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## Teaching social competence

Brenda Dewart

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Teaching Social Competence

A Thesis Submitted to the

University Honors Program

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements of the Baccalaureate Degree

With Upper Division Honors

Department of Family and Consumer Nutrition Sciences

By

Brenda Dewart

DeKalb, Illinois

May 10, 2003

**University Honors Program**

Capstone Approval Page

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Teaching Social Competence  
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HONORS THESIS ABSTRACT  
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## HONORS THESIS ABSTRACT

Increasing children's social interactions among peers can be accomplished with the use of intervention. The purpose of this thesis was to find out if social competence is a skill that can be taught to preschool-aged children. The hypothesis stated that the use of a PALS Center in a preschool classroom would promote peer interaction among the children. In order to track the proposed improvement of peer relationships, one child's development within and outside of a PALS Center was tracked. Due to time constraints the thesis was not able to be setup as a true PALS Center, though the same concepts were used.

The intervention strategy used, a PALS Center, is an area setup in a classroom to promote positive peer interaction. Toys and materials in the PALS Center are limited in number and limited to activities that will support children's cooperative play skills. Adult's roles are to prompt and reinforce social skills when necessary.

The type of documentation is on file as thesis materials in the form of film production. A checklist for preschool social relationships called, High/Scope Child Observation Record for Ages 2.5-6, was used to record the subject's progress. Running records for observations and reactions to the interventions are on file as thesis material in the form of written documents.

I found that the subject did learn to socially engage with one particular peer in the PALS Center. The subject did not generalize the skills learned in the PALS Center from child to child when interacting in the PALS Center. However, the subject did increase his peer interaction outside of the PALS Center by 42 percent. It is important to

professionals working with children to know and understand that children's social competence can be increased by the use of an intervention strategy.

Social development is a significant area of development during the preschool years. It is during this time that children begin to move from egocentricity to social interactions with others (Worham, 2001). When children interact in various environments, they begin to develop and expand their range of social skills. Therefore, when a child is able to use his or her social abilities they begin to influence others and in turn are influenced by them. The attainment of social and emotional competence is important to young children's social success. This is due to the fact that social and emotional competence is central to a child's ability to interact and form relationships with others. Subsequently, during the preschool years, managing and maintaining positive engagements with peers are key developmental tasks.

Children are social individuals from the moment they are born. How well children make judgments about how to achieve personal goals through social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships with others over time and across situations is a measurement of social competence (Kostelnik, Stein, Whiren, and Soderman, 1998). According to Kostelnik, Stein, Whiren, and Soderman (1998, p. 1), "it is through social interactions that children gain the knowledge of who they are and what they can do. They learn about human relationships, develop interpersonal skills, and come to understand the rules and values of the society in which they live." Therefore, it is during the preschool years that children can begin to develop the social foundation upon which they build for the rest of their lives. Behaviors that are related to social competence include giving and receiving emotional support, social awareness, processing information accurately, communicating, problem solving, and self-monitoring (Kostelnik,

Stein, Whiren, and Soderman, 1998). Other skills include entering a peer play group, extending play activities, and developing a preference for a particular peer that is reciprocated by that peer (Bailey and Wolery, 1992).

Many researchers have defined social skills in various ways. A definition of social competence suggested by Bailey and Wolery (1992, p. 258) is, "the ability of young children to successfully and appropriately select and carry out their interpersonal goals." This definition includes two important elements relating to social competence, which include a child's ability to influence a peer's social behavior and to perform that behavior in an appropriate way given the situation.

No one aspect of development occurs independently of the others. Social skills are influenced by other developmental domains and involve prerequisite skills from those other domains in order to develop. Particularly these skills include language, memory, cognition, self-esteem and physical development. These skills shape the manner in which children approach others, how they adapt to social situations, and how they feel about their encounters with their peers. The lack of these skills can affect a child's ability to further develop their social competence. Therefore, it is of great importance to provide children with intervention on a wide range to enhance social skills. Bailey and Wolery (1992, p.258) indicate that, "social competence is important for several reasons ... first, all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are social beings in a social world. Their actions, lack of actions, and their patterns of responding influence the individual-family members, professional, and peer's-around them. They, in turn are influenced by the social behavior of the individuals in their environments. Second, social skills and the ability to interact

appropriately and adaptively in social situations are critical to how infants and young children are perceived, the enjoyment other derive from them, the reciprocal friendships that develop, where they receive their education, and how they are included in the flow of community life." As a result early intervention curricula needs to encourage social competence.

The attainment of social competence is of great importance to young children. That is why intervention efforts should focus on teaching children those skills needed for successful social interactions. Bailey and Wolery (1992, p. 272) attribute three rationales for focusing on child-child interaction skills. They consist of the fact that, "peer interaction and relationships are life-long skills that are important for adequate adjustment and development ... simple contact with peers does not necessarily result in acquisition and use of appropriate and effective social skill ... peer interactions are a useful context for learning other skills." Chandler (personal communication, 2002) also suggests five reasons why professionals should be concerned about the attainment of social skills in young children. She brings to mind that social skills are often the least developed skill in children, that social deficits increase with age, that the prevalence of social deficits is greater for individuals with disabilities, that the influence of social skills is life long, and that social skills can be promoted and taught. Social competence affects not only children but also adults, in that if a child does not learn how to become an active social being in the early years, their social competence will be affected later on in life.

The benefits of becoming a socially competent being according to Kostelnik, Stein, Whiren, and Soderman (1998, p. 2) are that, "socially competent children are

happier than their less competent peers. They are more successful in their interactions with others, more popular, and more satisfied with life. In addition, there is evidence that children's social relations greatly influence their academic achievement." To possess social skills in turn means to have self-esteem.

The rationale for teaching social competence is to give children the experience needed to interact with others. This direct experience allows a child the opportunity to obtain information on which behaviors to maintain, which behaviors to avoid, and which behaviors to try instead at their next social interaction. Children that have access to peer interactions have the chance to practice their developing social skills. These children also obtain immediate gratification that stems from a positive social interaction. It is the rewards and costs of these interactions that will encourage a child to become a social being. However, professionals must make sure that children are experiencing more rewards than cost in peer relationships. If a child tends to have more costly peer relationships in which rejection, avoidance, or misinterpretation occurs, those children will not become as socially competent as the children that experience acceptance, positive feedback, and encouragement..

Social learning for children will take time. This means that children need many opportunities to engage in social interactions and support from adults to develop their skills. Children learn best when they feel psychologically safe and secure. For a child to feel safe and secure, they must be with people they like and can trust.. Adults can provide children with these feeling by providing consistent and loving relationships, as well as providing children with predictable routines. When all of these features are provided for

a child, a professional can then begin the learning process.

There are many things to consider when setting up an environment to promote peer interactions. Children must first be given the opportunity to experience and practice first-hand the behaviors needed in a social situation. Children learn more from real-life activities than from simply being told about them. Professionals must also know their children well enough to provide developmentally appropriate activities for the children in their classroom. Each child is an individual and has their own learning style, however an experienced professional will be able to assess the differences in his or her classroom and make changes according to the children's needs. Children are active learners, and like any other area of development can be taught the skills necessary to become a social being.

There are many ways in which professionals can arrange their classroom environment to promote peer social interactions. The adults in the classroom can actually use their roles as facilitators to manipulate their behavior in order to encourage the social interactions of the preschoolers in their classroom. Bailey and Wolery (1992, p. 283) indicate that, "several studies have documented that teacher attention and reinforcement can increase children's peer interactions and social play." However, the absence of teacher involvement in peer's social interactions may also reinforce the children to depend on one another for support. Morris (2002) suggests that professionals should take an active role in helping students acquire, develop, and refine the social skills necessary for meaningful relationships to develop and for interactions to occur. She states that professionals can do this, "through modeling, encouraging collaborative learning, and

providing direct instruction in social skills" (Morris, 2002, p. 67).

The materials in the classroom can also be set up to promote successful peer interactions. Some toys and materials tend to create social interactions better than others. A few examples of materials that create social interactions include, balls, blocks, dramatic play materials, puppets, and turn taking games. However, toys and materials in the classroom that tend not to promote social interactions can be used to create a social experience by asking two children to work towards a common goal. Materials that tend to not create social interactions are books, puzzles, and art materials. Though, a teacher could ask two children to complete a puzzle or create an art project together in order to create a social interaction with solitary play materials. Therefore, if a teacher observes that the children in the classroom tend to engage in solitary play he or she can always use the materials in the classroom to enhance cooperative play. A teacher may also be able to do this by limiting the number of available materials. By doing this the children are given more opportunities to share and engage in cooperative play. Bailey and Wolery (1992) also suggest that familiar materials rather than novel materials tend to promote social interactions. There are many actions that a professional can take to create a social environment for the children in his or her classroom.

The children in the classroom can also have an effect on the amount of social interaction that occurs. The effects of peers on social interactions can be related to characteristics such as size, composition, familiarity, history of interactions between members, and the social skills of group members according to Chandler (personal communication, 2002). Keeping those characteristics in mind, it has been found that

children display more social skills in small groups rather than larger groups. Also, children engage in more social interactions with familiar rather than unfamiliar peers. It has also been recognized that grouping children by social abilities rather than by age may result in more social behavior. As far as grouping children by gender, it has been found that children prefer to engage in social interactions with their same-gendered peers rather than their opposite-gendered peers. Lastly, it has also been found that typically developing peers prefer to interact with other typically developing peers rather than a peer that has a delay or that is disabled (Bailey and Wolery, 1992, p. 282). There are many different strategies that professionals can use in terms of grouping children in their classroom to promote social competence.

