



Day to Day the Ethical Way: Using the NAEYC Code of Ethics in Real-Life Situations

Southwest CAEYC Conference

November 1, 2014

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WHAT I HOPE YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

Understanding of:

Values, Ideals, Principles of Ethical Conduct

Ethical Responsibilities versus Dilemmas

Practical Application of the C of E

Professionalism in Early Childhood

Ethical Use of Social Media

Ethics for Everyone?



What Are Core Values in EC?

The beliefs and ideas considered the most worthy and desirable to guide our behavior in EC

Provide the foundation for ethical behavior

The First Core Value

Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle



OTHER CORE VALUES?

What do you think these should cover?

Base our work on knowledge of how kids develop & learn.

Appreciate the bond between the child & the family.

Recognize that kids are best understood/supported in the context of family, culture, community, & society.

Respect the dignity, worth, & uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, & colleague).

Respect diversity in kids, families, & colleagues.

Recognize that kids & adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust & respect.

WHAT ARE IDEALS?

These are the things you aspire to as an EC professional.

What do you aspire to -

In Regard to Children? (12)

For example - TO:

be familiar w/ the knowledge base of EC, stay informed;

base program practices on current knowledge & research, child development, & knowledge of each child;

create safe & healthy settings that foster development;

support the right of each child to play/learn in an inclusive environment;

ensure that each child's culture, language, ethnicity, & family structure are recognized/valued;

work w/families to provide safe/smooth transition.

In Regard to Families? (9)

For example - TO:

know the knowledge base related to working w/families;
develop relationships of mutual trust, create partnerships;

respect the dignity & preferences, make effort to learn
about structure, culture, language, customs & beliefs;

acknowledge families' child-rearing values, their right to
make decisions for their kids;

share info about each child's education, development;

help enhance understanding of their kids, support them
in their development as parents;

In Regard to Colleagues? (6)

For example - TO:

establish, maintain relationships of respect, trust, confidentiality, collaboration, cooperation;

share resources, collaborate to provide best program;

support in meeting their professional needs, & in PD;

give them recognition of professional achievement when recognition is due;

assist our program in providing highest quality of service;

do nothing to diminish reputation of our program unless violating rules, regulations, or the Code of Ethics.

WHAT ARE PRINCIPLES?

They are the actual guides for our behavior & actions.

They help us resolve ethical dilemmas.

IS IT A RESPONSIBILITY OR A DILEMMA?

What's the difference?

Responsibilities are clear-cut – they are actions that **MUST** or **MUSTN'T** be taken.

IS IT A RESPONSIBILITY OR A DILEMMA?

Dilemmas:

have more than 1 possible solution

each can be justified

each has costs & benefits

solutions are rarely simple or easily solved

can't just apply the rules

have to find the best possible solution for all

WORDS OF WISDOM

What's easy & what's
right are rarely the
same thing.

WORDS OF WISDOM

“The time is always right to do what is right.” ~ MLK

“Today I shall behave as if this is the day I will be remembered.” ~ Dr. Seuss

Practice with Vignettes

Each group has 1 or 2 vignettes.

Use the Code of Ethical Conduct to determine which core values, & which ethical responsibilities/principles to children, to families, and to colleagues, apply.

Write your vignette # on post-it notes & put the notes on the appropriate charts. Not all values, responsibilities, principles are represented on the charts.

Is Re-naming Your Centers Ethical?

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"I'm thinking of changing my centers to Sit Quietly, Behave Yourself, and Just Stop That."

A Closer Look at Professionalism

If you were going to hire someone to perform ANY job for you, what attitudes, & qualities would you look for?

Supposing they were going to be a team member or supervisor – now what qualities?

To hire a person who understands & respects boundaries, what would you want them to do/not do?

What professional work habits would you look for in a prospective employee?

Use the post-it notes to record your ideas about the questions on the charts around the room.

