

## **My Ethical Commitment**

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## **Introduction**

The NAEYC provided the Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment to help child development professionals to have more positive and professional interactions for and with children, families, colleagues, and the community and society (NAEYC, 2011). In the future, I plan to run my own preschool, and I plan to use the ethical considerations described throughout the rest of this paper.

### **My Ethical Responsibility to Children**

The NAEYC states a variety of principles and ideals that advocate for the well-being of children. Their first principle states that child development professionals should not cause distress to children in any way, physical or emotional (P-1.1). I plan to use this in my future career by treating children with respect in every situation. If I am feeling frustrated, tired, stressed, panicked, or other emotions, I will never take those emotions out on a child. For example, if a child suddenly dumps a whole cup of paint on my new shoes, I will not verbally or physically lash out at the child. Instead, I will talk to them about it. It is important to not harm children because they need to feel safe around their caretakers. They are at a stage in their lives when they are learning to build trust, and we need to help them in that process.

Another principle I will follow in my future career is the use of proper and fair assessments for children. This means accommodating according to their needs and using more than one assessment type before determining any outcomes or results (P-1.5). I plan to use this in my future career by implementing assessment plans for the children with at least three different types of assessments for each child. An example of this would be assessing a child through observation, criterion-referenced assessment, and authentic assessment. An example of an accommodation that I could make in my future preschool could be allowing a child with ADHD

to be assessed in a location where there are less distractions. It is important to accommodate children's needs during assessment and to assess them in more than one way because it helps to ensure that the children will be receiving accurate help according to their needs.

The third principle that I will be led by is reporting any signs of child abuse or neglect to a proper authority (P-1.9). I will apply this in my future program by training my employees on how to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect and how to respond. I will also keep a close watch for signs as well. If there is ever an occurrence when I or another teacher notices a child with a concerning bruise or that speaks about a situation at home that might indicate neglect or mistreatment, I will report it to the proper authority to investigate further. Following this principle helps to protect children from harmful situations and ensure they are receiving the care that they are deserving of.

### **My Ethical Responsibility to Families**

We have a responsibility to keep parents and families aware of any changes or decisions that involve their child. They should be active participants in the decision making for their child's education and experiences in a program (P-2.4). I will make this a part of my future program by interacting with parents daily. I will also hold monthly parent meetings to discuss how we can best help their child to succeed and develop. This is important because it helps parents to feel involved in their child's experiences. It is often hard for parents to leave their children with someone else, even if it is for a short time. By keeping parents involved in decisions for their children, it will help them to feel more peaceful with having them under the care of another.

We also have the responsibility not to take advantage of relationships with families in a way that would strictly benefit us. It is also important to ensure that the relationships with

families will not disturb the educational setting and relationships with the children we are working with (P-2.11). I will apply this principle to my future program by keeping relationships with families to a professional level. I will maintain confidentiality with the information shared by parents, and the information will be used strictly for the benefit of their child. For example, if a family confides to me about a financial hardship that they are experiencing, I will not use that information to take advantage of them. This is important to families because it helps them to feel valued and supported.

Like the last principle, keeping the privacy of families is essential to their well-being. It is our responsibility to protect the information they share that is personal to their lives. The only occurrence when it may be acceptable to share such information is when there is suspicion of harm that may happen to a child. In such cases, it is our responsibility to report our concerns to authorities (P-2.13). For example, if a mother of a child discusses their experiences with marital problems with me, I must respect her privacy by not sharing that information with anyone else. It is only acceptable to share this information if I am concerned about her or her child's wellbeing. This is important to maintain an environment where families can feel they can confide in the people there. It is also important to maintain safety for families.

### **My Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues**

Creating a relationship with colleagues is essential. These relationships should be based on reliability, privacy, trust, and teamwork (I-3A.1). I will implement this into my future preschool through holding staff meetings to help us become better acquainted with each other. These meetings could also include team-building activities as well. This is beneficial to the program because good collaboration and teamwork makes it easier to plan and makes the overall environment more open and positive.

