Shontelle Morrill

FHS 1500

School Age Observation

 On October 4, 2011, I went to a barbeque at a close friend’s house. Most of their family was there including fourteen of her nieces and nephews. I decided to observe her eight year old niece Hailey. She will be turning nine this month and was quiet fun to get to know.

 Hailey was of average weight and height. She seemed to be very coordinated. The girls decided to choreograph and perform a dance and sing a Taylor Swift while we were there. She seemed to be the leader of this. I was impressed by the degree of difficulty the dance was. Some of the younger kids had a hard time staying up with Hailey and some of the other girls. She seemed to be very determined and worked hard for quite a while to show the rest of the girls what to do. This made me think of Erikson’s industry versus inferiority. She was definitely trying to master the dance and also the song they were singing together. She was also trying to help the other kids master it. I did notice her start coughing after they were dancing and playing for a while. Her mom told her she needed to take a break and she came to sit with them. I later asked if that was something that happened quite often or if she just wasn’t feeling well. She said that Hailey had asthma and it was something that happened quite a bit. This year she said it had gotten worse and they had to put her on a low dose steroid to keep things under control. In the text book it says that asthma is becoming a childhood epidemic.

 Hailey was so smart. I was really impressed by the funny things she said. She spent quite a while playing with the other kids but she also spent a good amount of time conversing with all of the adults. She didn’t seem bored and she actually threw her input in quite a few times. She wasn’t like a typical eight year old that would trip over their words in front of a bunch of people, she knew what she had to say and she said it very matter-of-factly. I think this was a good indicator of how she got along with adults. She was very respectful and outgoing.

When I first got to the house I noticed a bunch of paintings sitting on the table. I walked over and looked at them and was very interested in the paintings and who had done them. Hailey soon saw that I was looking at her paintings and ran over to try to sell one of them to me. She said very confidently, “I’m selling those for twenty dollars. Would you like one?” I wouldn’t have guessed that the paintings were done by an eight year old girl. I also wouldn’t have guessed that she was such a determined business woman. This is what made me want to do my observation on her. In the text it says, “Children themselves work on regulating their temper, shyness, honesty, and fear. They develop what is called **effortful control** in their conscious attempts to master social interactions and emotions (Kochanska & Knaack, 2003; Veenstra et al., 2008).” I felt like Hailey had really done well doing these things. She was very outgoing and very confident in the things she had to say. One of her cousins is two years older than she was and was extremely shy. She participated when the girls did the dance but she was very reserved and made no effort at all to be noticed while the other girls were really fighting to be the loudest or the biggest.

 Hailey was a little emotional. Her brother is ten and her sister is five, they both really enjoy picking on her. He made her cry quite a few times while we were there. Once or twice she got hurt and cried but a more times than that she came up crying because her brother wouldn’t let her do something or because her sister said “this” or “that” that “wasn’t true” or that hurt her feelings. She very quickly turned from the mature, over achieving, painting selling eight year old to a whiney, angry eight year old. I didn’t ever see her get physical or try to get them back when they were being mean to her, she immediately started whining or crying or sulked over to her parents to have them take care of the situation. Hailey did get along with the rest of the children quite well. Like I said before, she was really a leader to most of them, even the girls that were older than she was followed the things she was doing and followed the orders she gave.

 Hailey was with someone else the entire time we were at the barbeque. She was either playing with all the other kids or she was talking with the adults. She seemed to be well liked and looked up to except, of course, by her brother and sister; they mostly tormented her. Hailey never acted like she had to have someone to play with or like she needed to be with the other kids to keep herself occupied, it just seemed like the other kids were drawn to her positivity and enthusiastic attitude.

 Some of the characteristics I noticed for Hailey and a few of her cousins that seemed to be around the same age were, they loved to be noticed, they worked together really well most of the time, they were all a little whiney or pouty at some point during the night, they were able to make decisions on their own, they were willing to try new things and show other people the things they were learning.

 Hailey seemed like a very happy, smart girl. I enjoyed watching her. She kept me laughing for quite a while that night.