The structure of the classroom environment can also be set up to invite children to become social beings. Bailey and Wolery (1992) discuss many studies in which the structure of the environment can either promote or discourage peer interactions. These studies found that low structured activities tend to allow children the opportunity to engage in social exchanges with their peers. It has also been found that when the goals of children's activities are to be met cooperatively rather than by individual work children will work together. Child-directed activities also promote social interactions over teacher-directed activities. As far as the space allotted in a classroom, less space has been associated with the probability that children will engage in social interactions. The structure of the classroom should also be an aspect of a classroom environment to be carefully monitored in order to allow the children the most opportunities to engage in social play.

The intervention strategy used in this thesis project is called a PALS Center. A PALS Center is created in a classroom as an optional center for children to engage in play during free play activities. The original creator of the PALS Center, Lynette Chandler (1992, p. 15) describes the center as a, "peer interaction play center." Specifically, there are four variables to consider when creating a PALS Center. They include peers, adults, materials and toys, and activity structure (Chandler, 1992). In the PALS Center, children with social delays should be paired up with peers that have a higher level of social competence. Adults should support the children's social interactions by prompting and reinforcing positive peer interactions. Materials in the PALS Center should be limited to activities that will support children's cooperative play skills rather than solitary play skills. The amount of materials and toys should also be limited to promote sharing among the children. The structure of the PALS Center is initiated and explained to the children by the adult, so that the children will be able to understand what is to be expected of them when interacting in the PALS Center.

As suggested by Lynette Chandler (1992) once a PALS Center is created in a classroom, children should be invited to interact in the center. Interactions in the PALS Center should be limited to two or three children. This strategy increases the probability that the children will socially interact with one another. There should also be no set time limit in the PALS Center. The amount of time the children spend in the PALS Center should reflect their interest to participate in the available activities. When children are first starting to interact in the PALS Center, a teacher should try to pair them by their level of social competence. For example a child with poor social skills should be paired

up with a child that has a higher level of social competence. In the beginning stages of the PALS Center, a teacher should be present to provide support to the children. An adult's presence in the PALS Center is to prompt peer interactions between the children. When the children become proficient in their ability to interact in the PALS Center, the adult's presence is no longer needed. However, the adult should still be available to the children when necessary.

The goal of the PALS Center, as explained by its creator, Lynette Chandler (1992, p. 17), "is to facilitate independent (of adult direction) and spontaneous positive peer interaction." The expectation is that children will generalize the skills learned in the PALS Center. Therefore, the ultimate goal for the children in the classroom is to increase social competence and become social beings in their everyday experiences with peers. Creating a PALS Center in a classroom is only one strategy that can be used by teachers to help facilitate peer interaction among the children in his or her classroom. The strategy used in this thesis project was chosen because it is non-intrusive to regular classroom procedures and is a fun way to improve the social interaction skills of young children.

Teaching social competence to children at an early age helps to develop the foundation upon which social skills will progress as time goes on. It is important to remember that social skills must be taught within the limits of the children's abilities and that other developmental domains affect the social learning process. With the attainment of social skills, children can become competent beings. This in turn will help the children to become happy and adjusted adults. Without the attainment of social skills at

an early age, the deficit increases, thus creating later frustrations in life. Professionals can have a profound impact on the development of social skills of the children that they encounter. By creating an environment that promotes positive opportunities for practice, children will learn to become appropriate social beings. Social skills at this point in children's lives should be the key developmental task that underlies all other activities taking place in the classroom. With the help of professionals children can be taught social competence.

## PURPOSE:

This thesis was designed to observe the social competence of preschool-aged children in a classroom setting. The objective of the thesis was to determine if the use of an intervention method would increase a child's social interaction skills among peers. The hypothesis stated that the use of a PALS Center in a preschool classroom would promote peer interaction among the children. With the intention of monitoring the proposed improvement of social competence, one child's social development skills were tracked throughout the intervention process. The results of this thesis were intended to prove whether or not social competence can be taught..

## METHOD:

The subject of the study is a three-year-old boy that attends a developmental preschool program at Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center. The classroom is a natural environment, in which there is a combination of children with special needs and children that are typically developing. There are a total of thirteen children in the subject's classroom.

The research design was setup to observe the child in free play three times and to provide direct intervention with the use of a PALS Center six times. From the results of the observation, I wrote a running record to document exactly what happened and to provide comments about the subject's current social skills (see appendix A). I also filled out a checklist for preschool social relationships called, High/Scope Child Observation Record for Children Ages 2.5-6 in order to collect data (see appendix B). After each time the subject interacted in the PALS Center a reaction was written to document what occurred (see appendix C).

During the first phase of the PALS Center the subject participated in the PALS Center intervention three times. For each intervention, a camera was setup in front of the table in the PALS Center in order to record the actions and communication used by the children and myself. For each intervention in the first phase, the subject was given the opportunity to engage in social interactions with a peer in the presence of an adult. Day one of the PALS Center, the subject interacted with a peer helper and myself. The peer helper was a three-year-old girl that is typically developing. The subject and the peer helper participated by playing two games, Lucky Ducks and Farm Families. The Lucky

Ducks game encourages matching colors and the Farm Families game encourages matching animals. My role was to support the children with hand-over-hand assistance, prompts, and reinforcement (see appendix C). Day two of the PALS Center, the subject interacted with a peer helper and myself. The peer helper was a three-year-old girl that is typically developing. The subject and the peer helper participated by playing the Lucky Ducks game, which encourages matching colors. My role was to support the children with verbal prompts and reinforcement (see appendix C). Day three of the PALS Center, the subject interacted with a peer helper and myself. The peer helper was a three-year-old girl that is typically developing. The subject and the peer helper participated by playing the Lucky Ducks game, which encourages matching colors and the Farm Families game, which encourages matching animals. My role was to support the children with verbal prompts and reinforcement (see appendix C).

I have concerns related to the subject's cognitive and communications skills from my observations of the first phase of the PALS Center. The subject at this time is not identifying colors consistently. The subject is also not matching colors consistently. It would also seem to me at this time that the subject prefers to engage in interaction with myself rather than the peer helper. This leads me to believe that he is lacking in the area of social skills. His verbal communication skills are limited. He is only verbally responding when prompted to.

During the second phase of the PALS Center, the subject participated in the PALS Center intervention two times. For each intervention, a camera was communication used by the children. For each intervention in the second phase,

children. For each intervention in the second phase, the subject was given the opportunity to engage in social interactions with a peer in the absence of an adult. On day one of the second phase of the PALS Center, the subject interacted with a peer helper. The peer helper was a three-year-old girl that is typically developing. The subject and the peer helper participated by playing the Lucky Ducks game, which encourages matching colors. My role was to help the subject and peer helper to setup the interaction and then to only be available for the children when necessary (see appendix C). On day two of the second phase of the PALS Center, the subject interacted with a peer helper. The peer helper was a three-year-old girl that has global delays. The subject and the peer helper participated by playing the Lucky Ducks game, which encourages matching colors. My role was to help the subject and peer helper to setup the interaction and then to only be available for the children when necessary (see appendix C).

My observations of the subject during phase two of the PALS Center, lead me to believe that the lack of my presence increased the subject's social skills when interacting with a preferred peer helper. During phase two the subject was able to maintain an interaction with a preferred peer helper and experience a positive peer interaction. During this interaction, the subject matched colors on a consistent basis. He also was initiating and responding to verbal communication from the peer helper. However, the subject's social skills were not generalized when interacting with a non-preferred peer helper.

## RESULTS:

The results of the three observations were tracked by the use of a checklist for preschool social relationships called, High/Scope Child Observation Record for Children Ages 2.5-6 in order to collect data (see appendix B). The checklist is broken down into four sections: relating to adults, relating to other children, making friends with other children, and engaging in social problem solving. Each of the four sections is then broken down further into five areas of social interaction. The relating to adults section includes: child does not yet interact with adults in the program (1a), child responds when familiar adults initiate interactions (2a), child initiates interactions with familiar adults (3a), child sustains interactions with familiar adults (4a), and child works on complex projects with familiar adults (5a). The relating to other children section includes: child does not yet play with other children (1b), child responds when other children initiate interactions (2b), child initiates interactions with other children (3b), child sustains interactions with other children (4b), and child works on complex projects with other children (5b). The making friends with other children section include: child does not yet identify classmates by name (1c), child identifies some of the children by name and occasionally talks about them (2c), child identifies a classmate as a friend (3c), child is identified by a classmate as a friend (4c), child appears to receive social support from a friend and shows loyalty to the friend (5c). The engaging in social problem solving sections includes: child does not yet work with other to solve a conflict, but instead runs away or uses force (1d), child finds acceptable ways to get others to pay attention to problems (2d), child requests adult help in solving problems with other children (3d),

child sometimes attempts to solve problems with other children independently, by negotiation or other socially acceptable means (4d), and child usually solves problems with other children independently (Sd).

