

Using the pupil profile given, identify how specific aspects of the child's holistic development could be met within an educational setting. Underpin this with references to relevant theories, research, and examples of excellent practice.

ECAD4007

Throughout this assignment I shall link the holistic approach to teaching and learning to strategies that may be beneficial in aiding four-year-old Ella's physical, social, and cognitive development, using Ella's pupil profile provided (See Appendix A). According to Twinkl (unknown, para.2), the holistic approach to teaching and learning references the "connectedness of mind, body, and spirit". Calling upon the five key aspects to its approach; physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development of the child, the holistic approach focusses on a more diverse learning experience rather than the cognitive aspect of learning alone. These five aspects are all essential in providing each child with learning that aids a well-rounded development to thrive within the education system and the six "Area's of Learning and Experience" within the new Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2019). There are many theorists that support this concept, including Froebel, Montessori and Steiner, whom all believe that to develop the "whole child", "physical, spiritual, feeling and intellectual" aspects of development should all be seen as "equal holistic influences" (Bruce, 2015, p.23). Miller (1990, para.1) suggests that methods of teaching that reflect a holistic approach include "curriculum integration". An excellent example of this practice is the "Forest Schools" programme (National Resources Wales, 2015), where students can "develop self-confidence through hands on learning experiences in local woodland environment". During my bridging experience, I was able to see this in practice through videos in Bridging School A. Teachers at the school explained that some of the benefits of the Forest Schools intervention included the development of social skills, language and communication, and the development of self-esteem. These are all areas of development in which Ella requires support. In terms of supporting the five holistic aspects of Ella's development, teachers hold a crucial role. They are required to acknowledge the demands of each individual learner and tailor their learning experience so that it "is appropriate to their needs and helps them to achieve their best possible outcomes and fulfil their potential" (GOV.UK, Unknown) all while making sure this is "a positive, safe and inclusive experience for every child" (GOV.UK, Unknown). This links with Article 36 of the UNCRC Rights of the Child, which states, "You have the right to be kept safe from things that could harm your development" (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2022). Therefore, it is vital that Ella's class teacher can understand her individual interests, strengths and weaknesses to support and challenge her development to the greatest ability. I shall aid this by suggesting methods of learning that I believe could be beneficial to Ella.

In Ella's pupil profile, it is evident that in some physical aspects of her development, she is demonstrating normal levels of development for her age. For example, Ella is "toilet-trained" (NHS, 2022). Ella can "throw a ball overhand" and "walks up and down steps", which are both displayed as physical skills that a child aged 2-4 typically should demonstrate (Doherty and Hughes, 2013 p. 205) (See Appendix B). However, there are aspects of Ella's physical development that show she has a lack of fully developed gross-motor skills. Gross-motor skills involve wide movements of muscles. This may include, walking, running, hopping, or jumping (Alvarez, Nelson and Gonzalez, 2019, p. 2). For example, Ella is

only able to walk up and down steps “two feet to a step, holding on to an adult’s hand”. This means that she is unable to perform the skill independently. As well as this, she is unable to “hop on one foot consistently”. Ella’s inability to “catch a bounced ball”, which is a skill highlighted as being norm for ages 2-4 (See Appendix B), shows that she also must further develop her fine-motor skills. Fine-motor skills require the use of smaller muscles to carry out actions such as “grasping, object manipulation, or drawing” (Alvarez, Gonzalez and Nelson, 2019, p. 2). It is essential to develop fine-motor skills as early as possible to gain the ability to hold utensils such as pencils and cutlery correctly in future. In Ella’s profile, we see that she can “hold a pencil with a ‘splayed’ four finger grip”, thus reinforcing the idea that her fine-motor skills need to be developed further. An intervention that could be used to aid the development of Ella’s physical skills is the “Successful Kinesthetic Instruction for Pre-schoolers” (SKIP). All teachers within the SKIP intervention are trained to “teach children the foundation skills they need to be competent movers and so access a range of physical activity” (University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Unknown). During my time at Bridging School A, I was able to speak to a teacher who had received SKIP training. She explained that within the school, they implement SKIP into weekly Physical Education sessions. Within these sessions, the teacher set up three “gardens”. In each garden there are different locomotor activities targeting different motor skills. These included (but are not limited to), obstacle courses, throwing and catching games, and jumping/hopping exercises. In each session, the learners are encouraged to move freely throughout the gardens in whichever direction they preferred, thus developing the child’s independence. During my experience whilst bridging, I was also able to witness techniques used in the classroom which were targeted at improving fine-motor skills. These techniques included ‘finger gym’ and ‘doh-disco’. These exercises took place each morning and focus on movement of individual fingers as well as whole hand movements, with an aspect of fun added to this, such as music that entertained the children. Contrary to my opinion, theorist Arnold Gesell (1954, quoted in Doherty and Hughes, 2013, p. 196), supporting the “biological-maturation perspective” suggests that “since development is the result of inheritance, no amount of stimulation can alter its course”. Gesell took the view that development was “controlled by genetic factors”. This would mean that teaching Ella through incentives such as “SKIP Cymru” and “finger gym” would have no benefit to her motor skills whatsoever. On the other hand, Fitts and Posner’s three-stage model (1967, quoted in Doherty and Hughes, 2013, p.197), suggests that gross-motor skills are developed in three stages. Firstly, the “cognitive stage” is about “getting to know the cognitive demands of the task”. Secondly, the “associative stage” involves “greater consistency in the movement”. And finally, the “autonomous stage” is when the skill becomes “automatic”, and the child can perform the skill without help from a more knowledgeable other. Therefore, this concept supports my idea that Ella will be able to develop her physical skills through teacher led sessions in the “cognitive stage”, allowing her to freely explore her movement capabilities within the “associative stage”.

