Case Study Dilemma

The following case study was adapted from:

Ethical dilemmas occur in school-age and youth programs from time to time. The National After School Association’s (NAA) Code of Ethics can be used to address these dilemmas. Think about similar situations that have occurred in your school-age program. In the space below reflect on how you can handle a similar situation in the future using NAA’s Code of Ethics as your guide.

CASE STUDY: YUKI

Yuki is a 9-year-old girl whose parents recently came to the United States from Japan. Although Yuki had learned some English in her Japanese school, she does not feel comfortable trying to speak it. When Janine, a school-age staff member, visited Yuki’s group as part of an in-program professional development activity, she observed Yuki’s difficulty in being part of the group. The school-age staff member, Andrew, was impatient with Yuki's attempts to express herself using both English and Japanese words. He even said, "You will have to say that in English so we can understand." When some of the children went to the art table, Yuki joined them. She looked at the colors of paint that were available and quietly asked Andrew for black. He told her that black wasn't a very pretty color to use for painting and that she didn't need it. Janine observed several other incidents in which Andrew seemed to be denying Yuki the opportunity to maintain aspects of her own culture. Janine had been reading about multiculturalism and anti-bias curriculum and was upset at what she saw in Andrew's group.

1. Was Janine observing instances of bias and lack of concern for Yuki’s culture?

Suggested Response: Yes, Janine was observing instances of bias and lack of concern for Yuki’s culture. When Andrew became impatient and insisted that Yuki only express herself in English, he was not honoring Yuki’s culture or showing sensitivity to her linguistic differences. Janine was also observing bias when Andrew refused to provide black paint for Yuki to use at the art table.

2. What should Janine do about her observations?

Suggested Response: Janine should ask herself what is the most positive way to address what she observed so that Yuki’s cultural differences are honored and Andrew grows professionally from this incident. Janine should write down what she observed and meet with her coach or trainer to share her observations and concerns. Janine could also share some of the articles she has been reading about multiculturalism and anti-bias curriculum.
3. How would you react to this incident? What approach will you take if you encounter a similar scenario in your work?

_Suggested Response: I always need to do what is best for the child or youth 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 document my observations and share my concerns with my coach or trainer. I can also ask my coach or trainer if we can share professional journal articles that reflect on multiculturalism and anti-bias curriculum at the next staff meeting._