During the first observation, the subject's strongest area of interaction was in the relating to adults section, in which the subject was observed to demonstrate 2a, 3a, 4a, and Sa. In the relating to other children section the subject was observed to demonstrate 2b. The subject's social interactions with adults are documented as presenting four out of the four possible positive interactions. The subject's social interactions relating to peers are documented as presenting one out of the 12 possible peer interactions. The subject is then documented as relating to peers eight percent of the time.

During the second observation, the subject's strongest area of interaction was in the relating to adults section, in which the subject was observed to demonstrate 2a, 3a, 4a, and Sa. In the relating to other children section, the subject was observed to demonstrate 1b. The subject's social interactions with adults are documented as presenting four out of the four possible positive interactions. The subject's social interactions relating to peers during this observation decreases to zero percent of the time.

During the third observation, the child was equally as strong in the relating to adults section and the relating to other children section. The subject was observed to demonstrate 2a, 3a, 4a, Sa, 2b, 3b, 4b, and Sb. The subject was also observed to demonstrate 3c, in the making friends with other children section and Sd, in the engaging in social problem solving. The subject's social interactions with adults again are documented as presenting four out of the four possible positive interactions. The

subject's social interactions relating to peers are observed to increase during this time to fifty percent of the time.

## DISCUSSION:

The results of the first observation defined the subject's current level of social interaction. I felt that this first observation was an accurate picture of the subject's typical daily interactions in the classroom. The results of the second observation however, demonstrated a decrease in the subject's social interaction with the peers in his classroom. This could have been due to the fact that the day the subject was observed there were only five of the thirteen classmates present. Thus decreasing his opportunity to interact with peers and in turn increasing his opportunity to interact with adults. The results of the third observation reveal that the subject's social interaction skills with the peers in his classroom increased. The increase in peer interaction could be due to two rationales. The first is that the subject became increasingly skilled at interacting with his peers due to the experience in the PALS Center. The second is that new teachers took over the classroom and the subject preferred to interact with familiar individuals.

This thesis would prefer to support the first rationale and attribute the subject's increased peer interaction to the PALS Center. However, there is more evidence to suggest that the second rationale is the cause of the increased peer interaction. Evidence can be seen with documentation of the PALS Center interactions and the observations. In the PALS Center the subject did present positive social skills when interacting in the PALS Center with a preferred peer helper. On the contrary, the subject did not transfer those skills when interacting in the PALS Center with a non-preferred peer helper. This supports the subject's preference to interact with familiar individuals. Also the first two observations show the subject only initiating interactions with familiar adults; even

when given opportunities to initiate interactions with familiar peers. When the familiar adults are absent from the environment in the third observation, the subject is then given the opportunity to interact with familiar peers or unfamiliar adults. The subject then chooses to interact with the familiar peers. This thesis supports the rationale of the subject's increasing positive peer interactions due to the lack of familiar adults. However, due to the subject experiencing positive interactions in the PALS Center, he may have been more willing to play with his peers.

Within the PALS Center experiences, the subject seemed to increase the amount of peer interaction each time. The last interaction in the PALS Center though, demonstrated that the subject did not generalize his experiences with a preferred peer helper to a non-preferred helper. This not only supports the subject's preference for familiar individuals, but also that he is not transferring social skills to various situations. The rationale for the subject not transferring social skills to the second peer helper is that the second peer helper does not possess a high level of social competence as the first peer helper did. The first peer helper was able to take over the role of the adult, to support and reinforce the subject within the interaction. The second peer helper was not able to take over that role because she herself requires support and reinforcement from an adult. Therefore, at this time it can be concluded that the subject does not have the social skills to become a socially competent being. However, the subject requires the support of another socially competent being to take the lead of the interaction.

Factors for consideration include the population and the intervention setup. If I were to repeat this research method, I would choose a population that was stable. Many

times the subject did not show up to class and the intervention procedures had to be moved to a further date. This did not allow for a standard intervention method. The program also changed owners during the intervention process and I was not able to complete the second phase of the PALS Center. This did not allow for me to obtain dependable results. Due to time constraints the thesis was not able to be setup as a true PALS Center, though the same concepts were used. With a limited number of interactions in the PALS Center, one is not to expect full generalization outside of the PALS Center for the subject.

In order to make the PALS Center more effective for the subject, I could have setup the PALS Center with a different approach. Instead of the PALS Center being an option in the classroom once a week, I could have made it an integral part of the classroom for a longer period of time. Therefore, the subject would be given the opportunity to interact in the PALS Center everyday on a more consistent basis. I also would have invited more than one child to interact in the PALS Center with the subject at a time during the first phase. This way the subject would not have formed an attachment to just the one peer helper. For the toys and materials, I would have added more choices of cooperative play materials. As for the role of the adult, I would have slowly faded my presence from the PALS Center, instead of completely leaving after three interactions. With all of these changes, the second phase of the PALS Center could have been more effective. Possibly, the subject would have chosen to interact with a peer helper on his own in the PALS Center. Thus meeting the goal of the PALS Center, which, "is to facilitate independent (of adult direction) and spontaneous positive peer interaction"

facilitate independent (of adult direction) and spontaneous positive peer interaction" (Chandler, 1992, p. 17).

This thesis was not able to provide enough evidence to support the stated hypothesis that the use of a PALS Center in a preschool classroom would promote peer interaction either way. The subject did present increased social skills in and outside of the PALS Center. However, there are too many variables to suggest why this occurred. Further research in the area of teaching social competence is needed in order to come to a conclusion about the effects that an intervention strategy can produce. This thesis attempted to prove that the use of a PALS Center intervention would increase peer interaction. However, no such generalization can be made due to the lack of concrete evidence.

Resources:

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## APPENDIX A

Child's Name: Esai  
Age: 3  
Location: Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center  
Date: February 10, 2003  
Observer: Brenda Dewart  
Type of Development Observed: Social Skills

### Informal Assessment - Observation One

#### Observation

Esai is playing with toy planes and cars in a center by himself.

Esai pushes a toy plane and then retrieves it. When he turns around to bring it back to the center he is playing in, he notices the other children in the room. After he puts the toy away, he walks in a circle and then walks to a table where the other children are playing.

Esai is exploring a basket of small toys and pulls out a horse. His teacher asks him, "what is that?" and he responds, "horse." She then asks him "what does he say?" and he responds, "ney." He continues to explore the items in the basket. His teacher asks him, "what else do we have?" as she places a cow on the table. He responds, "it's a cow." She again asks, "what does the cow say?" Esai responds, "moo." She places another cow on the table and asks, "what's this?" He responds, "cow" and then she asks him three times "how many cows do we have out right now?" and responds, "two out." He continues to explore in the basket with the teacher with the same type of back and forth dialog talking about the objects.

The teacher leaves the center to attend to another child. Esai continues to explore in the basket standing next to another child. He pulls out an alligator and says, "look an alligator." He again says, "look an alligator." as he holds it up to show me. He then taps the teacher and says, "an alligator." The teacher repeats him and then asks, "what's my name?" He responds, "Esai." She says to him, "that's your name, what's my name?" After a pause she says, "my name is Denise."

#### Notes or Comments

Esai is engaging in solitary play.

Esai recognizes that there are other children in the room and he wants to join their play.

Esai is responding to the questions that his teacher is asking him.

Esai is engaging in parallel play.

Esai is more interested in interacting with adults than with peers.

## Observation

Esai watches as the teacher interacts with another child and a frog. When the teacher puts the toy back in the basket, Esai picks it up and puts the frog to his ear and squeezes it the way the teacher did to the other child. She asks, "Can you hear him Esai, can you hear him, do you want me to try?" He responds, "yes" and she puts it up to his ear.

Esai continues to explore in the basket with two other boys.

The teacher asks, "Esai do you have to go potty?" and he responds, "yes." He leaves the table to go to the bathroom.

When Esai returns from the bathroom, he goes back to the table he was playing at and watches the children for a brief moment. He then looks around the room and walks towards the kitchen area.

In the kitchen area he plays with a pretend coffee maker. He looks in the sink, picks up a pineapple, and then sets it back in the sink. He then opens and looks in a cabinet for a few seconds. He then shuts the door and opens the door to the refrigerator. After a few seconds he then closes the door and walks away from the kitchen.

Esai stops for a minute as he looks in a bin. He then walks over to a bin full of balls and gets one out. He brings a ball over to an area in the room where other children are playing with balls. He drops the ball, runs after it, and then spots a different ball on the ground and picks it up.

The teacher says to Esai, "ask a friend if they want to play ball with you." He holds the ball in his arms as he looks at the other children. He then retrieves a second ball and walks toward another child. The teacher tells him, "ask Aaron, do you want to play ball." Esai says to Aaron, "do you want to play ball?" Aaron shakes his head and responds, "yes." Esai then throws the ball to Aaron. Esai laughs as Aaron tries to catch it. He then puts the other ball on the floor and stands there. Aaron throws the ball at him, Esai retrieves it and throws it back to Aaron. They play this back and forth game for about thirty seconds and then Esai begins to bounce and chase a ball by himself.

## Notes or Comments

Esai is interested in interactions that the teacher is engaging in with other children. He then wants to imitate their play.

Esai is continuing to parallel play.

Esai sees that the materials he was playing with are no longer on the table and looks for something else to do.

Esai is engaging in solitary and pretend play.

