Childcare Provider

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Childcare Provider- Prairie Lakes Church
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Introduction
This semester, I was employed at Prairie Lakes Church in their childcare program. I worked 2 three-hour shifts for six hours a week. My position was a paid caregiver. I received one course credit for my work. I was stationed in the infant room, working mainly with 7-8-month-olds.

Responsibilities
My position consisted of supervision and care for infants and toddlers. My duties included preparing bottles and snacks, changing diapers, facilitating nap time, and engaging in play time. At the mother’s discretion, I would administer feedings and nap time. Because of the nature of the programs, Tuesdays had fewer children than Thursdays. As a result, we were able to have better ratios in the classroom (e.g., one caregiver to one infant vs. one caregiver to four infants). This was the case for me, where I would have one infant in my care on Tuesdays. I was able to devote all of my attention to him and attend to his needs fully.

What I Learned
From my classes in Developmental Psychology and Dynamics of Human Development, I was able to see firsthand about some of the topics I learned. Some examples included the absence of object permanence, the absence of self-awareness, and the importance of tummy time. Object permanence refers to the understanding that objects continue to exist when out of sight. When the baby would reach for my brightly colored lanyard, I could move it to my back and the baby would forget about it. Self-awareness refers to a state where oneself becomes the focus of attention. I was able to see that when a mirror was placed in front of a baby, he did not seem to recognize himself. A baby being placed on their tummy is a beneficial period when infants acquire the strength needed to go from lying to crawling to walking. The older babies were already preparing for the walking stage by standing up with assistance, whereas the younger babies enjoyed tummy time to work on neck strength. The best part of this experience was being able to work with the infants and use my knowledge of child development to give them the best care. For the few hours I would spend with them, I still got to be a part of their growth and developmental experiences.

Application for My Future
• Gain experience working with children
• Network with parents in the community
• Work with like-minded peers
• Incorporate knowledge of child development into a future career

Advice for Future Students
This position is open to all majors who want to get experience working with children in a church classroom setting. You will get experience with childcare, team teaching, and curriculum development. I would recommend having taken classes in development or education, or having experience working with kids. This position offers its workers the opportunity to work with a variety of age groups and participate in educational development.

References