

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Paper 0637/01

Theory Paper

General comments

Section B Question 8 proved to be difficult for many candidates. However, more positively, the responses to **Section C** questions are showing some improvement.

Candidates should be encouraged to read each question carefully, so that they respond to the question which is on the question paper and not the one they think is being asked. For example, in **Question 1** candidates were required to provide four early signs of pregnancy, but some candidates gave the early signs of labour instead. **Question 3** was to do with talking, but some candidates wrote about walking. In **Question 8** candidates were required to describe the stages in learning to sit, but many candidates wrote about crawling and walking, which were not mentioned in the question and were, therefore, not required. Centres should encourage their candidates to underline or highlight key words in order to avoid this type of error.

Candidates were able to access the whole paper and followed the rubric for **Section C**. The level of response was generally weaker than in previous years, and together with the lower marks achieved on **Question 8**, led to an overall drop in performance this session.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The answer required four early signs of pregnancy, and many candidates gave excellent responses. However, a common mistake was to identify the signs of the start of labour.

Question 2

Candidates have an excellent knowledge about the reasons why breast milk is best for babies.

Question 3

The question required four ways a child learns to talk. A common error was that candidates wrote about walking instead of talking.

Question 4

The choice of baby clothes produced responses which showed a good understanding of the question.

Question 5

Most candidates knew - colour of skin, hair and eyes, height to which the child will grow and the body shape, but many did not know 'blood group' and 'size of hands and feet'.

Question 6

The question asked for four types of bullying, which were identified by many candidates. Where answers were incorrect, the reasons for bullying were given.

Question 7

Answers to this question were mainly correct, candidates explaining the differences between identical and non identical twins.

Section B

Question 8

- (a) Although there were some excellent responses to this question, with candidates correctly describing the stages a baby goes through when learning to sit, the common misinterpretation was to explain the stages in crawling and walking. Some candidates continued explaining stages over the age of five years. The syllabus only covers development up to the age of five.
- (b) Although many candidates were able to explain how to teach a child discipline, some responses were extreme and lacked understanding.

Question 9

- (a) & (b) Most candidates were able to explain the need for folic acid and how it can be obtained in the diet. This is pleasing as it is a relatively newly identified need.
- (c) This question required ways a couple could increase their chances of conceiving a baby. Some candidates correctly identified the five ways, but common errors included getting medical help, and preparing the house in readiness for the arrival of a new baby.
- (d) There were some excellent responses to the identification of foods to avoid, with reasons, during pregnancy. A few candidates included non-food things to avoid, for example smoking, drugs and alcohol.

Section C

Improvement in the responses to this section was very pleasing.

Questions 10(a) and 10(b) both produced well planned and full answers. There were no frequent errors in either question, and the level of achievement in this section was directly proportional to the depth of knowledge of the subject.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Paper 0637/02

Coursework (Child Study)

General comments

The coursework presented for assessment was generally of a high standard. Most candidates presented their work in an orderly manner, arranged correctly according to the assessment areas and clearly titled for each section. Areas of child development chosen for the study were mainly limited to one clear area of child development, e.g. physical development. It is usually best for candidates to study only one area in this way, rather than several areas of development in the child. This usually leads to a clear and detailed piece of work rather than one which barely skims the surface of many areas of development without any depth.

Candidates should be showing changes in the development in the child over the period of time of the observations. Many candidates did show these changes in development. However, during the observations, a few candidates simply compared their child with the normal accepted stages of development for a child of that age, so did not show any changes in the development throughout the study.

Most candidates produced work of a reasonable length and many included some work produced by the child during the observations. A few candidates included photographs showing development in the child, e.g. development of pincer grip. This confirmed the changes being reported. It was pleasing to find that most candidates included relevant labelling for any work and/or photographs which were included.

A few Centres continue to send their work in thick, heavy folders which is not recommended. Some Centres failed to include all the relevant documentation with their work. It is most important that these are all included. The folder of work for the Child Development Study should always be kept separate from the coursework for the Investigation section of the examination. Some Centres continue to submit both pieces of coursework in the same folder. This can lead to delays in moderation of the work if different examiners are responsible for moderating different sections.

Introduction and Planning

(a) Planning of the Study

Many candidates included a detailed plan at the beginning of their work showing where and when the observations would take place, what the aim of each observation was to be and the equipment needed, if any. The work which followed this type of plan was usually good. Some candidates who produced very brief outline plans, or none at all, usually continued their work in a disorganised way, obviously showing a lack of clear forethought. A good plan is vital at the beginning of the work.

