Vera
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Introduction

A. The child I choose for my portfolio name is Vera Dantzler. She was born March 3, 2012. She is a 4 year old girl, who is outgoing and spunky. Vera stands tall above her classmates, being one of the tallest in the class. She has brown hair with bangs that highlight her smiling face. I choose Vera because of her confidence to explore her classroom and her openness to new situational experiences. She didn’t shy away from me the first day I observed her classroom, and by my third visit she was greeting me in the morning by name. She displays a great foundation of knowledge in all areas of development allowing her to build greatly upon, within her environment.

B. Vera the daughter of Alta and Drake Dantzler, is their second born child. First born brother Rowan, is a kindergartner who she looks to for examples. Vera’s mother and father are both professors in the music department at Oakland University. Vera’s parents promote her independence and have confidence in her ability to perform. (source: Ann)

C. Vera’s health is normal. There were no complications prenatally or at birth. Her present status is healthy; she does not have any major health concerns. Vera reached all her developmental milestones. Her teacher explained how Vera has made a 180’ change from last year, where she exhibited some challenging behaviors, “Maturity” her teacher says is the reason in her behavioral adjustment. Vera understands tasks quickly and is verbal in all her requests. She is developmentally above the average in her class. (source: Ann)

D. Vera has only been in one child care setting since she was born. Since 18 months Vera has been at the Lowry Center. She arrives at the center by 8 each day and participates in a full day of preschool till evening, when her parents are finished teaching. The program Vera attends has 18 children including her in her class. There are two lead teachers, and 3-5 additional assistants. The child care curriculum is High scope, where the child learns through play. The classroom has a daily routine that includes activities like large and small group times and free choice. During free choice they are able to explore the opened content areas of the room. From the kitchen area and dress up, to trains and blocks, the children have a wide variety of choices when deciding what to play with. The class has an almost equal boy to girl ratio, of children aged 3-4. Vera’s parents are very involved with the program. Vera’s class has taken many afternoon fieldtrips to the music department at OU, where both her parents work. Her parents provide different instruments for the children to explore, allowing them to hear the varieties of vocals like opera, and give the children an out of the class room experience.
A. Overall Synopsis
   a. Physical:

Vera’s physical development is evident through her play. She is aware of her body and how to take care of it. She washes her hands before meals, and remembers too after she uses the bathroom. Her gross motor skills that include her balance, strength, and flexibility are well developed. In picture C, you see Vera standing feet apart holding a foam noodle. During this activity she demonstrated much of her ability to move her body to the directions, timing her body’s large muscles to the requests of the movement. Other activities done in the classroom promote her physical development. Dancing with scarves to the music on the rug, she freely moves her body, waving her scarf in the air, keep her engaged in movement of her body (note 16). Vera explores her fine motor skills by demonstrating dexterity and hand-eye coordination shown in picture A, by using her small hand muscles to use the scissors to cut out pictures from the page. To support her physical development keep promoting her body awareness, the more aware she is of her body and how to navigate it in space, will allow her to adapt more quickly to that of skills requiring her physical development. (note 25)

b. Social-Emotional

Vera’s social and emotional development is positive and well developed. She participates with the community of the classroom by always engaging in the activity. She demonstrates a sense of competence with her confidence to explore her environment. She engages in cooperative play with many classmates during free choice. (notes 13,15,21,28) Vera is building relationships with other children and adults when she engages in cooperative play. Note 13 supports that she is engaging with others during play, as her and Chloe recall the ABC’s together to find what letter comes next. Vera is learning to recognize and label her emotions so she can better regulate her feelings. In picture I she recalls that Luca was playing with the lollipop and was holding it, that day we practiced how to resolve conflicts that arise when one child has a toy that another one wants. Vera’s feelings were hurt. Acknowledging her upset feelings and coming up with a solution that both children could agree on, helped Vera to recognize her feelings and begin to understand that there are resolutions to conflicts.

c. Cognitive

Cognitively Vera meets the areas of development. Vera is working hard on counting and color recognition. In picture B, she is sorting the colored transportations into their colors. In notes 3 and 4 she recognizes the colors present in her environment. Her mind is in working mode even during lunch, where she counts the pieces she broke her cracker into. (note 19) Vera recognizes shapes and is aware of the differences in them.
In picture J, she recalls walking stairs that day, where she drew the stairs she than labeled them with a teacher counting 1-12. Counting the one to one correspondence is an achievement of the development. Vera can follow commands made of her in the classroom, like sitting criss cross applesauce while the teacher reads a story. (note 14) She is a great example for other children to look to for direction of task. Vera has developed to recognize her daily routine, she knows what to expect from each activity, and can predict what will happen next. Vera is well on equipped to use her brain to navigate her through learning.

d. Language
Vera’s Language is well developed. Vera speaks clearly to other students and teachers. She addresses her classmates by name and comprehends the language spoke to her. Her vocabulary includes a variety of words that exceed the expectations at this age. She talks with manners and kindness to her friends, displayed in note 12, Vera asks Chloe to use the bell when she is done. Vera speaks in complete sentences with clear and correct words. She comprehends request made of her and can follow through with 2 to 3 part words commands. Vera’s is often heard singing through her play (notes 11 & 20) which is an indicator of her language development. Along with vocally speaking and comprehension, her concepts about print are evident through her book knowledge. In notes 11 & 18, she displays this knowledge by reading for pleasure. Vera can identify the letter names, as she points them out in her own name (note 8). Her alphabetically knowledge is the building foundation to language and literacy.

