

Child Sustained Attention in 2, 3 & 4-Year-Olds

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Traditional Child Care

Child Care teachers - least educational requirements

Tendency to be more authoritarian, which is associate with:

- Worse self-regulation in children (LeCuyer & Swanson, 2017)
- Child aggression & disruptive behaviors (Chen, Dong & Zhou, 1997)
- Lower academic performance (Chen, Dong & Zhou, 1997; Walker, 2008)

Value of Choice

Children demonstrate preference for choice option (Brandt, et al., 2015;Doke & Risley, 1972; Fenerty & Tiger, 2010; Howell, Dounavi & Storey, 2019; LeLaurin & Risley, 1972; Reinhartsen et al., 2002; Tiger et al., 2006)and are more likely to:

- Engage in less disruptive behavior (Carter, 2001; Morgan, 2006)
- Initiate play & sustain play when given a choice (Carter, 2001: DiCarlo & Reid, 2004; Dunlap, et al., 1994)
- Respond when given a choice (Carter, 2001)

Attention

Attention is necessary for learning to occur (Bandura, 1989; Boersma & Das, 2008)

Previous research suggests that children give more attention to materials of their own choosing (Coelho, et al., 2019; DiCarlo, et al., 2016; Reinhartsen, et al., 2002)

Method

Subjects & Setting

- Child Care center in a suburban area of a Southern state
- All teachers had the equivalent of a CDA or a non-education bachelor's degree.
- Early Learning Center
 - NAEYC Accredited and maintained a 1:6 ratio for 2-year-olds, 1:10 for 3 year-olds, 1:10 for 4 year olds
 - 2-year-olds n=49; 3-year-olds n= 93; 4-year-olds n= 63
- No children had an IFSP

Behavior Definitions

Toy Play- a child's manipulation of toys in the manner the toy was intended to be manipulated (Martens & Hiralall, 1997). Looking at a toy or talking about the toy in the absence of manipulation was considered toy play (once the child initially manipulated the toy). Only interactions with materials designated as toys are recorded as toy play. Any disruptive behavior (e.g., throwing toys that were not meant to be thrown) or aggressive behavior (e.g., hitting another child with a toy) is not considered toy play (DiCarlo, Reid, & Stricklin, 2003)

Conditions

Child Initiated Choice (CI)-the teacher will approach the child & give the prompt, “Go play”.

Adult Choice (AC)-the teacher will give the target child a choice between 2 highly preferred toys & give the prompt, ““Would you like to play with the (puzzle) or with the (blocks)?”

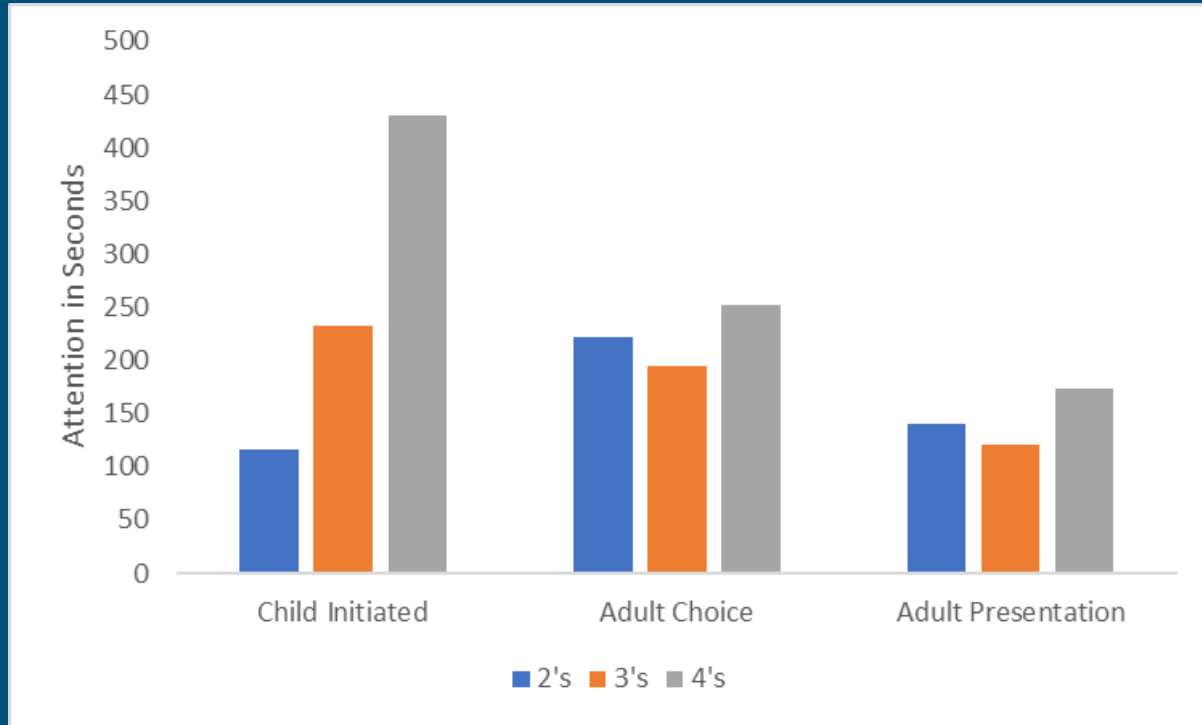
Adult Presentation (AP)-the teacher will select a highly preferred toy (not previous selected above) & give the prompt, “Why don’t you play with the (lacing cards)?”

Event Recording

An event began when the child touched a toy; the event ended when the child ceased to manipulate the toy for a period of 10 seconds.

	Name of toy	initiation	Start time	End time
Event 1		CI		
Event 2		AC		
Event 3		AP		

Results



Discussion

- Children prefer choice option (Doke & Risley, 1972; Fenerty & Tiger, 2010; Howell, Dounavi & Storey, 2019; LeLaurin & Risley, 1972; Reinhartsen et al., 2002; Tiger et al., 2006).
- Prefer own choice versus adult choice (Howell, Dounavi & Storey, 2019; Tasky, Rudrud, Schulze & Rapp, 2008)Choice produces longer duration of attention (Coelho, Cadima, & Pinto, 2019; Reinhartsen, Garfinkle, and Wolery, 2002)
- Reduces problem behavior (Morgan, 2006)
- Increases productivity (Morgan, 2006)
- Highly educated/experienced teacher needed to make decisions about materials selection

Questions?

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