Professional Attitudes & Qualities

ANYONE YOU HIRE:

Respectful & courteous; trustworthy & honest; positive outlook & attitude; dependable, accountable, responsible; considerate; responsive & calm

A TEAM MEMBER OR SUPERVISOR:

Kind, empathetic, & supportive; a team player; sincere; a good leader

Respect for Appropriate Boundaries

Leaves personal business & emotional baggage at the door

Minds own business

Avoids listening to, engaging in gossip about co-workers, families, children, community members, or other programs

Avoids sharing TMI at work

Avoids using work time for personal benefit or business as much as possible

More About Boundaries

Setting Boundaries:

Be aware of your own personal values, beliefs, emotions, expectations, & hot buttons

Be aware of your own desire to be liked by the families

Be able to reflect with a trusted adult

Know why you might want to share personal information with a family, & know the dangers

When in doubt, stop & think!

Professional Work Habits

Is dependable

Is on time

Manages his/her time adequately to get everything done that needs to be done

Is able to work independently

Is able to work cooperatively on a team

Keeps accurate & up-to-date records

Abides by all the rules/regs of the workplace

Ethical Use of Social Media & E-Communication

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Signs of the social networking times.

Finish these sentences:

Some people just share _____.

Email is convenient but snail mail is _____.

Using social media w/o violating ethics is like walking a tightrope _____.

You _____ post comments about your co-workers, the kids/families you serve, your program, other programs, other professionals in the community.

Why Email Can Be a Problem

We have no way of controlling what happens after we send it – it could be forwarded, printed & distributed, used against us.

Email accounts get hacked all the time.

Emails are often written in haste & w/o reflection, in moments of strong emotions. Whenever we feel strongly about something, take time to get calm & reflect. That's the advantage to snail mail.

USE THE 'FRONT PAGE' TEST!

FRIEND Me

These days we're *friends* with friends of friends of friends!

Think about the potential problems with *friending* families whose kids are in your class. They can see everything you post!

The same issues about boundaries apply when using social media as in person-to-person interactions.

Practice

How would you handle the inappropriate and potentially unethical use of social media or e-communication among co-workers?

How can using the Code help you address this challenge?

Extra Material

The following slides include the post-it chart headings as well as the vignettes.

(Selected)CORE VALUES (page 1)

“Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn”

We honor this value by:

- ~ learning about child development and early learning processes through college coursework and other professional development activities;
- ~using developmentally appropriate practices in our family childcare homes and early learning centers;
- ~ensuring that our observations and expectations of children are based on strong knowledge of developmental milestones.

CORE VALUES (page 1)

“Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family”

We honor this value by:

- ~partnering with the family to develop consistency between home and center, particularly regarding use of caregiving routines, guidance (discipline), cultural norms, etc.;
- ~ensuring that each child’s family is welcomed into our setting, and that the child is reminded of his/her family with pictures, stories, and remarks throughout the day.

CORE VALUES (page 1)

“Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, colleague)”

We honor this value by:

- ~behaving in respectful, responsive ways appropriate to each person;
- ~refraining from talk or action that could be interpreted as disrespectful, dismissive, or devaluing;
- ~avoiding body language (looks, posture, facial expression) and tone of voice that indicate disrespect, sarcasm, or negative judgment toward anyone.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO CHILDREN

The first and primary principle is this:

“P-1.1—Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children. This principle has precedence over all others in this Code.” (page 3) We implement this principle in a variety of ways. (The following list is not all-inclusive.)

We interact with children in ways that are nurturing, responsive, encouraging, and supportive of their emotional development.

We use guidance strategies that foster self-esteem. We avoid punitive, harsh, judgmental, sarcastic, and otherwise inappropriate “discipline” strategies.

We treat each child fairly. This doesn’t mean that each child gets exactly what the others get (a one-size-fits-all program), but rather that each child gets what they need from us. We don’t pay more attention to a child we “like more” – we make sure that each child in our care believes s/he is important to us.

We individualize to successfully meet each child’s needs. This includes environments, activities, curricula, interactions, etc.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO CHILDREN, Cont.

We individualize to successfully meet each child's needs. This includes environments, activities, curricula, interactions, etc.

We refrain from talking about children in their presence. We assume that even very young and/or children with seemingly limited receptive and expressive language, have an inner life and can absorb our messages about them. At the very least, talking about children in their presence is rude. At the worst, it's damaging to their developing sense of self, their belief that we are safe and trustworthy, and that the world is a good place. The only exception is when we make positive remarks about them to, for examples, their parents, or visitors to the class.

