

GHOST WRITING: CDA PORTFOLIO ETHICS PAPER

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Ethics Paper

“Some of the challenges faced by administrators involve balancing their obligations to support and nurture children with their responsibility to address the needs and safeguard the rights of families and personnel and respond to the requirements of their boards and sponsoring agencies” (NAEYC 1). Leadership and Management, the tenth program standard of NAEYC, is geared toward implementing policies and procedures that support the health and safety of children and staff. It also enforces policies, supporting proper Guidance and Discipline. The initiative-taking and preventative methods create a solid foundation, but it can often be exceedingly difficult for leadership to find balance between adhering to the policies and satisfying the wants and needs of parents/families. When faced with these tough situations, Administrators and Management should go beyond to comply with the safeguards in place, but also provide the necessary information, resources, and guidance, to ensure that parents, families, and leadership are all on one accord.

When you think about health and safety policies, they are just few of the many quality standards put in place to protect early childhood staff and children, and parents/families sometimes bring forth objections. The prevention of spreading disease/illness is one policy put in place to protect health, and it requires parents/families to keep sick/contagious children at home. Contagions are easily spread in these types of environments, especially when children are interacting, and often putting objects in their mouths. Parents sometime become insensitive to the big picture of protecting

other children and staff, due to the demands within their lives, such as employment obligations. Administration also requires children to remain up to date on immunizations. Some parents do not believe in immunizing their children, for varied reasons, which makes it more challenging to prevent the spread of disease. In addition to preventing illnesses, leadership also implements meal procedures, to support safety and health. Childcare centers adhere to specific calendar meal plans each month, which ensures that the children are fueled with the proper nutrition, including all five food groups. Many parents want to pack their child's lunch, in which some are unhealthy choices, so sticking to the menu is necessary. Leadership also enforces the "no outside food allowed" policy, to keep children and staff safe. Some children have allergies to certain foods, so accepting food from various sources, increases the chances of a child consuming an allergen and having a reaction. According to the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct principal P-1.1, "We shall place the welfare and safety of children above other obligations (for example, to families, program personnel, employing agency, community). This item takes precedence over all others in this Supplement." This is exactly what Leadership and Management should continue to support.

With health and safety on the forefront of priorities for leadership in early childhood, administrators must keep the family objections in mind, and must remain sensitive to their wants and needs. Although management's number one goal is to maintain the wellness of staff and children, there are certain methods put in place to finesse these conflicts, gain an understanding with families, and find a resolution. For example, if a parent brings a sick child to a childcare center, staff members will first remind the parent of sick/ill procedures. If the parent continues, staff members are encouraged to gain an understanding, so that the parent recognizes the seriousness of the issue. Staff will also reiterate that policies are put in place for the protection of the parent's child and other children. These finesse methods can be used when it comes to food health and safety as well, but staff can also put preventative measures in place to ensure understanding. According to the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct principal P-2.4, "We shall establish clear operating policies and make them

available to families in advance of their child entering the program.” When a child enrolls in the program, they must be made aware of all food policies and provided with a copy of the menu. In some instances, parents do have the option to sign a waiver for certain foods, with leadership approval and a doctor’s note. Leadership’s overall goal is to gain trust with families, and promote adherence to policies, but still allowing some windows of opportunity for compromise.

Another ethical standard that Leadership and Management strive to safeguard, with clear policies and procedures implemented, is Guidance and Discipline. This tends to be one of the most sensitive standards, when it comes to balancing ethical decisions or responses, with the requests and cultures of different families. “Use positive guidance techniques in individual and in group physical activities, which further children’s development of self-control, responsibility, and respect for self, others and property” (Great Start to Quality ELE: Social, Emotional, and Physical Health and Development 63). Leaders and staff members in early childhood development promote positive guidance, but some parents tend to promote punishment, such as yelling or scare tactics. Certain cultures may encourage these types of parenting practices, which do not fall in line with Administration’s ethical codes. Discipline is often another dilemma between staff and parents. Staff members are trained to calmly deal with disruptive children, but some parents will encourage staff members to spank, put the children in time out, and sometimes even encourage isolating the child. According to the State of Michigan licensing rule 140. “Positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation must be used.” It is the duty of Leadership to protect and respect children, just as they would respect one another. Forceful or aggressive methods of discipline and guidance have proven to be ineffective and can cause more harm than good to children. Leadership and management must continue to support proper discipline, even with the parent’s objection, as it would be in the best interest of the child.

When it comes to Guidance procedures, implemented by leadership, it is often difficult to gain parental trust and understanding. Parental rights also come up when staff members encourage or

propose healthy discipline techniques. Administration keeps the best interest of the child as the focus, when it comes to these situations, but are prepared to finesse parental objections and find a resolution that best fits their culture/lifestyle. For example, according to the State of Michigan Licensing Rules rule 140, “A written policy must develop and implement regarding the age appropriate, non-severe discipline of children. The policy must be provided to staff and parents.” One way to provide deep understanding and ensure parents are aware of staff member’s discipline practices, are through these written policies. Staff encourage parents to use the same guidance and discipline procedures at home, to ensure effectiveness at the childcare center. Another way to smooth the parent over, or finesse these sensitive discussions, is to provide resources and optional trainings on discipline. This helps the parent gain a better understanding of what they are doing and why it is helpful for the child. It also creates an awareness of previous discipline practices, they may have used, which could be negatively impacting their children. Staff reminds the parent just how much they are dedicated to the overall wellness and benefit of the child, and offers support where necessary, for consistency and a sense of resolution.

All in all, it is evident that parental resistance against policies will arise and cause a bit of conflict with the goals set for children by staff and Administration. Leadership and Management personnel must continue to adhere to the ethical standards put in place, using the implementation of these procedures. This will help to ensure high-quality health and safety practices and continue to help promote positive guidance and discipline techniques. Leadership should continue to take parental concerns into consideration and work hard to be sure that there is clear understanding. This will lead to a resolution that includes the best interest of the child, and at the same time, offers a sense of satisfaction for parents/families.

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