

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Paper 0637/01

Theory Paper

General comments

Most candidates attempted all sections of the paper and presented their work well. On some occasions candidates did not answer the questions fully, particularly where explanations, descriptions or reasons were required. Some candidates repeated themselves in their answers which limited the marks awarded. A number of candidates chose to plan their essay for **Question 11** and this was a very sensible idea, as it provided them with a structure and helped them to ensure that they answered the question fully. When essays are planned there is usually more information included and it is presented in a more logical manner. Those candidates who answered this question without a plan often did not write clearly; the work was muddled and repetitive and did not always answer the question set. Planning of essays is to be recommended.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates gave the correct answer: 40 weeks or 9 months.

Question 2

Answers were good. Candidates could list a good variety of the early signs of pregnancy.

Question 3

The usual correct answers given were **(i)** ovary, **(iii)** testis and **(iv)** semen, but a number of candidates were uncertain about the correct answer, cervix, for **(ii)**.

Question 4

The two signs of a miscarriage which were usually given were "bleeding" and "pain". For the third point candidates could have written "spotting" or "a gush of pinkish/clear fluid".

Question 5

This question was not always answered very well. Candidates often discussed infertility repetitively or simply said that the couples "did not want any more children". The question required that reasons for having only one child should be given, such as financial considerations, lack of space in the home, partner away from home, etc.

Question 6

Candidates answered this question well, usually listing clearly at least three changes during puberty.

Question 7

This question was not answered well. Candidates repetitively stated “encourage” the child or give the “opportunity to draw” but failed to say how this could be done. A number of candidates would make the child draw (perhaps against its will), some suggested bribing the child with sweets, while others would make the child watch a TV programme about drawing; such suggestions are not to be encouraged. Some candidates would have given “colours” to the children but did not explain what these were. Candidates should have suggested giving the children suitable materials e.g. a variety of crayons, paper, etc., books for copying, joining dots, etc. and a suitable place to be able to draw/paint. Allowing freedom to paint, making it fun and praising/displaying the work could also have been included.

Question 8

Many candidates answered this question well, usually listing the grasping, walking, rooting and sucking reflex actions. However, candidates did not always give clear descriptions of the actions and simply used the name of the action again, e.g. “grasping means the child grasps things” which does not describe the action.

Section B

Question 9

- (a) Many candidates were able to name the three types of play – solitary, parallel and co-operative play – and could give suitable examples of toys.
- (b) A good variety of safety points were listed but a number of candidates failed to give reasons for their points as required by the question. Many simply wrote that the toys could be “harmful” or would “hurt the child”. Answers could have included: avoid small detachable parts as these could be swallowed, buy from reputable shops for quality well-made products, avoid sharp/metal toys as these could cut the child, etc. A few candidates did not appear to have read the question carefully and wrote about safe places to play, both indoors and outdoors.
- (c) (i) Candidates often wrote incorrectly about knowledge of body parts, physical exercise, etc. An explanation of how the handling of books can help the physical development of the child was required so development of fine motor skills, hand-eye co-ordination, etc. would have been suitable answers.
- (ii) Candidates answered well explaining social development in bonding, sharing, discussion about books, etc.
- (iii) Intellectual development was explained well with answers including “increasing vocabulary”, “encouraging imagination”, “increasing knowledge”, etc.
- (iv) Many candidates said that books “develop emotions” which was simply repeating the question. Suitable answers could have included: exploration of feelings, talking about fears, exploration of sensitive issues and the development of a sense of enjoyment and relaxation.

Question 10

- (a) Many short, vague answers were given about brands, sizes, material, strength, etc. Candidates should have considered availability, cost, environmental issues, washing/drying facilities, fashion/trends, etc.
- (b) Some advantages and disadvantages of both types of nappies were given but these were often one word answers and sometimes vague, e.g. “easy”. Many answers correctly related only to cost and environmental issues. Candidates could also have mentioned absorbency, need to wash or not, ease of use away from home, etc.
- (c) Simple answers were usually given without the descriptions which were required by the question, e.g. “applying cream” was stated but a type of cream was not given nor a time when it should be used. Keeping the skin dry and aired, not leaving the baby in a wet nappy, allowing the baby time without a nappy, etc. could all have been included.