Esai is aware that other children in the room are playing with balls and he wants to join their play.

Esai does not yet know how to ask to join other children's play and needs the teacher to verbally prompt him.

Esai is engaging in associative play with another child.

## Observation

After a minute and a half, Esai walks to the bin of balls, retrieves three small footballs, and brings them back to where he was playing. He throws all three of them on the ground and bounces up and down. The teacher verbally prompts him to give one to Aaron twice. He turns and looks at Aaron, who then throws one of the footballs to the teacher. The teacher then says, "Are you ready Esai? Hold out your hands." Esai sits on the floor next to Aaron and holds out both of his hands. She then says to Esai, "tell me go." Esai responds "go" and she throws the ball. She then tells him, "now throw it to Aaron." Esai throws the football to Aaron but Aaron was not watching the interaction. The teacher continues the same interaction with Aaron and then tells Aaron to, "throw it to Esai." She prompts Aaron again by saying, "ask Esai, are you ready?" Aaron looks at Esai and says, "are you ready?" Esai looks at Aaron and says, "ready." Aaron then passes the ball to Esai. Esai in turn throws the ball to the teacher. The teacher says, "ok, are you ready Esai?" and Esai immediately puts both of his hands out. She then says, "tell me, what do you tell me? Are you ready?" Esai responds, "ready" as he claps his hands. He gets the ball and throws it back to the teacher. Esai runs over to the bin of balls. The teacher says, "Esai we have enough balls out. Esai all done." Esai grabs a ball from the bin. The teacher responds by saying, "Esai, stop, put it back." Esai throws the ball. "Come here" the teacher says to Esai as she holds out the ball to him, "please put this one back. We have enough balls. Put it away please." Esai takes the ball and walks to the bin to put it away. "Thank you" the teacher says.

Esai walks back to the area where he was playing ball and stands next to the teacher while she is taking to another child. She then asks him, "do you want to still play ball?" He responds, "yes." The teacher then directs him where to sit verbally and by pointing. Esai takes a few steps, stops, and watches a ball that bounces past him. The teacher again verbally and nonverbally directs Esai where to sit. Esai sits down and the teacher directs another child, Dillon to sit next to him. The teacher throws a ball to both of the boys. Esai and Dillon both throw their balls back to the teacher.. Esai then stands up and walks over to a table where his ball rolled under. He moves a chair, looks under the table, and then crawls around the table to retrieve his ball. He then brings his ball back to the area he was playing ball in and looks around.

## Notes or Comments

Esai stays on task to an activity and engages in associative play with another child for a longer amount of time when there is a teacher present.

Esai can follow a two step direction given by the teacher.

Esai goes to the teacher to initiate an interaction.

Esai seems unaware that Dillon is playing ball with him and the teacher.

Esai does not know what to do because the teacher has left the area.

## Observation

The teacher comes back to area and asks, "Esai are you all done with balls? Or do you want to play some more?" Esai responds, "play more." They continue to play back and forth catching game of ball with two interruptions from other children.

Another child in the room is hit in the face with a ball. The teacher asks, "are you ok? It got your nose" as she points to her nose. Esai then taps his nose and says, "bonk." The teacher asks Esai a multiple of times what the ball hit on the girls face. Each time Esai grabs his nose and jumps up and down.

Another child walks to the teacher and shows her her hand. Esai stands and watches this for twenty seconds before he walks over to look at the child's hand. He then takes the ball from the teacher and puts it in the bin of balls. He also puts another ball away that the teacher hands to him and asks him to put away.

Esai then walks back to the ball area. He stops, stands, and looks around for ten seconds. He then walks over to another teacher that is in that area. He takes the ball that is in her hands and tosses it to her. They play back and forth catching game for a minute and a half. Esai then takes the ball and puts it back in the bin of balls.

When Esai turns around to walk back, a child is standing in his way. Esai steps back and forth until he can walk around him. As he walks away he looks back at the child.

Esai then stops and looks at me. He then walks over to a basket that has train tracks and accessories. He walks back to me and says, "it's a choo choo" as he pulls on my leg. I tell him, "you can play with the choo choo, it's ok Esai." He then walks back over to the basket and pulls it out from under the easel. A teacher walks over and tries to get Esai to build a train track with her. He instead is exploring a train station.

## Notes or Comments

The interaction lasts a little over two minutes. This is longer than any associative play that he engaged in with children.

Esai is trying to get the teacher's attention by imitating the interaction she is having with another child.

Esai is not yet interested in what is happening with the peers in his class.

Esai initiates interactions with teachers only.

Esai is not using his words to talk to the other child.

Esai seeks out adult attention.

Esai is engaging in solitary play in the presence of a teacher.

## Observation

The teacher lays three pieces of train tracks down. Esai then rolls a car up and down the track. The teacher then hands a piece of track to Esai and asks him, "Esai do you want to do this?" He takes the piece of track and lays it down. They continue this with four more pieces of train track. He then walks a toy police officer on the track. He then rolls the car back and forth on the track. He places the police officer in the car and then rolls a second car on the track.

He sits up and watches the other children playing with blocks next to him. After a few seconds he goes back to playing with the train set.

Another child walks over and watches Esai playing. When Esai sees the girl he looks at her, looks at the teacher, and then goes back to what he was doing.

The lights in the room are turned on and off and a bell is jingled. The teacher then begins to sing the "Clean Up" song. The teacher Esai is playing with tells him it is time to clean up a few times and Esai shakes his head no. When the teacher physically puts a toy in his hand he places it in the basket. They continue to do this until the train set is cleaned up. There are also other children helping to clean up the train set. When it is cleaned up he walks to the carpet and sits down in a space between a boy and a girl.

## Notes or Comments

Esai is engaging in pretend play with the materials.

Esai is aware that there are other children in the classroom. He is not yet interested in playing with them.

Esai acknowledges that there is a child by him, but he does not talk to her. Instead he looks to the teacher.

Esai is not paying attention to the peers that are helping him clean up.  
Esai sits with the group.

Child's Name: Esai  
Age: 3  
Location: Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center  
Date: March 5, 2003  
Observer: Brenda Dewart  
Type of Development Observed: Social Skills

### Informal Assessment - Observation Two

#### Observation

Esai is plying with a baby doll and a shopping cart. He pats the baby on the bottom, rocks the baby and then tries to get the baby into the front seat of the shopping cart. The teacher tells another child, "Esai is pushing the baby in the stroller." Esai does not respond to this comment in any way.

The teacher asks Esai, "How many babies do you have in there Esai?" "How many?" she asks again. They count together, "one, two." "Two babies," the teacher says and Esai repeats her.

Esai picks up the other baby in the shopping cart and again holds it. He stands watching the teacher talk to another child in the center. He then walks over to where another child is, looks at what she is doing, and then walks away. He puts the baby into the back of the shopping cart.

Esai is standing in front of the shopping cart. When the teacher asks another child, "Who's on your shirt?" Esai turns around to watch the interaction. The teacher then says, "and what does Esai have on his shirt?" "I got..." the word is not understandable. The teacher asks, "what do you have?" He repeats the word again. The teacher points to his shirt and asks, "what is this right there?" "I got a baseball!" He responds. The teacher corrects him by saying, "it looks like a baseball. but it is a football." Esai points to the football and says, "football." "Do you like to watch football on tv with Dad?" the teacher asks. Esai responds, "yes."

Esai then walks forward toward another teacher and child and says something again that is not understandable. The teacher asks him, "do you want to go through?" The teacher tells him to, "say excuse me." He says, "excuse me" and the teacher gets up to move. He then pushes the shopping cart to the side and is walking away. The teacher tells him to, "put your cart away if your all done." Esai walks over to the cart and puts it away with verbal cues from the teacher.

#### Notes or Comments

Esai is engaging in solitary play.

Esai is too involved in what he is doing to hear what the teacher said.

Esai is interested in interactions that the teacher is having with his peer.

Esai is not interested in engaging an interaction with his peer.

Esai is interested in the interaction the teacher is having with another child. However, he waits until he is invited into the interaction to participate.

Esai needs many very cues and prompts from teachers.

## Observation

Esai then walks over to a set of bins where another child is playing. He begins to put pieces on a Mr. Potato Head. The other child walks away and Esai moves over to where she was standing and continues to play.

Esai then puts down the Mr. Potato Head, walks over to another area in the room, and gets a stroller with a baby in it. He stops and looks around, he then proceeds to walk with the stroller. A teacher and a child are in his way so he stops. The teacher tells him to, "put your baby away if your going to play rice and beans." Esai looks around and does not respond. The teacher then asks, "are you going to take your baby for a walk?" Esai says, "yes" and then walks away. He walks past other children playing in the sensory table and watches them for a few seconds. He then continues to walk, spins four times in a circle, and then walks again. He pushes the baby back to where he got it. A teacher asks him, "Esai do you want to come play rice and beans when your done pushing the baby?" Esai walks over to the sensory table.

Esai walks over to where there is an open spot at the table. He engages with the rice and beans and the materials in the table. After a minute, the teacher asks, "what are you looking for Bailey and Esai?" Esai responds, "looking for the Pokemon." The teacher tells him, "we don't have any Pokemon." The children and the teachers continue to talk about Pokemon and Esai is engaging in play with the materials. After another minute the teacher asks, "Esai what color shovel are you using?" Esai responds, "one." "What is on the bottom of the cup?" the teacher asks. Esai points to the mirror and responds, "number two." "What color is your cup Esai?" the teacher asks again. Esai does not respond, so the teacher asks, "Is it blue or green." She asks him the color of his cup a few more times without him responding. She then tells him, "it is blue." Esai continues to play in the rice and beans.

