

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Paper 0637/12
Theory Paper

Key messages

The paper asked for candidates to recall their knowledge and use it in a number of different ways. Candidates needed to respond to direct questions through giving accurate information, offer their understanding and opinion.

In order to do well on this question paper it was essential that candidates read and understood each question.

General comments

- Many learners responded to questions by suggesting children watch television. This is rarely going to be beneficial for young children's development.
- The majority of learners had made good attempts to answer all of the questions.
- Learners responded well to **Question 12** and gained good marks for this.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

All candidates attempted this question. This question was generally answered well. However, some did not state a play facility specifically as the question asked.

Question 2

Most learners achieved full marks in response to this question.

Question 3

Some learners did not consider the age of children covered by the syllabus and suggested actions by older children. Many gave a good range of responses.

Question 4

This question required learners to focus on behaviours that children **display**. Therefore, responses that did not convey this did not receive a mark.

Question 5

This question was answered well by learners. Some learners did not give enough detail in their response, such as stating 'folic acid'. On occasion some learners did not give what was to be encouraged and instead stated something that should be avoided. There were a few occasions where learners missed out on marks through repetition. For example, stating that a balanced diet was to be encouraged and then stating eating more fruit and vegetables.

Question 6

This was a question where few learners gained full marks. Some learners repeated the statement, such as 'recognition of letters' under the heading recognition. Many learners responded by saying 'seeing letters on television', rather than focusing on **how** children use recognition and recall.

Question 7

Good responses were given to this question with many learners receiving maximum marks.

Question 8

Many learners repeated types of illness rather than giving different reasons for visiting a doctor, this did not achieve a mark. Several learners gave good responses.

Question 9

Some learners did not elaborate on the reasoning for having children being expensive so missed out on marks. Many got full marks and gave good suggestions.

Question 10

- (a) Good responses were given to this question with many learners showing their understanding of the menstrual cycle and giving a good level of detail in their response.
- (b) Many learners knew about the different types of hormones. In some cases, learners confused their responses and missed marks, particularly in response to progesterone.
- (c) Generally good responses were provided. The majority of learners gave good, clear and correct responses.
- (d) Learners gave good responses with some elaborating and discussing artificial insemination which was awarded a mark.

Question 11

- (a) This question was answered less well by learners. In particular, many learners did not relate genes to emotional behaviours. When discussing people outside the home, some learners did not focus on children under 5 years old.
- (b) The vast majority of learners gained marks for this question. Learners who received most marks expanded on their answers, rather than simply stating that their response promoted bonding.
- (c) This question was answered well by the learners and many received full marks.

Question 12

- (a) Many learners opted to respond to this question and did so well. There were some learners who did not attempt all parts of the questions, particularly relating to care provisions that might be available for children. Some learners discussed developmental milestones and how these can be used to identify children who do not make good progress in their development. This demonstrated a good level of understanding.
- (b) Learners who responded to this question received most marks with several achieving full marks. These learners answered each part of the question in depth. Many showed a depth of understanding about the causes of infertility and the possible solutions. Good attention was paid to the diverse reasons why some people might be unable to have children without intervention. Learners also gave good discussions around the social implications of fertility treatment, including religious and cultural factors. Learners who responded in this nature tended to achieved maximum marks.

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Paper 0637/02
Child Development Study

General comments

The Child Studies were on the whole of good quality. Although generally over-marked by centre teachers with one or two notable exceptions, the degree of over-marking was less marked than previously. Most candidates appear to be using the mark scheme to organise the presentation of their studies, providing a logical path, including all the relevant parts. The report should be around 3000 words – candidates should record their word-count at the end of the work. Candidates vary in choosing to observe one child aged up to 5 and compare with the norm or compare with another child. Centres obviously offer advice on this and it varies according to the availability of opportunities to observe other children of a similar age. Some candidates are still choosing to observe family members, which does compromise the anonymity for children. Where candidates do choose this option, they need to analyse the pros and cons of this in more detail than they are generally doing. It would be useful for the candidates' analytical skills if they recorded the age of the child in years and months for each observation.

The approach to current theories of child development varied considerably between centres. The most in-depth responses compared what they had observed with what current literature says on the aspect of development and again used a compare and contrast method to look at two or more theories. The weaker projects provided a shallow comparison with a few key norms. A consideration of the context of the child's life and a 'picture' of the societal, cultural and familial life would be useful as these factors can have an impact on child development.

Candidates need to be explicit about using a pseudonym for their child to protect true identities.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Introduction and Planning.