- (d)(i) Many answers were correct, usually between 18 months and 3 years. A number of candidates vaguely stated “when a baby can walk”, “when the baby is ready” or suggested that training should start “between 3 and 6 months” which is far too early.
- (ii) There were some good answers in this section with candidates encouraging the child, never forcing the child, being patient and not making a fuss if accidents occurred. However there were many more poor answers. A number of candidates incorrectly stated “*make* the child stay on the toilet until it is done”, “let the child watch you use the toilet”, “make the child tell you when it wants to go” or “reward the child with sweets”. Very few candidates kept the potty handy (which is to be recommended) and instead expected the child to “use the toilet”.

Section C

Question 11

- (a) Candidates who chose to answer this question usually answered reasonably well, giving information about home and hospital births. Many answers included the availability of trained staff, specialist equipment, procedures for emergencies, availability of pain relief, support of midwives, visitors allowed during and after the birth, routines of hospitals or home, etc. Although many answers contained a lot of information there was not always further development in the answers or discussion as required by the question.
- (b) Candidates who chose to answer this question did not answer fully and answers were often repetitive. Brief references were made to money issues, bonding, missing early stages of the child’s development, maintaining contact with other adults, etc. Candidates only rarely considered the effects on the mother’s career, conflicts between home and work, the amount of attention available for the child and the rest of the family, etc. Again a series of points were included in the answers but there was little further discussion of the issues.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Paper 0637/02
Coursework (Child Study)

General comments

The child studies were on the whole a pleasure to read. Most candidates followed the mark scheme to organise the presentation of their studies, and this offered a logical path and made sure that they included all the relevant parts. Most candidates chose to observe one child aged up to 5 years rather than a whole group and some compared and contrasted the observed development with one other child of a similar age. This latter approach helped with the evaluation relating to current theories of child development. It would be useful for the candidates' analytical skills if they recorded the age of the child in years and months for each observation.

The approach to current theories of child development varied considerably between Centres. The most in-depth responses compared what they had observed with what current literature says on the aspect of development and again used a compare and contrast method to look at two or more theories.

The guidelines emphasise the advisability of recognising the confidentiality of the nature of the study and it is good practice for candidates to say clearly that they are using a fictitious names for the child/children.

Some candidates chose to include lots of pictures from magazines or catalogues, but unless they are referred to in the written work, and are relevant to what is being discussed, they should not be included.

Comments on specific questions

Section A - Introduction and Planning

- (a) Candidates at this level appeared to find this a real challenge, but the best studies provided a good introduction in which the candidate discussed what they intended to do and why; some candidates introduced a personal link to explain their choice of focus, whether they were looking at physical, cognitive, social, language or emotional development. Some candidates are clearly writing their plan at the end of the process and using the past tense in doing so. This is not the intention of planning.
- (b) Background information in the child/children was generally well presented. From the candidate's point of view, this was what the study was all about and the relevance of the task was clear.
- (c) The explanation, with the relevant theoretical information, of the development area chosen with reasons for choice, is an area where many candidates could improve. Firstly, a clear statement of the developmental area chosen is required and although this seems obvious, it was not consistently provided by the candidates. The reasons for the choice could easily be linked to the interesting aspects of the relevant theories.

Section B – Application

- (a) The written report of each observation made was approached by candidates in different ways. The most logical was an observation report clearly dated and with a clear intention of what was to be observed and why, followed by the actual observation. Use of dates and times helps the analysis of the information gleaned through observation.
- (b) Application of knowledge and understanding of accepted child development theories to the observations is obviously a higher level skill than the simpler description of what happened, but a natural corollary. As you would expect, stronger candidates did well and weaker candidates needed more guidance on what are the relevant theories for their studies.

