 2 years.

(b)(i) Most candidates understood that nature (in the context of child development) refers to genetics and maturation, though there were some who equated it with the environment.

(b)(ii) Some candidates stated clearly that nurture meant the influence of environmental factors, especially parental behaviour. Some also related this to some kinds of cognitive development, such as counting, shape recognition or language development. However, most candidates seemed quite unsure about cognitive development. The most common play situations referred to related to social rather than cognitive development.

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