- (a) The best studies provided a good introduction in which the candidate discussed what they **intended** to do and why, sometimes introducing a personal link to explain their choice of focus, whether they were looking at physical, cognitive, social, language or emotional development. Some candidates are clearly writing their plan at the end of the process and using the past tense in doing so, the plan should be written at the beginning.
- (b) Background information on the child/children was generally well presented. The better reports provided a well-rounded context, including physical, intellectual, emotional and language development as well as family situation and social/environmental background.
- (c) The explanation, with the relevant theoretical information, of the development area chosen with reasons for choice, is an area where many candidates could improve. Firstly, a clear statement of the developmental area chosen is required, this was not always included in the reports. The reasons for the choice could easily be linked to the interesting aspects of the relevant theories.

Section B

Application

- (a) The written report of each observation made was approached by candidates in different ways. The most logical was an observation report clearly dated and with a clear intention of what was to be observed and why, followed by the actual observation. Use of dates and times helps the analysis of the information gleaned through observation as would the exact age of the child/ren in years and months. Reports giving a general picture of what went on during each visit with the child tended to miss detail and to record selectively.
- (b) The application of knowledge and understanding of accepted child development theories to the observations is obviously a higher level skill than the simpler description of what happened, but a natural corollary.
- (c) Comparing the evidence of their observations with the norms or other children of a similar age was generally satisfactorily covered.

Section C

Analysis and Evaluation

This is generally the area where candidates need the most direction and support. It is also the section where it becomes obvious if the time frame for the study is limited, mostly because the development observed was also limited and therefore less to analyse and discuss.

If the original plan was unclear about what aspect of child development was to be observed, then the conclusion in this section was also weak. Reports should be concise about what it is that is going to be observed – narrow the field right down and make it specific to one aspect of intellectual development, rather than intellectual development as a whole, for instance. This would also help with the final section which asks candidates to identify areas for further development and improvement of a child study.

Some candidates were able to discuss the holistic nature of development whilst at the same time drawing on specific examples from their observations. Some were able to comment on the historical development of the theories to show how our understanding of child development is advancing, although these were in the minority.

There was quite a wide variation in the reports reflecting on strengths and weaknesses, many reports were weak in this area. However some honesty about what aspects of the study went well and what areas were more problematic was evident in the stronger reports.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Paper 0637/03
Practical Investigation

General comments

The Practical Investigation gives candidates the opportunity to do some first-hand research whilst learning about an aspect of child care and development. The choice of what to investigate is the key to a successful learning experience. Those candidates who choose an area of care or development benefit much more than those who choose to carry out a piece of consumer research. So, for example, simply 'investigating' which nappy cream is the 'best' or most 'economical' is the best focus for this module. Instead, it would be better to investigate whether nappy cream is beneficial, and if so how, so that deeper questions about children's care and development are being thought about, not simply addressing consumer issues. Topics as varied as children's literature, food and behaviour management provide stimulating opportunities.

The methods used for the investigation do need some analysis, so being clear in **Section A** about what investigative methods they will be using is important for candidates. Most use internet literature search, interviews and questionnaires in combination, which is to be commended. Some candidates managed to arrange interviews with professionals about their chosen topic and others manage to trial their questionnaires with three people before distributing to 20 more. A variety of research methods should be used: some reading of books, journals, internet and asking people and some observing and listening.

It is the conclusions from the research that give candidates something useful to present in their leaflets or posters. The leaflets produced have, in the main, been colourful and informative and demonstrate good use of IT skills. Candidates need to specify their target audience for the leaflet or poster.

Those candidates who show that they can see the project right through to the evaluation stage achieve the best grades. Being aware of how they can improve their own working methods and possibly achieve a more effective result next time is key. Admitting that the present research is less than perfect is admirable.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Introduction and Planning

- (a) Candidates are generally good at choosing, but perhaps some need help to refine their choices. If candidates can provide the reasons for their choice with examples from their own experiences, that is useful. Using a comparison is a useful tool too, so linking early experience of books and reading with socio-economic status, for example, makes for some useful learning.
- (b) A variety of methods must be explored and at least four methods used for full marks.
- (c) Planning and organisation requires candidates to consider timing and the need to show some empathy with their target group. An understanding of the difficulty in getting the general public to respond to questionnaires, for instance, is good at this stage.

Section B: Application

- (a) Candidates need to be using four varied methods to acquire information and this is the stage where they will be able to comment on the usefulness of each method.
- (b) Application of knowledge and understanding; this section is where candidates present their findings, remembering that the findings may be very different from their initial expectations, so keeping an open mind is important.
- (c) Candidates generally enjoy producing the leaflet or poster, but the quality of this is dependent on the quality of the information acquired through the different research methods.

Section C: Analysis and Evaluation

This is generally the area where candidates need the most direction and support. Sufficient time has to be given for this section. Candidates need to provide explicit analysis for each section. Candidates who realise that their plans were unrealistic in the timescale often do better as this shows careful evaluation – the honest approach to the task is the best! Candidates should be analysing and evaluating the investigative process, not their findings from the research; the latter should have been completed in **Section B**.