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ECE 232 Language Arts in ECE

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Morning Star Childcare Center and Preschool Observation Field Trip Reflection

 I was given the opportunity to visit Morning Star Childcare center and Preschool to view whether the environment supported a language rich facility. I am going to have to say I was fairly impressed with the amount of language rich qualities that this center had present.

 In the infant room there was always a teacher present and talking to each infant. Teachers gave eye contact to the child that was wanting attention and they communicated back to the child as if the child knew how to talk. The infants just babbled and cooed, but they were showing facial expressions of emotion in response to their teacher. Also, teachers used sign language while saying the word that they meant. This allows the infants to use gestures instead of just crying when they want or need something. Obviously signing takes a lot of practice, but with practice the infants will be able to communicate within the first six months of their life.

 In the toddler room there was several examples of a language rich environment. Students were given a quiet corner to encourage early reading. Teachers also used storytelling and audio books during circle time for children to listen and to hear stories and to learn words and vocabulary. Another quality that the toddler room had was that they had and alphabet wall, colors posters, numbers posters, and animal posters. These posters and pictures can be used as resources for the students to go to when learn their numbers, alphabet, animals, and colors. One other quality that I noticed was that everything in the room had a label on it. On each label there was a picture, and a letter, and a name. This allows for children to learn by visualizing, and sounding out the names and pronouncing each letter.

 The final room that I got the opportunity to observe was Mr. Daniel’s Preschool Room. I was able to watch a live language arts lesson take place. The story being used was “If You Give a Mouse a Cookie.” The teacher used a puppet to catch the student’s attention. The teacher gave short and precise instruction of what she expected the students to do when listening and actively participating in the telling of the story and following through with the activity that came after. The students were to help the teacher create a story just like the one they just read. Although, this time the students were going to get to choose the setting and what the mouse needed during the particular story with props provided by the teacher. Each child got a chance to speak a piece of the story. The teacher created a comfortable environment for the student’s to feel respected when it was their turn to speak. I noticed that one student picked a quarter out of the center and had to come up with something that the mouse wanted to do with the quarter. The student hesitated to come up with something, so the teacher gave him a few examples and gave the student time to think about how he was going to respond. At first the child just said that the mouse bought something cool, but given the time to think about the response and listening to the teacher try to expand off of what the child was saying, the child came up with “The mouse instead of buying something with the quarter, found the quarter instead.” “The mouse found the quarter outside by the bouncy ball,” the mouse was previously playing with in the story. It is important that you don’t force your students to do things that put them into the position to where they are publically humiliated because then they may never feel comfortable speaking again in front of others.

 After the lesson, I was given the opportunity to walk around the room to find items that supported having a language rich classroom. I saw that the preschool room had a giant word wall all in alphabetical order. I also saw that everything in the room had a label on it with just the name of the item. I saw that outside the classroom student’s stories and illustrations were hung up on the wall for others to read when they had the time. The classroom had a teacher library where children were able to check out books and read them at home or in the comfy reading corning in the corner of the room.

 Overall, my experience at Morning Star was great. I learned a lot about why it is important to start children at an early age with reading and reviewing words, sounds, rhythms, and even gestures such as sign language. Having a Language rich environment is key for success in the areas of speech, reading, communicating, writing, and vocabulary.