

Self-Reflection Essay #1

Over the past month, not only have I learned a vast amount of information on how to build relationships with children but I have been given the opportunity to put this new knowledge into practice. I will describe the strengths and weaknesses in the progress of the essential skill set in forming relationships with children in the mixed age class at the Early Learning Center and fear that I possess that could potentially hinder developing positive relationships.

One day, after completing a painting and wanting to switch activities, Olivia proceeds to remove her smock and wash her hands. I interpreted that she was getting flustered (face turned pink and slower speech than before) while attempting to get all the paint off of her hands. In order to engage in face-to-face interaction and create open communication, I squat down, turn my body towards her, look her in the eyes, and in a warm tone, I asked Olivia if there was something wrong. She tells me that all of the paint won't come off of her hands and that her daddy was going to be mad at her. All the while she is telling me this tears are forming. I was sensitive to the possibility of her crying and begin to talk her through the situation. Immediately, I tell her she does not sad because sometimes paint doesn't come off the first couple of times you wash your hands and that the paint wasn't going to get on anything else. She still thought that her daddy would be mad because her hands were pink. I then tell her that when her daddy came to get her, she and Ms. Virginia could tell him that she painted today and she had a hard time getting the paint off of her hands. As soon as I told her they could tell her dad, she was happy and wanted to go play. Afterwards, I described the situation to Ms. Virginia and asked her to follow up and speak with Olivia's father. I believe that the skills I demonstrated the most strength in during this interaction were engagement and responsiveness. I was able to successfully make eye contact with Olivia and come up with a solution to her dilemma in a timely fashion that avoided her

getting extremely upset and crying. Although I attempted to use multiple skills in the interaction with Olivia, I can still improve in all skill sets because each child and interaction varies.

One afternoon, Andrew enters the classroom and walks to the area where the train station is set up. He begins playing with the keyboard and laptop. More children began to enter the room and he started playing with other items. As soon as other children started playing with the keyboard and laptop, Andrew returned and grabbed the objects from them and stated that he was playing with them first and they couldn't use them. I instantly tried to engage in face-to-face interaction and create open communication with Andrew by getting on his level, looking him in the eyes, and turning my body towards him. I then began to kindly explain to him that because he had stopped playing with the keyboard and laptop and played with something else, his friends were now able to have their turn. Andrew tells me that he wants ten more minutes with the items and then they can play with them. I attempted to bargain with him by asking him if he would have less time with them because he had already played with the items but he would not accept my offer. In the last few minutes of the conversation with Andrew, the other children had left the area because I was unable to respond to them in a timely fashion. Thinking back on this instance, I could have included all of the children in the conversation so everyone could understand. A situation in which I lacked sensitivity was when I mistook Abby's cues. Abby was jumping up and down with her hands in front of her and looking towards the door that leads to the kitchen. I thought she was excited about snack time because of her energy level and the direction she was facing and looking towards, but she was more than likely looking at the bathroom because shortly after snack time began, she had an accident. Due to this event occurring, I am more aware of how cues for needing to go to the restroom could be mistaken for excitement. In both scenarios, I was able to see my weaknesses and will pursue improvement.