**My chosen case study**

**Jeremiah Wilson**

* + **Gender:**

Male

* + **Ethnicity:**

African-American

* + **Age:**

5 years

* + **Grade:**

Kindergarten

Jeremiah is a bright, strong boy who likes helping children with physical tasks. He is showing symptoms of ADHD, and unfortunately he becomes somewhat aggressive when he gets frustrated. Jeremiah's father is a Marine who is currently deployed overseas.

**Home Life**

Jeremiah’s parents are married and middle class. His father is a marine who is currently deployed overseas. He has one sister who is two years old. The family is Christian (Baptist).Jeremiah and his sister are cared for by an aunt outside of his school hours. Mom works long hours and finds it difficult to help Jeremiah with his work. Jeremiah’s aunt cares for several children so she expects him to take care of his own needs. They live in an urban setting in a relatively safe neighborhood where a lot of the children play out on the street.

**Developmental Details**

Jeremiah is a very athletic and active child. Jeremiah is a kind and thoughtful little boy though he can become somewhat aggressive when he loses control. He does not mean to hurt anyone, but his level of physical activity can get out of control and his judgment becomes affected. Jeremiah has been looked at by a pediatrician and a neurologist due to his restlessness and his difficulty attending to tasks and directions. The doctors agree that there is a suspicion of ADD/ADHD but feel that it is too early for a diagnosis. They have encouraged mom and teacher to provide Jeremiah with structure, exercise, and a safe place to “blow off steam” when he begins to spin out of control.

**School Life**

Jeremiah is obviously a bright little boy, but his schoolwork suffers from his inability to stay on task. He does not yet have an IEP, but he is below expectations in classroom work, and in addition to his impulsiveness is thus being looked at by the RTI team.

**Schoolwork**

The bars below refer to this student’s level of performance in each area.

Exceptional--- physical coordination

Above Average--

Average—Art, Music, Drama & Acting

Below Average—Reading, Writing, Math, Language & Vocabulary

Deficient--

**Behaviors & Domains**

Below you will find a categorized list describing the behaviors and domains of the child.

**Attention**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities. | Low Mild Moderate Severe |
| Has difficulty sustaining attention in work tasks or play activities. | Low Mild Moderate Severe |
| Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities. | Low Mild Moderate Severe |
| Avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort such as homework and organizing work tasks. | Low Mild Moderate Severe |
| Is easily distracted by outside influences. | Low Mild Moderate Severe |

**Theories**

In this case study I chose two theories that are applicable to Jeremiah, and other children with such situations. I took two child psychologists, David Elkind, and Lawrence Kohlberg. Elkind is a renowned child psychologist, who expounded Piaget’s theory of egocentrism in young people. In terms of education methods, that are in line with this case, he discusses, how the recent changes in the society are affecting children, parents, and the whole family in terms of learning. He also focused on learning and healthy development. This is where he associates play and learning to children. He believes that children should have varied experiences so as to live a healthy live. This helps children to understand things both in the classroom and outside the classroom (Elkind, 2009). Elkind thinks that parents who push their children to learn at earlier ages do not give them time for adequate experiences that are necessary for learning. This is a theory that requires nature to take its course whenever there is a controversy between nature, and nurture.

Lawrence Kohlberg developed the theory of moral development in children. He explained the development of moral reasoning in a detailed way. Earlier on, Piaget had described a two stage process but Kohlberg developed three levels, and six stages of moral development. He explains that moral development occurs throughout the life of a person (L.E, 2012). Kohlberg presented different dilemmas to children, and he could deduce each level of moral development at a time. The first level is the level of preconvention Morality. The first stage in this level is obedience and punishment (McLeod, 2011). This is the earliest stage of moral development and children are able to see rules as fixed rules. The second stage is, is the stage of Individualism and Exchange. At this stage, children express their views from an individual’s point of view. Their judgment is based on how their reasoning is serving individual needs.

The second level is the level of conventional morality. This entails the third and the fourth stage of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development. The third stage, entails, interpersonal relationships. This is where choices influence the relationship of a child and other people in the society. The fourth stage is maintaining social order (University, 2013). At this stage, children start considering the society as a whole when making decisions. They maintain law and order by following rules. Level three is called Post conventional Morality. It has stage five and six. Stage five is the social contract and individual rights. At this stage people can account for the opinions of other. Stage six is called Universal Principles. This entails abstract reasoning in tandem with universal ethical principles.

Why the Theories Fit the Child

Kohlberg described three levels of moral development, which explains how people learn to differentiate between right and wrong, and develop good moral behavior. The first stage explains how children develop behavior as a result of consequences (McLeod, 2011). They should mind what is right and wrong so that they cannot get in trouble. In the case of Jeremiah, this first stage is fully applicable. The child is always in trouble with other children because of his physical fitness, though we suspect a disorder. There should be strict rules and regulations both at home and school so as to curb the behavior. Unfortunately, Jeremiah does not have time with his parents (University, 2013). His parents are most of the time working, and she is left with her aunt who is taking care of several children. Therefore, it is easy to see that the same environment experience that Jeremiah has in school is not different from what he has out of school. Therefore, Kohlberg encourages parents and teachers to provide experiences that can set rules for children to follow. The second stage also outlines how good moral behavior promotes personal relationships, and leads to healthy living. Jeremiah needs has no conventional morality, because his acts are not in line with the moral ways of other students. The teachers and parents should therefore provide experiences that can help him develop conventional morality.

Elkind explains how learning through play provides experiences that are good for learning. Jeremiah is very good in physical activities and poor in academics. Teachers can provide playing activities for such a child who needs to play and improve his performance (Elkind, 2009). Elkind says that we should stop taking play as a luxury for children, and convert it to learning experiences. A child who drops something can discover gravity, while the child who puts everything in the mouth is able to differentiate hard and soft things. Therefore, we should the teachers of Jeremiah, should provide space for self-created learning. Children will repeat things that are good.

Jeremiah has a below average performance in arts, music, and play. Elkind explains that children, who develop their self-initiated play, are likely to create experiences for learning. When children play the role of a doctor, or a fireman, or a teacher, experiences the power that he attributes to adults. They create the experiences of being like those adults (Elkind, 2009). Children also learn through the self-created learning experience. When playing hide and seek in school or at home, they learn mutual respect. Therefore, the parents and teachers of Jeremiah should allow such experiences to occur so that he can live well with children.