Ethics Statement

Andrea MacMurray

3/5/10

Early Childhood Methods One

The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment was created for educators to refer to when they needed guidance on how to carry out their decisions of every day. Educators should refer to this often to make sure they are meeting all of the standards or at least strive to. NAEYC’s core values are to embrace that children develop at their own pace, appreciate the bond between children and their families as well as encourage strong parent educator communication because it will ultimately prove to be an emotionally healthier environment. Family, culture, community and society should all be taken into account when going about your day. You should embrace diversity and individuality. Most importantly relationships flourish when they are based on trust and respect (NAEYC 1). The framework is separated into four categories relationships with children, families, colleagues, and with community and society (NAEYC 2).

The framework lists a set of ideals that educators should strive to do and a set of principles that educators must follow. The framework to me is the tool to succeed. The framework breaks down what you need to do to be a successful educator. Yes firstly you are an educator to the children but you cannot be successful educating the children without taking into account families, colleagues, community and society. I would refer to Section One (NAEYC 2) when I am considering continuing my education. As an early childhood educator I have a responsibility to stay informed and base my curriculum on my current knowledge (1-1.1, 1-1.2). Above all as an educator “I will not participate or practice a curriculum that is emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitive or imitating to children (P-1.1).” Section two is based on family-educator commitment. As an educator I will strive to strengthen that bond while creating a relationship with families that is built on openness and trust (I-2.2). I will protect the confidentiality of the families when they confide in me. I know that in order to best support their child we need to have open communication that has a foundation of honesty and respect (P-2.13). Section three discuses my ethical responsibilities to my colleagues. Relationships with colleagues is much like relationships with families based on trust, honesty, respect, confidentiality and working together as a team (I-3A.1). A principle that I will refer to often when a conflict or ethical dilemma arises I will refer to P-3A.2 where if I have a concern about a behavior of a colleague I will first let that person know of my concern all the while respecting the colleague and encouraging team work and collaboration. I will strive to resolve the matter collegially and in a confidential manner. Section four is ethical responsibilities to the community and society. I will support policies that support the well being of children, families, and I will work to change the laws and policies that are not in the best interest of children (I-4.7). As an educator I will communicate openly and truthfully about the nature and extent if services that we provide (P-4.1).” This leads to less miscommunication and a stronger bond between children, families, and educators.

What qualifies a child as sick? Who gets to make that decision; the teacher, the assistant or the director of the program? These issues are coming up a lot lately during this flu season. Recently my cooperating teacher noticed that a child was laying on her lap with no energy, pale and very warm. My cooperating teacher decided to call her director to ask if she could take her temperature the director said no. My C.T. was under the impression that many other staff members were abusing the thermometer and having to send children home because they were sick. Eventually my C.T. fought to take her temperature the child had a temperature of 105.6. This event took place in the blue horses’ room which is ages 18 months to two years. After my C.T. took the child’s temperature and realized how high the child’s temperature really was the director felt quite awful that she neglected to look at the child herself. This situation could have been a lot worse if my C.T. did not fight for this child’s rights as hard as she did. The child was ultimately sent home with a high fever and the mother thanked the staff for calling her. This situation is considered an ethical dilemma because on one hand the director was attempting to minimize the amount of children having to be sent home because of sickness some staff members had been abusing this privilege. While trying to minimize the amount of children being sent home the director ignored cautions from a classroom teacher that a child was truly sick and in fact needed to go home.

In section one ethical responsibility to children clearly states that educators are to be familiar with knowledge of early childhood care. That would include what signs to watch for when a child is clearly ill and needs to go home and or seek medical attention. The director was neglecting I-1.1 the teacher was trying her best to make this known that this child was not okay. I-1.4 children are dependent on adults therefore we need to recognize warning signs and take action. As an educator you are to create a safe and healthy atmosphere by keeping the child in school you are not only infecting the other children but the other staff members as well I-1.5. P-1.1 “Shall not harm children” by denying a child the comfort to go home when they are sick is harming a child. I-2.2 creating mutual trust with the families means that you communicate with the parents often about everything especially something as significant as a high fever that could potentially be dangerous. By keeping the child in school I-3C.1 is not being taken into account. I-3C.1 states that employers have the responsibility “to promote safe and health working conditions.”

In theory I understand what the director was trying to accomplish. She was trying to lessen the amount of children having to be sent home when they may not really need to be sent home. However, in doing this she neglected the fact that a child may actually have a fever and truly in fact need to go home. I see no harm in taking children’s temperatures if they have a temperature they should go home not only because they need their rest because they are in fact sick but to protect the health and safety of the center. These dilemmas spanned over the course of a few hours it could have been solved in minutes. As an employer the director needs to respect and trust her employees’ decisions. The teachers know the children in their classrooms best because they spend all day with these children and I do not think that was taken into account. If I was a parent I would want to know immediately if there was a health concern with my child. I would feel a bit betrayed by the teacher we built this trusting relationship with a foundation of open communication and she or he withholding that kind of information would be a strain on our relationship.

When two educators have vastly different beliefs on teaching styles there is bound to be some conflict. Conflict can be where growth stems from, if we face conflict with open communication with an open mind. Recently my C.T. and the associative teacher got into an argument over how the associative teacher interacts with the children. The C.T. was stating that she would not like her to yell across the room when it is time for a diaper change instead walk over to the child and talk to them on their level. The argument got escalated and they started yelling. This all took place in the classroom when the children were present. The associative teacher claims she did not know that she was doing this and she was visibly upset.