We must understand that our colleagues have valuable insights and qualities that may benefit our program. We should strive to help to strengthen their reputation and skills through constructive and professional feedback, not words that may harm other's views of them or their ability to work with children and families (P-3A.1). In my future program, I will have an expectation of proper communication and gossip avoidance. If there are any concerns, they should be addressed to the individual or me. For example, if someone notices a colleague is spending too much of their time on their phone instead of with children, then they should address their concerns with the individual first to seek a resolution.

It is important to realize that our colleagues have their own lives and personal struggles. It's most important to address our concerns to them in a professional manner.

As child development professionals, we must keep laws and regulations that ensure children's safety. It is also our responsibility to report and act when we learn of any breakage of laws and regulations (P-3B.3). In my future program, I will follow laws and regulations, and I will expect the same from my colleagues. If I notice anyone breaking rules, I will address them with that individual immediately. It is essential for laws and regulations to be followed to ensure that children are receiving the most quality care possible and that they are being protected.

### **My Ethical Responsibility to Community and Society**

An important responsibility that we have to the community and society is to be transparent about what services our program offers to children and families (P-1.4). I will implement this into my future program by being honest while advertising my program. For example, my website will include specifics about what my program includes. This could include age groups I serve, dates/days that are available, prices of the program, and more. This is

important so that parents understand everything that they are signing their children up for and what the parents will agree to as well.

Another obligation that we have (specifically as an employer or manager) is to thoroughly consider applicants' applications, references, and qualifications before deciding to hire them. (P-4.3). In my future program, I will read the applications completely and reach out to references to learn more about the applicants. I will also hire the most qualified applicants. I will not hire unqualified individuals, especially out of desperation. This is important because children deserve quality care. I want them to have positive and impactful learning experiences taught and planned by individuals with a passion for child development.

It is our responsibility to be take action and report a program if we become aware of any that may be compromising children's safety and/or breaking laws or regulations for a childcare facility (P – 4.9). In my future career, I will be hyperaware of what I observe from other programs. I will report things that I find concerning to proper authorities, even in times where it may feel difficult to do so. This is important because we should be willing to report programs that may be compromising the well-being of children. Even if it may not feel like the most serious issue, we may end up saving a child from an unfit situation.

### **Other Ethical Considerations**

As child development professionals, we have an ethical responsibility to follow developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in our curriculum. I will follow DAP in my future program by regularly evaluating and assessing children's needs. I will be aware of activities that may not be appropriate for certain age groups. I will also be aware of what the other teachers in my program will be teaching and offer guidance to how they can improve. This is important because children have a harder time engaging in activities that are too hard or too easy for their

developmental level. Activities need to be within the Zone of Proximal Development (something they can accomplish with some help from a mentor/adult).

We also have a responsibility to use positive guidance strategies with children. In my future program, I will only use positive guidance and no corporal punishment. For example, I will use Rachel Wagner's FLIP IT method for discipline instead of spanking or yelling. Positive discipline keeps children safe, physically and emotionally. Physical punishments do not help children's development, and we should be helping them to develop emotional intelligence.

Finally, we have a duty to use technology within a program tactfully and in limited amounts. This means following screen time recommendations for age groups. In my future program, I do not plan on using mainstream technology like TVs, tablets, phones, or iPads. If I do, it will be for an hour maximum for children over the age of three, and it will be media that is educational and not overstimulating. Meaningful and limited use of screen time is important for children because it could potentially take away from other meaningful experiences they may have if misused. Children also learn a lot from what they watch from others, so it is important to be conscious of what they are seeing and hearing from media sources.

### **Summary**

These considerations ultimately provide guidance on how to improve relationships and respect for children, families, colleagues, and the community and society. This will help me to remember the things I need to do to run my program smoothly while maintaining respect and professionalism. This document will help me to not only know what I need to be doing but to help me to remember why I need to be following these principles. This document will help to ensure that children will be receiving quality care and are being protected. This will also help

families to feel comfort knowing their child is in good hands and that they have a say in their child's development.



## References

National Association for the Education of Young Children (2011). *NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment*. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/ethical-conduct>.