Scenario Reflection

Ethical dilemmas occur in early childhood programs from time to time. The National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct can be used to address these dilemmas. Read the scenario below and think about similar situations that have occurred in your preschool classroom. In the space below, reflect on how you can handle a similar situation in the future using NAEYC’s Code of Ethics as your guide.

SCENARIO: CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Carly teaches three- and four-year-olds in her program. As a preschool teacher, she intentionally plans interesting, developmentally appropriate activities that focus on language and literacy skills. Jackson’s mom shares with Carly that she would like Carly to send home worksheets and flashcards so that Jackson can practice his letter-sound recognition skills. She is concerned that Jackson is not learning what he needs to know for kindergarten. Jackson’s cousin, who attends a different program, brings home worksheets and flashcards every night. Carly listens attentively to Jackson’s mom, but is uncomfortable with her request.

1. What concerns do you think Carly might have about sending home worksheets and flashcards with Jackson?

   Suggested response: Carly may feel conflicted about what is developmentally appropriate for Jackson and partnering with his mom in his education. Carly would like to do what is best for Jackson and what will honor his mom’s commitment to Jackson’s education.

2. What can Carly do to address these concerns?

   Suggested response: Carly can use NAEYC’s Code of Ethical Conduct to help her address this ethical dilemma. She can meet with her trainer or coach and share her concerns about sending home flashcards and worksheets with Jackson. Carly can also ask her colleagues for activities and resources to offer Jackson’s mom that reinforce letter-sound recognition in a developmentally appropriate way.
3. How would you react in a similar situation?

Suggested response: I always need to do what is best for the child in every situation. It is important for me to address ethical dilemmas in a positive way so that I can maintain healthy working relationships with everyone who is involved. In a similar scenario, I will seek advice from my colleagues, as well as my trainer or coach. I will share developmentally appropriate activities and resources with parents.