Esai sneezes, so the teacher brings him a kleenex. She verbally cues him to put the materials down and to wipe his nose and hands. Esai then begins to play in the rice and beans again. He then walks around the table and begins to interact in the sensory table next to a different child. Esai watches himself play in the mirror. After a minute he walks away from the table.

## Notes or Comments

Esai is engaging in parallel play.

Esai does not acknowledge that the child has left the center.

Esai is not interested in engaging in a teacher directed activity.

Esai notices what his peers are doing.

Esai is engaging in parallel play.

Esai does not participate in the discussion the class is having.

Esai does not respond appropriately to the question that he is asked.

Esai is engaging in parallel play.

Esai is interested in watching the cause and effect that he is having on the materials in the mirror.

## Observation

Esai walks over to an easel that has a chalkboard on it. He touches the chalk, looks at his hand, and then wipes it on his shirt. He then picks up the eraser and wipes off the chalkboard. He scribbles on the chalkboard and then erases it. He again looks at his hand and wipes it on his shirt. He then puts both of his hands inside a pocket on his sweatshirt to wipe his hands. He takes his hands out of the pocket and looks at them again. He then wipes both of his hands on his bottom.

Esai then pulls out a train set that is under the easel. As he is pulling out the train set he asks me to play with him. I tell him, "you play with the train Esai." He then begins to lay down train tracks. A teacher asks Esai, "are you going to put the train together?" Esai responds, "yes." A teacher then comes over to facilitate his play with the train set and other materials. Throughout this interaction, Esai is not recognizing his colors consistently. This interaction continues for eleven minutes.

The teacher leaves the area to throwaway his kleenex and Esai crawls over to a toy bus. He pushes the buttons and then puts his ear to the bus. The teacher comes back to the area and asks, "Esai are you all done with train?" Esai then turns around and begins to clean up the train tracks.

Esai then puts the train set back under the easel. After which the teacher tells him what the other children in the room are doing and Esai chooses to see what Sara Anne and Aaron are doing at the table.

When he gets to the table Esai begins to take materials out of a red bucket and place them in the dollhouse. When the teacher gets to the table she says, "Esai can you asks Aaron. Say can I play please." Esai then repeats her. Aaron shakes his head and says, "yes." The teacher then asks him, "can you say thank you?" Esai then says, "thank you."

Esai then begins to drive a motorcycle on the table. He kneels down next to Aaron to play with the materials in the dollhouse. Esai then drives the motorcycle around the kitchen area and then walks back over to the red bucket to get out more toys to play with in the dollhouse.

## Notes or Comments

Esai may have sensory integration differences.

Esai has no problem initiating play with adults.

Esai is not recognizing colors consistently in various settings. Esai maintains attention to an activity longer with an adult present.

Esai requires adult interaction in order to stay on task with an activity.

Esai is just repeating what the teacher has said and the words do not have meaning to him.

Esai is not interacting with the other children that are playing at the table.

## Observation

The teacher then tries to facilitate a game of pretend play with the children. She has Cookie Monster knock on the doll house door and asks, "whose there?" Sara Anne announces, "Esai." Esai does not respond back. Esai yells a little when Cookie Monster comes through the door. Then he moves over to interact with materials on the other side of the dollhouse.

As Esai is playing the teacher asks, "is anybody home? Is anybody home?" Esai then responds, "hello." He again walks to the other side of the table and plays with the materials inside the dollhouse. The teacher asks Esai a series of questions as he is playing with the materials.

Sara Anne leaves the area that she was playing in.

The teacher has Sara Anne come back to the table to clean up some of the materials. Esai watches the interaction between the teacher and Sara Anne. During their interaction, Esai takes the Cookie Monster and pretends that he is falling from the table. As he does this he says, "whooh."  
"Ut oh, did Cookie Monster jump down from the table?" the teacher asks. Esai does the same action two more times. The teacher then asks, "what does Cookie Monster have in his hand?" She asks him the question three more times before he answers, "baseball." They continue an interaction having Cookie Monster jump up and down.

Esai and the teacher then have dialog about Cookie Monster going home. This interaction occurs for about three minutes. Esai then continues to play in the dollhouse with the teacher facilitating his play.

Aaron has come to the table to build a tower.

Esai continues to play in the dollhouse. Bailey comes over to the table and Esai gets a dog and begins to bark it at the teacher.

## Notes or Comments

Esai does not respond to the back and forth game of pretend play that has been set up for him by the teacher.

Esai is engaging in solitary play even though he is interacting with the same materials with Sara Anne.

The teacher is facilitating Esai's pretend play skills.

Esai does not respond in anyway to Sara Anne leaving the center..

Esai is trying to get the teacher's attention.

Esai continues the action that he originally used to get the teacher's attention to now keep her attention.

Esai does not acknowledge that Aaron is in the center.

Esai wants the teachers full attention on him.

## Observation

Esai then goes with the teacher to the other side of the room because he needs to blow his nose. When he is done he runs over to the table. He begins to play with the dollhouse and then stops to watch the other two children building towers with pegs. He then gets a mat and puts one peg in. He then runs over to where the other children are building and begins to build a tower on Bailey's mat.

The bell is then rung and it is time to clean up. Esai continues to build on a tower that Aaron is cleaning up. The teacher then says, "ok Esai it is time to clean up." Esai then begins to clean up the tower. Sara Anne comes over to help clean up the pegs.

Esai then sits between two other children on the floor.

## Notes or Comments

Esai is engaging in parallel play.

The children are working together to clean up.

Esai sits with his peers.

Child's Name: Esai  
Age: 3  
Location: Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center  
Date: March 17,2003  
Observer: Brenda Dewart  
Type of Development Observed: Social Skills

### Informal Assessment - Observation Three

#### Observation

Esai is walking over to the sensory table. The teacher tells the children, "tell me open please." The other two children respond, Esai does not. The teacher says, "Esai, tell me open please." Esai responds, "open please." Esai begins to play in the sensory table that has rice and beans in it.

Esai finds an egg that is buried in the sensory table. He fills the egg with rice and beans. He then tries to put the top on the egg. When he gets it on he looks up, smiles, and then shakes his egg.

He then takes the top of the egg off and fills it up with more rice and beans. He then tries three times to put the top of the egg on. When he gets it on he again shakes it, this time showing the teacher. He again takes the top off the egg. He moves all of the materials in his area and digs in the sensory table with the egg. He fills the egg up and then puts the top on. He shakes it and the teacher says, "shake, shake, shake." Esai takes the egg apart, dumps out the rice and beans, and then digs with the egg in the sensory table. He again fills the egg and tries to put the top on but all the rice and beans fall out. The teacher asks him, "can you scoop it up, then close?" she models this behavior for him. Esai imitates this model and the teacher helps him to close the egg. Esai shakes his egg.

Esai finds a purple egg in the sensory table. He shakes it in front of the teacher's face. She is interacting with another child. He then hits her in the arm five times before she tell him, "tell me Cindy." He says, "Cindy" and then asks her, "can you open this?" The teacher tells him, "please." He responds, "please" and she responds, "nice asking." She then prompts him to tell her, "thank you" and he responds, "thank you." He then digs in the table with the purple egg.

#### Notes or Comments~

The teacher announced the she was opening the sensory table, so Esai went over to the table. Esai needs an individual prompt from the teacher to respond.

Esai is engaging in parallel play because the other children at the sensory table are trying to do the same thing he is doing.

Esai is engaging in parallel play. However, he is more interested in showing the teacher what he is doing rather than the children next to him.

Esai is not using his words to get the attention of the teacher.

## Observation

A child takes one half of the egg that Esai is playing with. So the teacher tells Dillion to give Esai the egg. Dillion hands Esai the egg and Esai takes it from him. He then shows the teacher the egg and asks her to close it. She prompts him to say please and he does. Together they close the egg. She then asks Esai, "can you share one egg with Dillion please?" He gives the purple egg to Dillion.

Esai then shakes his egg and tries to get around the teacher that is in his way. The teacher says, "Esai what do you tell me?" He continues to shake his egg without responding. She tell him, "move please." He says, "move please" and the teacher moves.

Esai takes his egg over to the kitchen area. A teacher directs Esai to bring the basket to the sensory table. When he gets to the sensory table, he finds a purple egg and puts it in his basket. Esai taps the teacher and she asks him, "what do you have?" Esai points to his face. She asks him a series of questions, but Esai does not respond. She then asks him, "what is on the outside of your basket? What's that?" Esai responds, "eggs." The teacher tell him, "yeah, that's inside what's outside?" She then directs him to look at the basket and Esai responds, "a bird."

Esai then walks to another side of the sensory table. He is watching an interaction that two other children are having with a teacher. He then walks back over by the teacher and digs in the sensory table for a few seconds. He again walks back over to the other side of the sensory table. He stands there for a few seconds and then walks over to where three boys are playing. He watches the boys play for a few seconds and then walks away laughing.

