

ECE430 Week Four Case Study

Focus: Assessment/Resources



It sure was a busy day in Mrs. Ashland's preschool class.

The day has come to a close, and Mrs. Ashland sits in a small chair in the art center as she takes a moment to reflect on the day while logging notes into the children's portfolios. There are newly hung paintings of butterflies for the unit on spring, a block tower that extends to the top of the bookcase, and a snapshot of Jane making a birdhouse out of popsicle sticks with the caption "Fine Motor 3/30/2013."

A neatly organized pile is ready for the 6:00 p.m. meeting with Caleb's parents and includes Caleb's portfolio. Also included in the pile is the center's handbook outlining the Respect for Diversity Policy, a pamphlet about normal social-emotional development in boys, and pictures of Caleb engaging in block play, art, outdoor sports, and math activities. Mrs. Ford, the director, has agreed to be present for this meeting.

While beginning to sort the day's artwork for portfolios, Mrs. Ashland notices Kayla drew a picture of her family during independent centers and they show sad faces. She pulls Kayla's portfolio and notices that this picture is different from her past examples. Today her drawing used only blue and black crayons for the colors, but she used a variety of colors in her other drawings. As Mrs. Ashland studies today's drawing, she also notices tears on the faces of Kayla, her brother, and her mom – but not on the face of her father. Mrs. Ashland leaves her table and goes to her community resources folder to look up the number for the school counselor as well as the local social worker who typically supports families. As part of the center's procedure, she makes sure to document all the observations she makes and actions she takes in this situation, and includes Mrs. Ford on all contact. Mrs. Ashland is worried about Kayla, and although she does not know specifically what the problem is, she must find out how to best support her. She pulls the counseling consent form and counseling information pamphlet so that she can share these with Kayla's mom confidentially in the morning.

As she heads out of the classroom to the office to make the call to the school counselor, she notices Johnny sitting in the chair reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* book he signed out from the field trip to the local library today. He does not look up at her, but is immersed in his book. It is about 25 minutes after the center has closed and the rest of the children and teachers have gone for the day. She notices the director's door is ajar, so she knocks lightly before entering to ask about Johnny's situation.

Mrs. Ford, the director, has just hung up the phone with Johnny's dad and sighs deeply, while she walks toward the door. She tells Johnny and the teacher sitting with him that

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his parents are on their way and prompts him to watch out the window for them so he will be ready to go when they arrive. Mrs. Ford invites Mrs. Ashland in and shuts her door, still watching Johnny through the pane of window glass. She begins to ask her about Johnny's progress in class. Mrs. Ashland speaks about what she sees, noting that while Johnny is doing well in preschool, he would really benefit from parental support and she is worried about the amount of time he spends with early drop-offs and late pickups. Mrs. Ford echoes that she also has a hard time communicating with the parents, and they often dismiss their late pickups saying "they will pay the fees associated with keeping the staff late." Mrs. Ford says that she will set up a meeting so that they can all talk about alternate options that might support Johnny and better meet the family's needs. Mrs. Ashland writes a reminder to call the library in the morning to inquire about their afterschool literacy arts program, which she thinks might have extended hours. She also mentions that Jane's mother spoke about a creative arts program Jane participates in that picks the children up by bus from the center and may be closer to where Johnny's parents' work.

Mrs. Ford then asks Mrs. Ashland if she has another minute to chat about the next month's board presentation. She tells Mrs. Ashland that the board keeps up on current policy, and they have identified the need for the center to adopt an assessment tool. The board has explained that assessment has become a staple of high-quality early childhood programs and has identified it as a crucial component in understanding and supporting children's development and learning. It sees center-wide assessment as a means to consistently evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional programs and curriculum.

Mrs. Ford acknowledges Mrs. Ashland's thoughtful decision making, current use of portfolios, and her developmentally appropriate teaching approaches. Mrs. Ford asks Mrs. Ashland to use these skills to help her identify specific assessment tools and practices that may be used center-wide. Mrs. Ford hands Mrs. Ashland a stack of possible tools to test in her classroom. which include anecdotal records, checklists, rating scales, rubrics, and running records. Mrs. Ashland is excited to be a part of this decision-making process. Johnny's parents arrive, and Mrs. Ford quickly walks him out in hope of setting up a future meeting with his parents. Mrs. Ashland exclaims, "Enjoy that book Johnny! Can't wait to hear about it in the morning!"

Mrs. Ashland proceeds to leave the office to make the call to the school counselor with an arm full of assessment examples and a mind full of thoughts!