P-1.1 states “thou shall not harm children, including emotionally damaging.” By yelling in front of the children the children become terrified. The teachers are always there to support the children. They model friendly behavior and are firm about behavior management. The children are less than three feet tall and the teachers are five feet tall and yelling and slamming doors. As a co-worker “you are to maintain a relationship of respect, trust, confidentiality, collaboration and cooperation” (I-3A.1). This was not met because the way the C.T. went about approaching the associative teacher was not respectful. P-3A.2 states that when we have concerns about a co-workers behavior we should let that person know in such a way that is respectful and shows personal dignity. The associative teacher was on leave for some time a prior to returning I was informed by multiple teachers about the associative teacher’s behavior this is a breach of P-3A.3. As an employee you have a responsibility to your place of employment such as I-3B.1 in which you assist the program in providing the highest quality care. P-3B.4 which outlines that when we have concerns about a colleague’s behavior and the child’s well being is not at risk we may address the situation accordingly. If the situation does not improve it is to be brought to the attention of proper authority. My C.T. did this but may not have brought the issue to her co-worker in the most respectful dignified way. My C.T. does bring her concerns to the proper authority but they seem to be dismissed that is why the issue escalated (P-3B.5). By her concerns not being validated this is a breach of I-3C.2 (environment of trust which allows staff to speak openly and freely) C.T. has said that the administration ignores her concerns. It all relates back to trust and respect that is the foundation of all relationships.

The dilemma was not handled in the way that is most beneficial to the children. The C.T. did have a valid point that it is not healthy to yell across the room. However, when you come at someone by yelling they get defensive and cannot comprehend truly what you are really saying. The C.T. does demonstrate how she would like the associative teacher to talk to the children but she does not seem to get the hint. During a less stressful time the C.T. could have breached the subject more calmly. By yelling at the associative teacher during diaper changing time she is all ready busy, a better time might be during nap time or snack time when she is preparing snack. Try to say it in the most respectful way making sure she knows that you are not criticizing her. P-3C.2 which is proving staff members with a safe and supportive environment there can be more room for growth. The way this situation was resolved is completely understandable because I have seen that happen so many times but we can learn from this that if we approach people in a certain respectful way we may gain more than we expected. Working as team proves better for the children and the other staff members. As a potential future educator I will strive to respect the dignity and uniqueness of all my co-workers in the effort to work together as a team because I know the two minds are better than one and we cannot present a united front if we are not united. As a hypothetical parent I would not want my child to be exposed to that environment it is not healthy for anyone.

Growing up I witnessed my parents going to work each day and they never missed work unless I was sick. They modeled good work ethic through their dedication to their jobs. Since my early teens I have had a job at a daycare center. To this day I cannot recall any days that I have called out sick. That is one of my biggest frustrations in my job is when people call out sick. We are a small daycare center with a limited amount of staff and in the past a certain person would call out sick at least a few times a month. I tried to be sympathetic to the fact that they were truly sick and they needed their rest, but the person may not have been the best person for our center. In the past few years I have learned a lot from my new position and I have learned that everyone does not have the privilege of having parents that instill a good work ethic. Your job is not just something you do your whole mind body and soul need to be in it.

The dilemmas were handled in a way that the people involved thought was the best at the time. However, when multiple people are involved you need to consider the other persons view in order to truly understand the situation. When my cooperating teacher was trying to get the director to realize that the child was in fact sick she was unaware of the other staff members abusing the thermometer and sending children home. Just to be clear that does not make it okay for the director to not take my cooperating teacher’s concerns seriously. Both the director and the cooperating teacher had a thought process which led them to their decision but if they would have explained to each other the background information then there would have been a clearer understanding of the situation at hand. The dilemma between my cooperating teacher and the associative teacher happened and each other’s points of view were not taken into account. This led to a large heated argument which could have been prevented if the relationship was built on openness and respect. I can see the thought processes for both of the dilemmas mentioned. If more often than not we step back and consider the other persons point of view we would see a different picture. I can completely relate to arguments that got heated really quickly and about something that is insignificant. I think back on it now and wonder what would have happened if I took the time to really ask why the other person did what they did, why they felt that way. The overriding factor in both of these dilemmas is open communication and respect. If we would just take the time to take the role of the other then both of these dilemmas and many more could have been prevented. As the NAEYC’s Statement of Commitment outlines as an educator you basically commitment yourself to above all never harm children, basing your curriculum on up to date knowledge, respect and support families, children, and colleagues and continue to keep an open mind. This statement concludes what the ethical guidelines states.

**Bibliography**

Ambery, M., Ball, R., et al. (2005). Code of ethical conduct and statement of commitment: A position statement from the National Association for the education of young children. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

This source is extremely useful for educators. Each and every day we are faced with ethical dilemmas this source gives us a resource to turn to. The code of ethical conduct separates and outlines each aspect of early childhood responsibilities. It is a useful resource to check yourself regularly. This source could also be used by the average person making sure that they are treating people respectfully and with as much dignity as possible. Truly the overriding theme of the source is taking the role of the other and respect.