e. Approach to Learning
Vera’s approaches to learning are emerging during her daily routine. She demonstrates her own initiative to explore her environment. It is evident in her play, when she engages with others or when she initiates her own discovery. In note 20, she explored the music shelf and began to use the musical triangle her own way. This is fundamental for her to freely explore her environment. Vera engages herself in activities she encounters during play. In picture d she is trying to get her feet of the ground and begin to swing on the swing. Her persistent in her activity will help her by being able to expanding on the interest.

f. Creative
Vera’s Creative development is present. She fully engages in the areas of developing creativity in arts, music, movement, and pretend play. Through arts Vera has expressed herself. In picture L of her self portrait, you can see how her creativity and awareness of self have grown since the fall. Pictures i-k are from her recall journal. Weekly, Vera recalls what she did that day by expressing herself through art; this represents what she is thinking, observing, and feeling throughout the day. Vera’s creativity is expressed in her movement and music during activities like moving with scarves to different genres
of music, or when she holds a steady beat will tapping the musical triangle (note 20). Vera appreciates the arts by engaging herself in play.

B. Strengths and Interests

Vera has many strengths and interests that are present throughout her play. Based on my observations in the class and through my anecdotal notes it appears her interests are in creativity. Through much of her play she expresses her interest of music, when she sings tunes or starts a musical band in picture e. Pictures f and g exhibit her musical strengths; keeping a steady beat on a coffee container or shaking a musical tube, arts keep Vera fully engaged. Vera shows strengths physically as well. Her fine and gross motor skills are present in her play. She can write her name while using a tripod grasp. Which before observing Vera, I didn’t know that the tripod grasp was a complex skill that needs mastery for efficient writing skills. Her success in writing with the tripod grasp will benefit her while she continues to grow into writing more. Tracing stencils with her tripod grip is great practice for her and her fine motor skills (note 9). Her gross motor skills include using her large muscle, in note 25, Vera ran across the playground kicking the ball in front of her, following the ball, and giving another kick. These multiple movements of her body demonstrate her strengths and flexibilities within these motor skills.

C. Conclusions & Recommendations

Currently in terms of development, Vera’s is that of expected from a four year old, but through this new study of seeing where her developments are, I became aware that she displays much of the same accomplished milestones as a five year old. Her cognitive and language development support this, she speaks in full clear sentences and understands language spoken to her. Cognitively she can count 10+ things and can draw a person with at least 6 body parts (herself in picture L). To foster her continued development in language and cognitive, acknowledge her successes skills and build upon them. Promote more spoken language, suggesting having her emphasis on her recall of her day; using more complex sentences will support growth. Continue to help her better understand the concept of time, relating daily routines to time of day; (example; breakfast in the morning.) will help her better learn the concept. Vera’s Physical development and Creativity are both her strengths, evident in her play and through my observations. She shows much control over her body’s movements, walking forward and backward easily, up and down stairs herself, and performing somersaults on the mat while in the atrium. She engages in healthy practices by carrying out personal care routines herself, while she washes her hands after using the bathroom without a reminder. Her creative arts
are expressed daily while she sings through transitions, draws and recalls her day, and engages in pretend play. To support her development in these areas of interest, continue to support and acknowledge her already existing accomplishments. Keep allowing her freedom of expression and expand on her interests. Promote her movements, suggesting more large muscle skills like climbing and running on the playground, or moving her legs when beginning to swing by herself. Foster her balance, making a contest of who can stand on one foot the longest, reaching 9 seconds is a major development. Vera’s emotional and social development is rapid. Through her play she engages with others sharing and taking turns, shown in notes 6 &12; that help to build relations and engage in cooperative play. Vera is becoming more independent creating a positive self identify with your support. She understands and follows the rules of the class room; she supports the community by being a positive example of what others should be doing, achieving a sense of competence. Through the community of the class Vera is learning moral developments and conflict resolutions, and demonstrating empathy. These are important skills to have to be successful socially and emotionally. To foster her continued development in these areas, follow the problem solving steps 1-6 to resolve conflicts that may arise at home. Problem solving is important for children to learn, so they will better rationale problems later in life. Encourage her awareness of self and emotions, giving label to all emotions she experiences helps her to understand and regulate them.

Closing Statement

To conclude, it was a pleasure to observe and engage with Vera over my time in the classroom. The joy she shows at school is unconditional, and makes me happy to have been part of her experience. Her teachers Ann and Debbie are both strong leaders for furthering her educational experience. Thanks to them I was able to fully engage in their classroom, participating in all areas of their day with the children. The Lowry Center is an outstanding center, that I was privileged to do my field hours at, with thanks to Julie. Thank you Dantzlers; for giving me permission to observe Vera throughout my course and for furthering my development of early childhood education.

Parent Meeting

The portfolio is shared upon completion. With the information obtained, the family community and relationship will be supported. Through observations by students, the parents are presented with evidence of their Childs learning and growth. This supports the building of a relationship between teacher and parents, with an in depth highlighted interest in their child and their strengths.