- (c) Comparing the evidence of their observations with the norms or other children of a similar age. This was generally well covered by candidates.

Section C – Analysis and Evaluation

This was generally the area where candidates need the most direction and support and the section where it became obvious whether the time frame for the study was limited; for these candidates the development observed was limited and so there was less to analyse and discuss.

Again, if the original plan was unclear about what aspect of child development was to be observed, then the conclusion in this section was also necessarily weak. Candidates need encouragement to be concise about what it is they are going to observe – they should narrow the field right down and make it specific to one aspect of intellectual development, rather than intellectual development as a whole, for instance.

Some candidates were able to discuss the holistic nature of development whilst at the same time drawing on specific examples from their observations. Some were able to comment on the historical development of the theories to show how our understanding of child development is advancing, although these were in the minority.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Paper 0637/03
Coursework (Practical Investigation)

General comments

The practical investigations were on the whole a pleasure to read. Most candidates followed the mark scheme to organise the presentation of their studies, and this offered a logical path and made sure that they included all the relevant parts.

Candidates chose from a wide spectrum of issues and it was good to see so many discuss the environmental impact of disposable nappies and others extolling the virtues of breast feeding.

The guidelines emphasise the advisability of recognising the confidentiality of the nature of the study and it is good practice for candidates to say clearly that they are using fictitious names for those who completed questionnaires or who were interviewed by candidates..

Some candidates chose to include lots of pictures from magazines or catalogues, but unless they are referred to in the written work, and are relevant to what is being discussed, they should not be included. Other candidates wrote a lot about their chosen topic, but in a rather unstructured way which did not address the requirements of the assignment.

Comments on specific questions

Section A - Introduction and Planning

- (a) Candidates at this level appeared to find this a real challenge, but the best studies provided a good introduction in which the candidate discussed what they intended to do and why, sometimes introducing a personal link to explain their choice of focus. Some candidates chose too wide a remit for their investigation and were at risk of learning nothing significant and producing leaflets which were far too general.
- (b) Suggested methods for acquiring information included book and magazine research, the use of the Internet, observation, questionnaires, interviews with parents, carers, merchants, professionals etc., experiments, statistics and market research.
- (c) Planning the investigation and organising oneself was a challenge for some and those who clearly left things until too late produced poor work. Some candidates are clearly writing their plan at the end of the process and using the past tense in doing so. This is not the intention of planning. However, some candidates are able to produce a detailed plan to cover several months of investigation.

Section B – Application

- (a) An evaluation of a range of investigative procedures required candidates to consider the pros and cons (advantages and disadvantages) of their research methods, which some did in detail, explaining why the particular method would give reliable and valid information. Others were less detailed.
- (b) Application of knowledge and understanding of the chosen topic required candidates to do more than just write a great deal about the topic – they had to transfer this information to a leaflet or poster so that it was suitable for their target audience.

- (c) The leaflets – which candidates generally chose over the poster option – varied in attractiveness; use of IT and colour generally enhanced the product. The best candidates were able to clearly identify their target group and make links with the findings of their study. The relevant information presented attractively.

Section C – Analysis and Evaluation

- (a) This is the point where candidates are able to evaluate their work, commenting on the investigative methods and the usefulness of any results obtained. For the weaker candidates, being able to look back and analyse the process can be difficult and they require help in thinking about their evaluation.
- (b) Identifying strengths and weaknesses of the investigation and their approaches to it requires a maturity that some candidates are able to show. If the investigation had too wide a remit, it was sometimes recognised at this stage. Not all candidates are able to be as open and honest about what went well and what did not. Acknowledging what is within the control of the candidate and what is beyond their reach is a significant step at this stage of the investigation.
- (c) An awareness of opportunities for further study provided candidates with an opportunity to examine their own progression needs as well as developing their thinking skills and knowledge and understanding of the topic they chose. The responses to this section gave an insight into the depth and breadth of understanding of the topic.