(b) Background information

Most candidates included good detail about the child and its family, although some of the photographs included were not always relevant to the study. A few candidates explained the stages of development already reached by the child at the beginning of the study. It would be helpful for all candidates to do this so that progress in development can be demonstrated throughout the work.

(c) Explanation of development area chosen

Research into the area of development should be relevant to the particular development being studied and also to the correct age of the child being observed. Some candidates produced detailed relevant research of a reasonable length in their own words. Many candidates however copied long sections from books, often about all the different areas of development and in many cases for children of different age from the child being studied. Candidates need to take care that the research is always relevant to their own work.

Application

(a) Written record of observations made

There were some excellent written records of the observations, explaining what happened on each visit and detailing the development shown each time. Throughout the series of observations it was possible to see changes in the development over time which should be the purpose of the observations. Other candidates wrote simple short accounts of "observing" or "playing with" the child without any real aim or purpose in discovering the development which is central to this study. Care should be taken to ensure that the observations are not just stories about visiting the child; they should relate to specific developmental milestones shown over a period of time.

(b) Application of knowledge and understanding

Many candidates seemed to be unsure about this section of the work and wrote very little. Candidates should briefly consider theories on child development put forward by people such as Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, etc. The ideas expressed in these theories should be examined with reference to the behaviour/development seen in the child being studied.

(c) Comparison of evidence

There were some excellent comparisons made between the child being studied and other children or with the accepted norms. Candidates who completed this section well usually presented the comparisons in a clear table which was easy to understand. Care should be taken that comparisons are being made with children of the same age as the child being studied and that these comparisons are in the particular area of development being researched.

Analysis and Evaluation

(a) Comment on appropriateness

Many candidates briefly summarised the work in their folder without discussing the effectiveness of methods used to achieve the final results. Candidates should explain how they organised their observations and should comment on the outcome.

(b) Identification of strengths and weaknesses

Some candidates completed this section well while others gave only one or two simple points when much more could have been included. It is important that candidates are critical of their own work and are able to discuss how it could be improved.

(c) Awareness of opportunities for further developments

Most candidates made at least one suggestion for further development in the study. Sometimes detailed reasons were given for the suggestion but often candidates seemed to have no supporting reasons for their ideas.

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Paper 0637/03

Coursework (Practical Investigation)

General comments

INTRODUCTION

- (A) Subject content of the investigations varies greatly. Whilst some candidates chose breast v bottle feeding or home-made food v convenience foods many other candidates chose more obscure topics e.g. Down syndrome and other genetic disorders which apart from being very sensitive subjects they do not lend themselves to the investigative procedures that the students need to carry out. Some candidates need guidance from teachers to ensure that they will be able to carry out valid research. It is no use candidates deciding to carry out an investigation into contraception only to find that (a) they are too embarrassed to ask questions of strangers and (b) people are quite understandably reticent to talk about such personal issues. Also there are still candidates who choose to look at child abuse. This topic is totally unacceptable and should not be attempted in future. It is also difficult to design a poster or a leaflet when such sensitive issues are being investigated.

There should also be at least three **qualified** and **explained** reasons for choice. For example 'because there is a lot of information' is not sufficient.

- (B) Surveys, questionnaires and interviews are usually the most popular ways of gaining information. These methods should be qualified i.e. there should be reasons for choice of method. A few candidates are still relying mainly on secondary information – research should not be just copied information. If this is the case then high marks should not be awarded.
- (C) Again many candidates did not submit a plan although some did give a brief outline of the content of the investigation. The plan would ideally be a week by week plan of the work to be carried out along with an explanation of the procedures used and the equipment necessary to complete the tasks. This would form a basic framework for the candidates to work to. On the whole the organisation of the work was very good and usually followed a natural progression.

APPLICATION

- (A) Many candidates used graphs to illustrate their findings and these, where used, were usually of a good standard. Interviews were also recorded. It is not necessary to send all copies of questionnaires – one copy as an example would be sufficient.
- (B) Many candidates did make an attempt to interpret their results and were able to form conclusions but quite a few candidates did not attempt to explain findings and this was the main area where marks were lost.
- (C) On the whole leaflets and posters were of a good standard. Some candidates managed to produce a professional finish with the use of excellent graphics. Marks cannot be awarded if posters/leaflets are not in evidence.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION.

- (A) This area is getting better as many candidates did review their work and produced some pleasing evaluations.
- (B) Strengths and weaknesses were often mentioned as candidates stated that one of the main reasons for their investigation not being as detailed as they should have been was a lack of time.

- (C) Further developments is still a weak area as candidates tend to go off on a totally different tangent or just state that the investigation will help them in their future career.

It would help if Centres would send the Child Study and the Practical Investigation in separate folders. It would also help if Centres would not use hard back files as they are very bulky.