He begins to walk around the room and then stops to play with materials on a shelf. He walks over to me, smiles, and then tell me, "look at eggs." I tell him to, go show your friends." He takes his basket over to where the children are playing and announces, friends, friends." He stops to look at Peter and then keeps on walking.

## Notes or Comments

Esai does not respond to the child taking or giving back the egg that he is playing with. Esai uses his words to get the teacher's attention.

Esai is able to share when prompted by a teacher.

Esai is aware that his peers have a basket. Esai is imitating his peers interactions.

Esai is able to identify animals.

Esai is interested in his peers.

Esai is wondering.

Esai is interested in the activity that his peers are engage in, but he does not know how to join them.

Esai is associating friends with the peers in his classroom.

## Observation

Esai walks over to the sensory table where Dillion is standing. He taps Dillion on the arm and says, "look, I got two eggs," and shows him his basket. Dillion shows Esai his basket and says, "I got two eggs." The teacher tells Dillion, "you have one, two, three eggs." Esai then picks up a cup in the sensory table and gives it to Dillion. As Dillion digs in the sensory table with the cup, Esai pats him on the back. Esai says to Dillion, "have one, two." The boys both hold up their baskets and count. Esai then holds up a bowl and Dillion fills it up with rice and beans. Esai then puts the bowl down and begins to take the rice and beans out, while Dillion is still filling it.

Esai points to Dillion's basket and says, "you got eggs too." Dillion looks in his basket and in Esai basket. Esai then walks over to another area and runs a car up and down a ramp a few times. The teacher announces to the children that it is time to clean up. Esai walks to the other side of the room with his basket. Aaron follows Esai and tells him, "put your eggs in the table." Esai looks behind him at Aaron and begins to run back and forth. Aaron points and tells Esai to put his eggs in the table. Esai then runs away, looking back to see if Aaron is following him. When he sees that Aaron is behind him he begins to run again. They continue this same interaction around the room three times. The teacher then directs Esai to put the eggs in the table. The teacher does hand over hand with Esai to get him to clean up. Esai then begins to play with materials on a shelf. The bell is rung and the teacher sings the, "Clean Up" song. Esai continues to play with materials on the shelf. The teacher again does hand over hand to get Esai to stop playing with the materials and sit on the carpet.

## Notes or Comments

Esai is initiating an interaction with a peer.

Esai is sharing materials with a peer.

Esai is showing affection to a peer.

Esai and Dillion are imitating one another.

Esai is engaging in cooperative play with a peer without teacher prompts.

Esai is initiating social interactions with a peer using verbal communication.

Esai initiates a game with this peer.

## **APPENDIX B**

		~Ac:./63		
<b>I. Social Relations</b>				
<b>E. Relating to adults</b>				
		<b>Time 1</b>	<b>Time 2</b>	<b>Time 3</b>
Child does not yet interact with adults in the program.	(1)	_____	_____	_____
Child responds when familiar adults initiate interactions.	(2)	_____	_____	_____
Child initiates interactions with familiar adults.	(3)	_____	_____	_____
Child sustains interactions with familiar adults.	(4)	_____	_____	_____
Child works on complex projects with familiar adults (shares labor, follows rules).	(5)	_____	_____	_____
<b>F. Relating to other children</b>				
		<b>Time 1</b>	<b>Time 2</b>	<b>Time 3</b>
Child does not yet play with other children.	(1)	_____	_____	_____
Child responds when other children initiate interactions.	(2)	_____	_____	_____
Child initiates interactions with other children.	(3)	_____	_____	_____
Child sustains interactions with other children.	(4)	_____	_____	_____
Child works on complex projects with other children (shares labor, follows rules).	(5)	_____	_____	_____
<b>G. Making friends with other children</b>				
		<b>Time 1</b>	<b>Time 2</b>	<b>Time 3</b>
Child does not yet identify classmates by name.	(1)	_____	_____	_____
Child identifies some of the children by name and occasionally talks about them.	(2)	_____	_____	_____
Child identifies a classmate as a friend.	(3)	_____	_____	_____
Child is identified by a classmate as a friend.	(4)	_____	_____	_____
Child appears to receive social support from a friend and shows loyalty to the friend.	(5)	_____	_____	_____
<b>H. Engaging in social problem solving</b>				
		<b>Time 1</b>	<b>Time 2</b>	<b>Time 3</b>
Child does not yet work with others to solve a conflict, but instead runs away or uses force.	(1)	_____	_____	_____
Child finds acceptable ways to get others to pay attention to problems (does not hit or kick to get attention).	(2)	_____	_____	_____
Child requests adult help in solving problems with other children.	(3)	_____	_____	_____
Child sometimes attempts to solve problems with other children independently by negotiation or other socially acceptable means.	(4)	_____	_____	_____
Child usually solves problems with other children independently (shares materials, takes turns).	(5)	_____	_____	_____

figure 3.5 Checklist for preschool social relationships  
 Source: HighScope, Child Observation Record for Ages 2-6, (1992), Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Educational Research Foundation, pp.6-7.

II. Social Relations		f) 1/2 to 3/4	3/4 to 63	
E. Relating to adults		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Child does not yet interact with adults in the program.	(1)	_____	_____	_____
Child responds when familiar adults initiate interactions.	(2)	~	V	_____
Child initiates interactions with familiar adults.	(3)	i;	T	_____
Child sustains interactions with familiar adults.	(4)	~	V	_____
Child works on complex projects with familiar adults (shares labor, follows rules).	(5)	J	L	_____
F. Relating to other children		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Child does not yet play with other children.	(1)	_____	~	_____
Child responds when other children initiate interactions.	(2)	<< .	_____	_____
Child initiates interactions with other children.	(3)	!	_____	_____
Child sustains interactions with other children.	(4)	= =	_____	_____
Child works on complex projects with other children (shares labor, follows rules).	(5)	_____	_____	_____
G. Making friends with other children		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Child does not yet identify classmates by name.	(1)	_____	_____	_____
Child identifies some of the children by name and occasionally talks about them.	(2)	_____	_____	_____
Child identifies a classmate as a friend.	(3)	_____	_____	_____
Child is identified by a classmate as a friend.	(4)	_____	_____	_____
Child appears to receive social support from a friend and shows loyalty to the friend.	(5)	_____	_____	_____
H. Engaging in social problem solving		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Child does not yet work with others to solve a conflict, but instead runs away or uses force.	(1)	_____	_____	_____
Child finds acceptable ways to get others to pay attention to problems (does not hit or kick to get attention).	(2)	_____	_____	_____
Child requests adult help in solving problems with other children.	(3)	_____	_____	_____
Child sometimes attempts to solve problems with other children independently by negotiation or other socially acceptable means.	(4)	_____	_____	_____
Child usually solves problems with other children independently (shares materials, takes turns).	(5)	_____	_____	_____

figure 3.5 Checklist for preschool social relationships  
 Source: HighScope, *Child Observation Record for Ages 2"-6"*, (1992). Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Educational Research Foundation, pp. 6-7.

II. Social Relations	Dh% 6	3Js/03	31,7/03
<b>E. Relating to adults</b>	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Child does not yet interact with adults in the program.	(1) _____	_____	_____
Child responds when familiar adults initiate interactions.	(2)		
Child initiates interactions with familiar adults.	(3)		
Child sustains interactions with familiar adults.	(4) _____		_____
Child works on complex projects with familiar adults. (shares labor, follows rules).	(5)	<b>L</b>	~
<b>F. Relating to other children</b>	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Child does not yet play with other children.	(1) _____		
Child responds when other children initiate interactions.	(2) <b>L</b>	_____	
Child initiates interactions with other children.	(3) _____	_____	
Child sustains interactions with other children.	(4) _____	_____	
Child works on complex projects with other children. (shares labor, follows rules).	(5) _____	_____	<b>L</b>
<b>G. Making friends with other children</b>	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Child does not yet identify classmates by name.	(1) _____	_____	_____
Child identifies some of the children by name and occasionally talks about them.	(2) _____	_____	_____
Child identifies a classmate as a friend.	(3) _____	_____	
Child is identified by a classmate as a friend.	(4) _____	_____	_____
Child appears to receive social support from a friend and shows loyalty to the friend.	(5) _____	_____	_____
<b>H. engaging in social problem-solving</b>	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Child does not yet work with others to solve a conflict, but instead runs away or uses force.	(1) _____	_____	_____
Child finds acceptable ways to get others to pay attention to problems. (does not hit or kick to get attention).	(2) _____	_____	_____
Child requests adult help in solving problems with other children.	(3) _____	_____	_____
Child sometimes attempts to solve problems with other children independently, by negotiation or other socially acceptable means.	(4) _____	_____	_____
Child usually solves problems with other children independently. (shares materials, takes turns).	(5) _____	_____	<b>L</b>

Figure 3.5 Checklist for preschool social relationships.  
 Source: HighScope Child Observation Record for Ages 2-6, (1992). Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Educational Research Foundation, pp. ~7.

## **APPENDIX**

Child's Name: Esai

Age: 3

Location: Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center - three-year-old developmental preschool

Date: February 12, 2003

Observer: Brenda Dewart

Type of Development Observed: Social Skills

Introduction of PALS Center - Day Two

Reaction:

Today was the first day that I introduced the PALS Center to Esai. The children's choices of games were Lucky Ducks and Farm Families. The Lucky Ducks game encourages matching colors and the Farm Families game encourages matching animals. I paired Esai with a child named Heather because I feel that she has a good grasp of peer interaction and basic cognitive concepts. My role the first day was to introduce the activities to the children and then allow them the opportunity to begin to understand how to play the games. I have no specific time set for the interaction to occur. My main goal for today's interaction was to allow the children to get use to playing the games and playing with each other. For my own knowledge, I wanted to learn the children's individual abilities, their strengths, and their weaknesses.

