

Vignette

Conflicting Approaches

Amina is an RECE with many years of experience. She is a new employee at All About Kids Child Care Centre and has been assigned to work in the infant room. Her new colleagues are Berta and Jamie, two RECEs who have worked together in the program for 10 years.

On her first day in her new position, Amina observes a young boy, exceptionally strong and sturdy for someone twelve months of age. He is jumping on a small red couch giggling and smiling. Berta is sitting nearby, bottle feeding a younger infant. She looks annoyed by the young boy's animated movements on the couch, and she asks Amina to remove the boy from the couch and secure him into a highchair. Amina does not agree with this strategy. However, wanting to show respect for her new colleague, she hesitantly complies and places the child in the highchair to play with some building blocks.

Shortly after Amina is hired, a new parent transitions her infant, Sara, into the room. She asks Amina, "Do you think I should sneak away while Sara is distracted?" Amina respectfully replies, "No. I think you should say 'bye-bye', and that you will be back soon. She may cry when you leave, but we are here to help with the transition. It will be okay." The parent says "Goodbye" to Sara, who begins to cry after her mother leaves the room.

Shortly after, Berta approaches Amina and says, "We do not encourage parents to say goodbye to their babies because it upsets them and when one of them cries, all of them start to cry. We prefer they sneak off. This is how we do it here." Amina is dismayed. Her belief is that if parents sneak off from their babies in times of transition, trust in the parent and child relationship could be lost.

Other situations begin to trouble Amina as she reflects on her new environment. She notices that when infants are placed in their highchairs for lunch, their hands are wiped with a damp cloth, yet she also notices that a child-sized stool sits next to the sink for the children to wash their hands with soap and water. Jamie has insisted that "licensing has seen how we serve lunch and they have said that it is okay just to wipe their hands with a damp cloth." Amina believes that the older infants in the program should be encouraged and supported to actively participate in a hand-washing routine.

Amina realizes that she and her colleagues have a very different vision on programming for the infant room. She is unsure if she can continue to work in this environment.

Reflecting on the Vignette

1. What are the key facts highlighted in this vignette?
2. What is Amina's dilemma?
3. What ethical and professional practice standards might assist Amina's decision-making and actions?
4. Who else might become involved as this scenario unfolds? What kind of support might these people provide to Amina in light of her dilemma?
5. Suggest two or three possible ways this vignette might unfold.