

## **Examples of Applications for Service Learning Paper for Psy 251**

Here are some examples of how applications can be made for your Child Psychology Service Learning paper. Each of your entries need to show how theory and/or research can be applied to the children you have interacted with during your service learning experience. (I have not corrected this paper for any errors.)

### **Attachment:**

Each week the parents would always stay in the gym and watch their kids play basketball. With the exception of one time this wasn't a problem. But I was able to see what kind of attachment each kid had with their mom or dad. As Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation experiment showed, the majority of the kids had a secure attachment where they would look at their parents after they did something good, but for the most part they had no problem being away from them. There were a couple Anxious-Avoidant kids who you could tell were independent and just did their own thing as soon as they walked in. Also when it was time to leave they didn't run for their parents like everyone else did to tell them how they did, they just took their time and walked over.

There was only one kid who was Ambivalent-Resistant, and it was very noticeable. He was also the only kid who I had any trouble with during the entire duration of the camp. Once he would enter the gym his mother had to convince him to go and play. By the fourth week he would go to his mom during most of the drills, except when we would play sharks and minnows. This proved to be a problem because it made the other kids think that they could pick and choose what they would participate in. This also showed that he was Ambivalent-Resistant in that one minute he would want to be next to his mother, and the next minute he would go back to the group. What did stand out to me

was that he never showed any sort of excitement ever. When he made a shot or when he was running around, he always seemed very reluctant to show any sort of emotion at all. I didn't know if this was because he was a slow to warm up child and he just didn't have enough time, and if that were the case it was probably due in large part to the fact that he had spent most of the time attached to his mother instead of getting to know any of the kids. It also could have been that he simply wasn't interested and maybe in another activity he would show tons of energy and excitement and his temperament was a mix between easy and difficult. This suggests that if he was put into an environment that interested him but was still different, he would be able to adapt. But if put into an environment he didn't express any interest in, he would be very reluctant to change for anything. This could also have direct correlation to his attachment with his parents in that he could showcase a very secure attachment with an easy temperament but have the ambivalent-resistant attachment when he's in a difficult situation.. I believe that it is a cry for attention and this is the only way they know how to get it. Ainsworth's anxious-avoidant attachment fits them well. They show no emotions with the caregivers at all.

**Conditioning:**

With any sort of teaching, some sort of conditioning is used. With the kids I found that operant conditioning worked the best in getting the children to act the way I would like them to. The most obvious example of this is when I would tell the younger group that we were going to play the game "sharks and minnows"(their favorite activity, by far.) if they would behave well and perform the drills well. Each time we would rotate it would turn into a, if we do this well then you guys get to pick what we do next time. They responded very well to this, showed that reinforcement had a great effect on them. Along with this, they responded very well to punishment too. There was an instance with

the younger kids where we had a problem with a couple of the kids knocking the basketballs out of other's hands while in line. The problem was easily remedied after I told them they would sit out sharks and minnows if it continued to happen.

This also held true with the older kids. Everyday, since there were a small number of us, I would tell them that if we didn't have any problems in the first half hour, then we would spend the rest of the time playing a real game. The first time we played the kids would constantly foul each other. Because of this I told them that if it continued we would have to stop the game short and just do dribbling drills the rest of the time. Since they didn't stop fouling, I had to stick to my word or they would think they could do whatever they wanted with no consequences. Although they weren't happy about having to stop the game, which was the last time we had any trouble with the kids fouling each other. Positive reinforcement also got the older kids to work together much better. Since one of their favorite things to do was shooting on the big hoops, I would let them only if they made five shots in a row. After this the kids started cheering each other on to make their shots. The boys were even cheering on the girls and giving them high fives and compliments. By doing this they were providing each other positive reinforcement after each shot instead of just myself.