

## ECE430 Week Three Case Study

### Focus: Families



Mrs. Ashland arrives at school very early in the morning before the children arrive so that she can get set up. She often uses this time to update children's portfolios from the day before and to set up the learning environment with activities and materials connected to her curriculum plans. When her colleagues arrive, they engage in friendly conversation and Mrs. Ashland shares the planned activities for the day with them.

Mrs. Ashland has an effective morning routine for student drop-off. The parents or caregivers drop their children off at the classroom by signing them in at the door. During this time, Mrs. Ashland is stationed by the door and greets each child and family as they arrive and points out any new information on the parent bulletin board. She often kneels down to greet the children and does the daily health check as they enter. Mrs. Ashland directs the children to go wash their hands so that they are able to engage in independent play in the open areas. The materials that are set out are aligned with the thematic unit taking place in the classroom; the assistant teachers are setting up the next activity. The parents are coming and going and take newsletters from an organizer labeled, "Preschool News," which is set out for them.

Mrs. Ashland notices her student Johnny has again been dropped off in the lobby with Mrs. Ford, the director, prior to school opening. Johnny is the first to enter the room and goes to the listening center to hear a story. Johnny's parents both work long hours and have arranged to drop him off with Mrs. Ford 15 minutes before the doors are open so that they can make it across town and be on time for work. Johnny stays for the afterschool program, and his parents are often late picking him up. Johnny is often left waiting and generally looks at books while he waits. Mrs. Ashland has tried to make contact with his parents, but is usually unsuccessful. She has sent several notes and called several times at night, but usually does not receive a response back. On one occasion, when they were able to come in, they praised Mrs. Ashland and mentioned that they were so glad Johnny was thriving in school because they are very busy with work. Johnny's parents noted that they get home late and are tired and are not as involved as they would like to be. They are grateful for a teacher who is responsible for Johnny's development.

Mrs. Ashland scans the room as the children begin to explore the day's learning activities.

During drop-off time each day, Mrs. Ashland smiles at Maya's mother, who does not speak English, and hands her the newsletter that has been translated into Spanish. Mrs. Ashland greets them with a cheery "Good morning." Each day, Maya's mother waves and says, "Te Amo," as she watches Maya walk into the classroom.

Jane's mother, Mrs. Smith, enters the classroom and tells Mrs. Ashland she is available to stay and volunteer this morning. Jane is holding her mom's hand tightly and leads her into the room. She proceeds to engage in a conversation with the assistant teacher about a television show last night. She comes in about once a week and has become very close with the assistant teacher. She spends a large part of her classroom time talking with the assistant teacher but is willing to help when she is given specific directions. Jane goes to the dramatic play center and begins to dress up in the chef costume and play in the kitchen.

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Mr. Jones and Caleb enter next, and Mrs. Ashland greets them. Mr. Jones, who is visibly irritated, states he does not want Caleb playing in the housekeeping area. Mr. Jones points out that he knows another child in the class has two moms and says, "That child's parents should not be allowed in the classroom because they are setting a bad example." Mrs. Ashland responds calmly and asks Mr. Jones if he and his wife would be available to set up a time to talk about this further. He agrees to come in after school to discuss these issues, but states, "Caleb is not allowed to play in the kitchen today."

Kayla enters next, very slowly, and Mrs. Ashland notices that she looks very tired and appears to have been crying. Separating from her mother for the past few weeks has been difficult and she has been asking to go to another room in the school to see her little brother. Mrs. Ashland gets down on one knee to greet Kayla and asks about her morning. Kayla begins to cry and clenches her mom's leg tightly. Her mom dismisses her actions by saying that she got to bed late last night and was cranky today, "as all kids are." Kayla's mother looks tired as well and Mrs. Ashland notices her eyes are very swollen and red. She quickly states, "Things are rough right now." She tells Kayla to "be a big girl and go to school," and then hurries out of the classroom. Mrs. Ashland is worried about Kayla, who watches her mother leave as more children enter.

Mrs. Ashland scans the room and notices Caleb playing in the kitchen area pretending to feed a baby doll.

Mrs. Ross arrives with Jack and his infant brother, Mike. While Mrs. Ashland is talking with Mrs. Ross, Mike is watching the activity in the room and coos and makes sounds. As soon as he does, Mrs. Ross puts a pacifier in his mouth. Mrs. Ross asks Mrs. Ashland to separate Jack from Johnny because she thinks Johnny is "a bully." In the meantime, Jack is playing with some of the other children in the block area. A child takes a block from the pile in the center of the block area. Jack tries to pull the block out of the child's hand. When that does not work, Jack hits the child, throws himself on the floor and starts to scream. Mrs. Ross walks over to Jack and offers him a candy from her purse to stop his crying. She takes his hand and leads him away from the block area telling him to play with another child. Mrs. Ashland bends down to talk to Jack and reminds him of ways he can use his words to express his frustration. She praises Jack as he returns to the block area and asks the other child for the block back.

Kayla has finally let go of Mrs. Ashland's leg and has cuddled up in a beanbag chair sucking her thumb. A few more children enter, and soon it is time for Mrs. Ashland to start the day.