The children ended up playing both of the games; therefore the PALS Center interaction lasted for eighteen minutes. I was surprised that the activities held the children's attention for that amount of time. The first game that the children played was Lucky Ducks. Esai was not able to identify or match colors consistently. He was also not able to match farm animal sounds. Both of these things are concerning for his age. I did a lot of hand-over-hand with Esai to get him to play the games. I also had to verbally prompt him each time that it was his turn. Esai is also not yet using his words

consistently enough to have an active role in the interaction. Due to the fact that Esai does not yet know his colors consistently made the interaction much harder and I also think this hindered his opportunity to engage in peer interaction.

During today's PALS Center, both of my goals were met. The children were given the opportunity to play and understand the concept of both of the games. The children were also able to interact with one another, even though it was mainly teacher directed. For myself, I was able to learn the children's individual abilities in order to be prepared for the next PALS Center. I believe that Heather will be a good match for Esai because she does know her colors and she has the capability to take turns. I was also able to identify today that Esai does not know his colors consistently. This basic concept will be needed in order to be successful in the PALS Center independently. Therefore, he will most likely need adult support in this area for the first phase of the PALS Center. I am going to continue with both of the same games at the next PALS Center because I feel that they are motivating and they will encourage Esai's concepts of color identification and matching. Peer interaction was minimal today, however that is to be expected when introducing a novel activity. At this time I believe that peer interaction is still an appropriate goal for Esai.

Child's Name: Esai

Age: 3

Location: Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center - three-year-old developmental preschool

Date: February 19,2003

Observer: Brenda Dewart

Type of Development Observed: Social Skills

### Introduction of PALS Center - Day Three

#### Reaction:

Today was the second day that Esai interacted in the PALS Center. I only brought the Lucky Ducks game because I wanted to give Esai the opportunity to work exclusively on learning his colors. Heather did not want to play in the PALS Center today, so I invited her twin sister Natalie, to play with Esai. I choose Natalie because she also has a good grasp on basic cognitive concepts and is able to engage in peer interaction. I also choose her because I knew that she had a previous opportunity to play and understand the concept of the Lucky Ducks game. Me role on the second day was to facilitate the children's interaction using a more hands off approach. This way the game could be more child-directed and in turn, the children would interact more with one another. My main goals for today's interaction was for the children to turn take without my verbal cues. I also wanted to see how much of the game the children could play without my help.

The children played the Lucky Ducks game twice and the interaction lasted for fourteen minutes. Esai is not identifying and matching colors consistently on his own. Esia was identifying that it was his turn inconsistently. However, when I asked him whose turn it was, he was able to correctly identify if was either Natalie's or his turn. Natalie also gave Esai a lot of verbal cues by saying, "Esai's turn" and "pick a duck." I

was able to take a more hands off approach during this PALS Center. Therefore, the amount of adult verbal cues from myself reduced during this PALS Center. I was also glad to see that the children were initiating the rules of the game appropriately with minimal help from myself. One other thing that I noticed was that the idea of winning is too abstract for both of the children at this point in time.

During today's PALS Center, I feel that both of my goals were met. The children were given the opportunity to take turn during the game with minimal adult verbal cues. They were able to identify whose turn it was on their own for most of the game. The children also did a great job playing within the rules of the game. Most of the verbal cues I gave today were to facilitate Esai's recognition of colors. Beyond that, the children initiated the rules of the game appropriately without my help. Peer interaction on behalf of Esai was minimal. Natalie however was encouraging Esai throughout the entire interaction. I believe that peer interaction is still an appropriate goal for Esai at this time. I will continue the same procedure during the next PALS Center.

Child's Name: Esai

Age: 3

Location: Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center - three-year-old developmental preschool

Date: February 24, 2003

Observer: Brenda Dewart

Type of Development Observed: Social Skills

Introduction of PALS Center - Day Four

Reaction:

Today was the third day that Esai interacted in the PALS Center. I brought both of the games, Lucky Ducks and Farm Families, because Natalie requested the Farm Families game at the last PALS Center. Also by allowing the children to play with both games, I am hoping that they will not become bored. I invited Natalie to play with Esai in the PALS Center today because I felt that she had a good grasp on the rules and function of the game. I also feel that her developed level of peer interaction will help to motivate Esai to have an interest in peers. My role on the third day was to continue to take a hands off approach to facilitate the children's social competence. I also wanted to further decrease my verbal cues. My goal for the children was to further increase their peer interaction by decreasing my verbal cues. I again wanted to see how well the children could play without my help.

The children played the Lucky Ducks game twice and the Farm Families game once; the interaction lasted for thirteen minutes. Esai is not recognizing his colors on a consistent basis, but he is able to match colors in a more consistent manner than before. The children played the Lucky Ducks game first. In the beginning I initiated the set up, but I then walked away to allow the children to do it together without adult assistance. They did a great job setting the game up and putting it away by themselves. During the

first two games of Lucky Ducks, Natalie was cueing Esai to pick a duck. Esai was also recognizing that it was his turn on his own on a more consistent basis than before. I felt that today's PALS Center progressed in a back and forth turn taking manner more than the two previous PALS Centers. The children also identified what to do if they obtained a match without my help. Esai though, is not yet interested in the color duck that Natalie was choosing. Natalie however, is interested in the color duck that Esai was choosing, so that she could get it to match her card. At this time I believe that Natalie fully understands the Lucky Ducks game and Esai just needs a little more support. During these two games I did ask the children questions about what to do and the color that they picked, instead of telling them. When the children played Farm Families it was heavily adult-directed because this game is not as familiar to either of the children. Due to this fact, I was not interested in the children knowing what to do on their own. I was more interested in allowing the children time to interact with one another in this back and forth turn taking fashion.

During today's PALS Center, I do not feel that my goals were met quite to the extent that I wanted them to be. Natalie did present a lot of great peer interaction skills. However, Esai at this time is not responding to her social gestures. The children do understand the rules of the Lucky Ducks game and can play the game well without adult assistance. What I would really like to see though is the two children interacting with one another directly through the use of the game. At the next PALS Center, I will completely remove myself from the children's interaction. Hopefully the lack of my presence will allow the children the opportunity to interact at a higher level.

Child's Name: Esai

Age: 3

Location: Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center - three-year-old developmental preschool

Date: March 10, 2003

Observer: Brenda Dewart

Type of Development Observed: Social Skills

Introduction of PALS Center - Day Six

Reaction:

Today began the second phase of the PALS Center.. Now that the children have had the opportunity to interact with one another and the materials with adult-direction, it is now time for their interaction to become fully child-directed. I again invited Natalie to interact in today's PALS Center because of her advanced social skills and because of her familiarity to the PALS Center experience. My roles today were to set up the interaction for the children and then give them the opportunity to engage in the activity on their own. During this time I tried to make myself as unavailable to the children as possible. My goals for today were to allow the children to depend on and socially interact with one another to their fullest extent without an adult present..

I was quite impressed with the children's ability to stay on task and with their interactions with one another. The children played the Luck Ducks game three times for ten minutes. When the children were in the PALS Center, I gave them the game and they set it up on their own. They even knew how to begin the game without any verbal cues from me. The first time Natalie chose a duck she showed it to me. However, I redirected her to interact with Esai and from then on Natalie and Esai fully interacted with one another. They were both showing and telling each other the color of the duck that they chose. Throughout the game, Natalie gave Esai verbal cues. The children also played the

game appropriately by taking turns. One time Natalie picked a duck twice in a row and Esai did not notice. On another turn Esai picked one of Natalie's ducks, he gave it to her, and she put it on her card. She then announced, "I win" and Esai proceeded to choose another duck.. Natalie also choose another duck and Esai continually picked up ducks. I heard Natalie announce that she won, but I waited to intervene to see what they would do. During the second game their play skills and peer interaction continued to be purposeful and appropriate. When Esai won this game Natalie had to tell him and she told me. I then verbally cued them to set up another game if they wanted to play again. I did though help them choose new cards. The third game started off good until Natalie picked one of Esai's ducks and put it on his card. When she did this, he put it back in the pond and Natalie picked it up again and put it on his card. Esai again put it back in the pond. I was glad to see that Esai is recognizing the rules of the game on his own. However, Esai then began to continually pick one duck after another. Natalie sat and watched for a few seconds and then announced, "I don't want to play," got up from the table and walked away. I redirected her back to the table to help Esai clean up, but she did not want to help. Overall, I was pleased with the children's social interactions.

I feel that the goal that I had set for today was met to the children's fullest extent.. I was not expecting the duration of the PALS Center to last for as long as it did. I was also not expecting the amount of direct peer interaction that occurred. Without my presence, the children were able to depend on each other, interact appropriately, and have a positive peer interaction. As for the next PALS Center, I found out today that Natalie and her sister will no longer be attending the program. Therefore, I will have to pair Esai

up with a child that is not as familiar with the game. However, it will be interesting to see if Esai can generalize his experience with Natalie to another child.