Although teachers undoubtedly are influential in the development of their students, it is also the responsibility of parents, careers, family members and all other peers involved in the upbringing of Ella. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory (1979) displays a series of layers, each representing a different group of individuals who impact a child’s maturation. The inner-most layer is called the ‘micro-system’ and has the most effect on the child’s development; including family members, friends and school peers. These individuals all have ‘direct personal experience’ with the child. According to Bronfenbrenner, the family is “the most efficient means of making human beings human”

(Bronfenbrenner, U. 1979). Therefore, it can be argued that the most important way for a child to develop certain social qualities is for them to be led by the example of those closest to them. Within Ella's pupil profile, it is evident that she is "reluctant to share" toys and activities with other children and she can show a lack of "care and respect" These are characteristics of a child at stage two of Erikson's "Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development" theory, showing that Ella is reliant on a significant caregiver and is reluctant to explore activities with other children in the classroom without their guidance (Sprouts, 2017). I believe that this can be overcome using imaginative play (as it states in her profile that she enjoys playing 'pretend') within the child's life outside of school as well as with her teachers and class peers. This is supported using Bandura's "Bobo Doll Experiment" in which a child imitates the actions of an adult. Bandura states that behavior is learned by "watching others behave in those ways" (1973, quoted in Bee and Boyd, 2014, p. 284). Therefore, if Ella can be shown how to share and play with others, and to show care and be respectful whilst doing so, she will be able to replicate this in her own play experience.

Cognitive development can be defined as "the process by which human beings acquire, organise, and learn to use knowledge" (Gauvain and Richard, 2016, p.317). Listed in her pupil profile, there are many teacher concerns regarding Ella's cognitive development. This includes her inability to "count over ten objects accurately", and to "tell a short story in full". Curriculum for Wales suggests that "In the early years, play forms an important part in the development of mathematics and numeracy" (Welsh Government, 2019). To teach Ella skills such as counting and simple addition and subtraction tasks, I believe the use of number games could be beneficial. In Bridging School A, I was able to witness activities such as counting using conkers, writing addition formula in shaving foam and counting using Lego blocks. All of these activities took place in tuff trays, a common resource within foundation phase classrooms. Here I could see pupils enjoying each task and developing their math skills collaboratively. This approach can also be beneficial for Ella to develop her language skills. For example, writing letters and simple words in sand and matching objects to their associated label games. This is supported by constructivist Piaget's Theory of Developmental Stages. According to Piaget's theory of developmental stages, Ella is in the "pre-operational stage (ages 2-7 years)" (Bee and Boyd, 2014, p.176). During this phase, children are expected to develop their independent curiosity and desire to learn via their imagination during classroom tasks such as those I have listed, thus increasing their knowledge and skills. Contrary to this, theorist Vygotsky believed that there is a sociological element to the development of a child, meaning that when they "play or interact" with others, they are in the "zone of proximal development, aiming their conversation, their questions, and their assistance at a level that is just above the level the children could manage on their own", meaning that with the aid of other children or staff, children are able to master new skills that they potentially couldn't without any social interaction (Bee and Boyd, 2014, p.220). Consequently, I suggest that to develop Ella's cognitive skills, teachers propose activities such as interactive number and language games that incorporate pupil inclusion and collaboration, meaning that Ella has opportunity to enjoy her learning, socialise with others to expand her knowledge and activate her personal imagination.