We safeguard confidential information about individual children and refrain from sharing it inappropriately. This includes accidentally leaving confidential information lying out for anyone to see. This also includes talking about a child or family to another family.

We know and follow state laws regarding abuse and neglect of children.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO FAMILIES

This NAEYC statement provides a benchmark for ethical decision-making in relationship to partnering with families:

“Families* are of primary importance in children’s development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child’s wellbeing, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child’s development. (page 3) * The term family may include those adults, besides parents, with the responsibility of being involved in educating, nurturing, and advocating for the child.”

We implement this in a variety of ways. The following list is not all-inclusive.

We “...respect the dignity and preferences of each family andmake an effort to learn about its structure, culture, language, customs, and beliefs to ensure a culturally consistent environment for all children and families.” (Ideal 2.5, page 4)

We let families know in advance about our policies, procedures, etc. and any changes to these.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO FAMILIES, Cont.

We establish and maintain appropriate boundaries between our personal and professional lives. This means that we're aware of our own values and beliefs; that we refrain from sharing personal information; we're mindful of our desire to be liked by families; etc.

We refrain from using our relationship with families to our own advantage.

We safeguard confidential information about individual children and families, and refrain from sharing it inappropriately. This includes accidentally leaving confidential information lying out for anyone to see. This also includes talking about a child or family to another family.

We know and follow state laws regarding abuse and neglect of children.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO COLLEAGUES

This NAEYC statement provides a benchmark for ethical decision-making in this area:

“In a caring, cooperative workplace, human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are developed and sustained. Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility to colleagues is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children also apply as we interact with adults in the workplace.” (page 5)

We implement this in a variety of ways. The following list is not all-inclusive.

We share resources and ideas that will benefit children and families.

We recognize the professional achievement and contributions of co-workers.

We refrain from chatting and visiting with co-workers about anything unrelated to the task at hand, during class time.

We talk over concerns about a co-worker’s behavior with them in a respectful, confidential manner.

We help our agency or program provide high quality services at all times.

We talk over our concerns about program policies and services with the appropriate program administrator and work for positive solutions.

VIGNETTES

1: The parents of a child in your class are going away for the weekend and say they'll pay you a lot of money if you'll babysit for them. Without thinking, you agree. Then you realize it's not such a good idea, but it's too late for them to get another sitter. What should you do?

2: The director of your center decided to implement continuity of care but didn't include anyone else in the decision-making process. When you and other staff members resist, she gives you less than adequate performance evaluations. What should you do?

3: You have a child with significant physical disabilities in your class. The parent of another child asks you what's wrong with the little girl. What should you say?

4: One of the moms whose son is in your class wants to "friend" you on Facebook. What do you do?

5: You overhear a co-worker making unkind and sarcastic remarks about a family's religion. What should you say?

VIGNETTES, Cont.

6: A relatively new child in your class screams for hours after he's dropped off – it's getting on your nerves. One morning you say to your co-worker, "Well, I see Jason's in his usually bad mood again this morning!" Jason is right there at your feet. Is your behavior ethical?

7: A parent brings her 2 year-old child with a medicine pouch on a string around his neck and tells you not to remove it. Once she leaves, you take it off saying, "This is dirty and yucky." You put it back on just before pick up time. Is your behavior ethical?

8: The family of a child in your care is experiencing severe hardship and you feel sorry for them. You notice bruises and other signs indicating that the child might be a victim of abuse. You don't tell anyone or refer them because you feel sorry for them. Is your behavior ethical?

9: A co-worker has started selling handmade jewelry, and is soliciting purchases from families served by the center. What should you say?

10: You're frustrated that the toddlers in your class have so many problems taking turns and sharing. You are constantly using time-outs but this isn't working. Is your behavior ethical?

Resources

1. NAEYC Position Statements and Codes of Ethical Conduct:

http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/ethical_conduct

2. Everyday examples of ethical dilemmas:

<http://www.naeyc.org/event/ethics>

3. NAEYC videos on ethics:

<http://www.naeyc.org/ecp/resources/ethics>