Child's Name: Esai

Age: 3

Location: Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center - three-year-old developmental preschool

Date: March 12, 2003

Observer: Brenda Dewart

Type of Development Observed: Social Skills

Introduction of PALS Center - Day Seven

Reaction:

Today was the second day of phase two of the PALS Center. Esai has now had the opportunity to interact in the PALS Center without the presence of an adult. He was very successful in that interaction; so today he was given the opportunity to generalize that experience with a different child. I chose Sara Anne because in the past she has shown an interest in interacting in the PALS Center. I also know that Sara Anne has appropriate play skills and is able to take turns. Sara Anne is also semi-familiar with the Lucky Ducks game. The only issue that concerns me is that Sara Anne does not have a high level of peer interaction skills. My roles today were to set up the interaction for the children and then allow them to engage in the activity on their own. During this time I tried to make myself as unavailable to the children as possible. My goal for today was to allow the children the opportunity to depend on and socially interact with one another to their fullest extent without an adult present.

I was not surprised by what happened today in the PALS Center. The children played the Lucky Ducks game for ten minutes. There was very minimal peer interaction that occurred. Each time the children did choose a duck; they would try to show it to me. Twice Esai told Sara Anne that it was her turn and she did not respond. I was happy to see that Esai did take the lead in those two instances. The children also did not play the

game in an appropriate back and forth turn taking fashion. Due to the lack of appropriate game play, the children did not interact with one another.. When Esai found all three of his ducks, he tried to get my attention to show me that he won. When I did not respond, he began to "quack," and play with his ducks. Esai then left the PALS Center to get me. During this time Sara Anne sat at the table and chose a duck once. I set up the next game for the children, gave them new cards, and then told Sara Anne that it was her turn. The children continued to not interact with one another. Sara Anne continued to show me her duck and Esai continued to look at me. At one point when Esai chose a duck, he began to play with it and then put it back in the pond. Esai tried again to get my attention; when I did not respond he left the PALS Center to get me. I again redirected him back to the table. When he got there he sat down and then waved his hand at me and stuck out his tongue. When I did not respond to this behavior, he stuck his tongue out at me three more times. Sara Anne then got up and I asked if they were all done. I gave them the box to clean up and they did.

The interaction did occur for ten minutes, however the children sat for most of the time looking around the room. I was disappointed at the severe lack of peer interaction. I was also surprised at the children's inappropriate play skills. I was hoping that Esai would take the initiative and become the leader of the interaction. I do not feel as if Esai was socially interacting with Sara Anne to his fullest extent.. Therefore, I do not feel that my goal for today was reached.

Child's Name: Esai

Age: 3

Location: Easter Seals Jayne Shover Center - three-year-old developmental preschool

Date: March 17,2003

Observer: Brenda Dewart

Type of Development Observed: Social Skills

Introduction of PALS Center - Day Eight

Reaction:

Today was scheduled to be the last day in the second phase of the PALS Center. However, due to circumstances beyond my control I could no longer be a part of the three-year-old developmental preschool program. As of today, the program is no longer associated with Easter Seals because a new company has taken over. Due to this fact I was not permitted to carry out the last PALS Center.

REQUEST FOR UNIVERSITY HONORS INDEPENDENT STUDY LEADING TO THE  
COMPLETION OF THE HONORS CAPSTONE PROJECT

COVER SHEET

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Student Name

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Local Address

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E-Mail Address

[REDACTED]  
City, ip

TLSE~  
Department and Course Number

[REDACTED]  
Student Phone Number

Spring 2003  
Semester of Registration

.;)-7-03  
Date of Request

5/03  
Graduation Date

## Teaching Social Competence

I would like to create a research project to investigate the use of a PALS Center to promote peer interaction in a preschool classroom. The PALS Center will be an area in the room that is arranged to promote peer interaction. Within the center, children with poor social skills will be paired with children that have good social skills. Adults will prompt peer interaction and as time progresses will leave the center after the introduction of the activity. The toys and materials available in the center will be limited to use only in the PALS center. In addition, the activities available in the center will require two or more partners to complete, such as a game. My hypothesis would be that the use of a PALS Center in a preschool classroom will promote peer interaction among the children. In order to track the proposed improvement of peer relationships, I would like to specifically follow the social development of one child's social interactions before the introduction of the PALS Center into the classroom and then after.

I am interested in seeing the results that the PALS Center will create in the children's peer interactions. I am curious to find out if social interactions among children can be influenced by an intervention process. Social skills are often the least likely developed skill in children. Therefore, the topic of increasing children's social interactions among peers by use of intervention is important to me as a future developmental therapist.

Resources:

- Bailey, D. B., Wolery, M. Teaching Infants and Preschoolers with Disabilities. 2nd ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1992.
- Chandler, Lynette, "Promoting Positive Peer Interaction Between Preschool-Age Children During Free Play: The PALS Center," Young Exceptional Children, 1, no. 3 (1998): 14.
- Chandler, Fowler, & Lubeck,, "AN Analysis of the Effects of Multiple Setting Events on the Social Behavior of Preschool Children with Special Needs,," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 25, no. 2 (1992): 249
- Kostelnik,, Marjorie, Laura Stein, Alice Phillips Whiren, Anne Soderman. Guiding Children's Social Development. 3rd ed. Albany, New York: Delmar, a division of Thomson Learning, Inc., 1998.
- Pellegrini, Anthony D., Observing Children in Their Natural Worlds: A Methodological Primer. Mahwah,, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1996.
- Wortham,, S. C. Assessment in Early Childhood Education,, 3rd ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 2001..

## Method of Study:

Day One:

February 10, 2003

Informal Assessment - Observation Based

On this day, I will videotape the child's interactions during free play. From the videotape, I will write a running record in order to record my observation and any notes or comments about the child's social behavior. In addition, I will fill out a checklist in order to record the child's current level of social relations. The checklist I will be using is called *High/Scope Child Observation Record/or Ages 2.5-6*, a checklist for preschool social relationships.

Day Two:

February 12, 2003

Introduction of the PALS Center

On this day, I will introduce the PALS Center to the classroom. I will then pair up the subject of the research project with another child in the class that has a higher level of social skills. The children will have a choice of two activities to engage in play with. My role will be to facilitate the children's interactions during the activity. The session will be videotaped and I will write a reaction to evaluate what happened in the session.

Day Three:

February 19, 2003

Continuation of the PALS Center

Day three will be conducted the same as day two.

Day Four:

February 26, 2003

Continuation of the PALS Center

Day four will be conducted the same as day three.

Day Five:

March 3, 2003

Informal Assessment - Observation Based

On this day, I will videotape the child's interactions during free play. From the videotape, I will write a running record in order to record my observation and any notes or comments about the child's social behavior. In addition, I will fill out a checklist in

order to record the child's current level of social relations. The checklist I will be using is called *High/Scope Child Observation Record for Ages 2.5-6*, a checklist for preschool social relationships.

Day Six:

March 5, 2003

Continuation of the PALS Center

On this day, I will again pair up the subject of the research project with another child in the class that has a higher level of social skills. The children will have a choice of two activities to engage in play with. Today will be the first day that my role will change. I will instead set up the activity for the children and then let the children engage in the activity on their own. During this time I will try to not be available to the children so that they will learn to depend on and socially interact with each other without teacher direction. The session will be videotaped and I will write a reaction to evaluate what happened in the session.

Day Seven:

March 12, 2003

Continuation of the PALS Center

Day seven will be conducted the same as day six.

Day Eight:

March 19, 2003

Continuation of the PALS Center

Day eight will be conducted the same as day seven.

Day Nine:

March 26, 2003

Informal Assessment - Observation Based

On this day, I will videotape the child's interactions during free play. From the videotape, I will write a running record in order to record my observation and any notes or comments about the child's social behavior. In addition, I will fill out a checklist in order to record the child's current level of social relations. The checklist I will be using is called *High/Scope Child Observation Record for Ages 2.5-6*, a checklist for preschool social relationships.

With all of the information that I have collected, I will write an evaluation of the research project that I have conducted and determine whether or not my hypothesis was correct. I will submit this to my faculty capstone advisor on March 31, 2003 for any comments that she may have. This will then be submitted to the Honors office on April 4, 2003.

## Personal Background:

### Related Courses:

- Assessment of Infants and Preschoolers with Disabilities
- Instructional Systems for the Education of Infants and Preschoolers with Disabilities
- Interactions of Parents and Young Children with Disabilities
- Child Development
- An Observational Approach to the Study of Young Children
- Principles of Guiding Young Children
- Program Planning for Infants, Toddlers, and Their Parents

### Related Experience:

- Practicum in Infant and Child Development Laboratories
- Child Development Internship in the Early Intervention Setting with a Developmental Therapist
- Student Aide at an Early Childhood Special Education Program

Signature Page

'?J:D" ~A~  
Student Signature



Request Approved:

Lynette K. Chandler  
Printed Name of Faculty Capstone Advisor

Lynette Chandler  
Signature

1)-7-03  
Date of Acceptance by Faculty Capstone Advisor

V/Act Do fsc  
Printed Name of Department Chairperson

Jat~~  
Signature

2-7-03  
Date of Acceptance by Chairperson

University Honors Program Director

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Date of Acceptance by Director

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