In conclusion, this essay has explored the aspects of Ella's holistic development that are most in need of support and the possible methods in doing so, within Ella's educational setting. Arguably, the most influential method in doing this is the use of teaching through play. This is because "play is considered children's 'work' and is the vehicle through which children acquire knowledge and skills" (UNICEF, 2018). Therefore, I believe that if Ella's class teacher were to implement more play-based activities, specifically

those involving sharing and pupil collaboration, maths and numbers, and fine/gross-motor movements, improvements would be seen in terms of Ella's physical, social, and cognitive development.

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Appendix

Appendix A:

Pupil Profile3

Ella is 4 and has been in the Reception class for 6 months.



The Class Teacher is becoming increasingly concerned because even though she attended playgroup and has supportive parents, her progress is limited. Ella finds difficulty following classroom routines, appears confused when instructions are given, doesn't initiate interaction with adults or peers. During play she imitates peers briefly. Ella is a popular and happy member of the class. She is very reliant on adult direction and has difficulty making choices.

On entry to Reception, Ella's Foundation Phase Profile indicated the following strengths and identified particular teacher concerns:

Personal & Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity

- Ella is not always happy to separate from her mum each morning
- She can at times, show affection for other children and for adults and enjoys other children 'taking care' of her
- Ella does not consistently show care and respect for others
- Ella is toilet-trained
- Ella plays on her own a lot, and doesn't appear aware of peers
- At times, she is reluctant to share resources during play activities with others
- She is unable to negotiate solutions to conflicts without adult intervention.
- Ella finds difficulty understanding how decisions may affect herself and others
- Ella is beginning to communicate her feelings and is aware that others may have different feelings
- She is starting to develop new fears as a result of her active imagination

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

- Ella can talk, though not always clearly, using many one word responses
- She is able to hear and has good listening skills
- She can hold a pencil with a 'splayed' four finger grip and scribble on paper
- Ella uses gesture to communicate her needs, although she can be very reluctant to do so.
- She rarely initiates talk, but will respond
- She has not yet established a definite hand preference and can't imitate zig zag lines

zag lines

- Ella plays silently alongside her peers in the role play area
- She occasionally speaks in sentences of five to six words
- Ella is able to recall parts of a story

- Ella is unable to tell a short story in full

Mathematical Development

- Ella can be persuaded to build a tower of bricks and tolerates an adult counting these alongside her
- Ella doesn't as yet appear interested in sorting, matching, playing or joining in with counting games and rhymes
- She is not able to point to and count over ten objects accurately
- Ella is developing her understanding of time and can tell an adult what happened yesterday and what is going to happen in the future
- She uses spatial awareness to put puzzles together

Welsh Language Development

- Ella appears to understand that 'Bore da' is a greeting
- Ella doesn't appear to understand that 'Bore Da' is a greeting in a language different from her own

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Ella can name some simple objects - such as doggy
- Ella rarely initiates interaction with adults to tell them about something she has seen
- Ella is aware of different gender
- She understands the use of common household objects

Physical Development

- She can come up and down steps, two feet to a step, holding on to an adult's hand

- Ella can't hop on one foot consistently
- Ella can appear somewhat unsteady on her feet and needs adult supervision especially when playing outdoors
- She can throw a ball overhand
- Ella is unable to catch a bounced ball

Creative Development

- Ella appears to enjoy listening to rhymes
- She knows the difference between fantasy and reality
- Ella plays "pretend" which is becoming increasingly inventive
- Ella doesn't join in with singing
- She will bang on a musical instrument at singing time
- She can be reluctant to join in with some 'messy' activities

Appendix B

Motor development viewed as a staged model

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Table 7.3 *Continued*

Age		Gross and fine motor skills
2-4 years	 	Walks up and down stairs Runs with confidence Balances on one foot Rides a tricycle Uses a slide alone Throws and catches a ball Draws crosses and circles
5 years	 	Jumping skills quite proficient Walks up and down stairs alternating feet Performs forward rolls Uses scissors safely Copies shapes on paper with some accuracy Draws a recognisable person
6-8 years		Displays some skill in batting Displays some skill in ball games Swims Can skip and play hopscotch Writes cursively