Based on what I’ve learned about cognitive, socioemotional, physical, and moral development theories, Charlie seems to be right on target for his age. He appears to be a typical healthy, active 6 year old. I have outlined how I came to this decision plus offer some recommendations that will help him continue to grow in each of these areas. One of the best things Charlie has going for him is the support and care of his loving family.

Socioemotional Development

Socioemotional development seeks to explain the changes in a child's emotions, interaction with others, self-concept, and personality. Erik Erikson originated one of the most popular theories on this concept called the 8 Stages of Man. This theory focuses on the conflicts between a person’s internal and external worlds. Erikson believed that as we age, we pass through different stages that require us to solve conflicts that help us develop our personalities and identities.

According to this idea, Charlie would be in the latency stage because he’s between the ages of 3-6. Children in this stage begin to fully develop skills in the areas of logic, reading and writing. Consistent with this theory, the conflict that Charlie faces in this stage is between industry versus inferiority.

During this stage, children are trying to gain a sense of initiative. If they are encouraged by parents and caregivers the child will feel industrious and become confident that they can achieve their goals. If this is restricted by parents, the child will begin to doubt their own abilities and are then unable to reach their full potential.

 From what I’ve read about Charlie, he definitely fits into this stage. He’s able to read, write and is starting to think logically as evident by the fact that he can write his first and last name, count to 100 and is beginning to learn his letters and sounds. Plus he knows what he likes yet I think he’s not given enough opportunities to decide for himself.

For instance, Charlie clearly is not interested in playing the piano. Instead of forcing him to do so, I think his parents should give him the chance to decide what he would rather do. As mentioned, he has a very strong vocabulary and at an age where he’s clearly able to articulate what he enjoys. Another example of an opportunity for him to learn independence was when he was at the garage sale. I believe Charlie should’ve been able to spend his money at the garage sale the way he wanted. I think this would’ve been a great opportunity to reinforce his ability to make decisions for himself.

My recommendation is that his parents allow him more chances to make decisions based on his wants and needs. I also think that his parents should seek out opportunities for Charlie to participate in activities that he likes.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development is focused on how children process information and make sense of the world around them. This includes how a child remembers, reasons, problem solves and makes decisions with available information. It also includes how children develop language skills throughout their lives. Many people have developed theories that attempt to explain this phenomenon; however I will focus on Jean Piaget model as it relates to Charlie.

Piaget’s theory explains that people develop cognitive and language skills as they go through distinct stages. Furthermore, he believed that children were active creators of knowledge verses passive recipients. According to Piaget, children in this stage are unable to see from another person’s viewpoint; they don’t have concrete thoughts and cannot manipulate information. However, they are good at pretending and role play becomes increasingly important during this phase.

Based on this idea, I believe that Charlie would fit in the preoperational stage that usually includes children ages 2-7. First, Charlie isn’t able to think logically yet. An example of this is the fact that he’s afraid of the dark and is unable to sleep without the lights on. Many children at this age experience this type of fear. It may be due to the fact that there are fewer distractions to keep his mind occupied at night so his imagination runs wild.

Another example that supports this is the fact that when he plays with his sister he only wants to play with his toys and the games that he likes; he’s not interested at all in what his sister wants to do. This supports the fact that children in this stage are unable to see life from other’s perspectives. Finally, Charlie really enjoys playing pretend which Piaget says increases during this time in a child’s life.

I would recommend that Charlie get the opportunity to interact with children his age more regularly. The goal would be to expose him to a wide variety of viewpoints in hopes of helping him understand that others see things differently than him. Plus, this exposure will help him understand that there are concrete rules when playing games with others and that it’s not appropriate to change the rules to benefit him. Also, I think more effort should be put in to making bedtime a soothing experience. This is a great time for some one-on-one time with parents. In addition, I would suggest his parents encourage him to read until he falls asleep to keep his mind occupied on something other than the monsters.

Physical Development

Physical development covers a range of areas from brain development to motor skills. Most of the work in the area of physical development is organized according to developmental milestones that children are expected to achieve by a certain age.

At 6 years old, Charlie’s gross and fine motor abilities seem to be appropriate for his age. For instance, he’s able to jump, kick a ball and pedal a bicycle without training wheels. Plus he’s able to dress and undress himself. Although his parents are concerned that he doesn’t write his name correctly, this could be attributed to that fact that he’s still developing his fine motor skills.

My recommendations to help Charlie continue to develop his gross and fine motor skills are:

* Register Charlie for a sport or activity, such as gymnastics, or drama and provide hands-on activities that will allow him time to practice these skills with kids his age.
* Provide more chances for him to play outside and explore nature. This will allow him opportunities to burn off some of his excess energy. Plus, I think this will help at bedtime and aid in him falling asleep earlier.
* Stop requiring him to write his name 15 times each night and understand that children at this age are still developing their fine motor skills.
* Also, I think that Charlie is strong in bodily-kinesthetic and naturalistic areas as suggested by the **Theory of Multiple Intelligences introduced by Howard Gardner. As a result, I think that the opportunities mentioned above will allow him to excel in these areas.**

Moral Development

Moral development centers on how and by what means children learn right from wrong. One of the most popular theories of moral development was created by Lawrence Kohlberg who was interested in the reasons that people make moral decisions; not so much on whether those decisions were right or wrong. His theory is based on the idea that people make decisions that can be classified in three distinct levels each with two stages. I think that because Charlie struggles with trying to find the answer that he thinks his mom is seeking, he most appropriately fits in stage 3 of this theory that’s characterized by trying to do what’s right to maintain good interpersonal relationships with others.

Overall, I think that Charlie is a well-developed 6 year old boy. While there are some areas he still needs to grow in, I feel that he’s developing right on target. The best thing that his family and caregivers can do is educate themselves on what children at his age are typically capable of doing and keep their expectations consistent with these philosophies. Also, they should strongly consider providing more opportunities for him to interact with children his age allowing him to choose the activities that he enjoys.

Case Study-----Charlie

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