

Lacy Strings 3 Beads

Lacy is a toddler enrolled in a community child care setting. Based on observations and using a classroom assessment tool, her early childhood (EC) teacher, Jennifer, had suggested to her parents that they contact the school district for further assessment. Lacy now has an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) to address developmental delays in the areas of speech and language, fine motor skills and large motor skills. The early childhood special education (ECSE) teacher, Linda, visits the center once a week to work with Lacy. Usually when Linda is there, she pulls Lacy aside to work on the IFSP goals, but Lacy often resists going with Linda because she is involved in play. A few times she has started a game of “chase me” but then gets pretty wound up and hard to pull back to the ongoing activities. Once she cried and fell to the floor when Linda asked her to put her dinosaur away and come to a small table to work. Jennifer, the EC teacher, feels stressed out when Linda comes to work with Lacy because she doesn’t like to see Lacy upset and it’s usually up to her to get Lacy re-engaged with the group or an activity when it happens. Jennifer is hesitant to question Linda’s approach, since she is specially trained in helping children who have delays.

One of the fine motor goals for Lacy is to string three 1” beads on a string. One morning at circle time, Jennifer had a very long piece of yarn that stretched from one side of the circle to the other, held by two teachers. She told a story about the “the bead kids” who were choosing beads for a special necklace. Each child picked 3 beads from a basket. As she said their names, each child placed their beads on the string, moving them from one side of the circle to the other, and if they wanted, could say something about their bead. Jennifer strategically called Lacy’s name after about 3 other children, so that Lacy had a chance to observe the other children stringing their beads. When it was her turn, Lacy excitedly chose 3 red beads, put them on the string and called out, “wed, wed, wed!” The next time that Linda came, Jennifer shared her circle time strategy and reported that Lacy had strung 3 beads. Jennifer asked Linda if that “counted” to meet Lacy’s goal. Linda laughed and said, “Of course – what other tricks do you have up your sleeve?”

Which Kaleb?

Marie has spent much time seeking out resources to understand and address her son Kaleb’s (2 ½ years old) needs. She has consulted with physicians, requested medical tests, taken Kaleb for assessments and therapy, learned about nutrition, and changed Kaleb’s diet over the past several months. Recent assessments suggest that Kaleb is on the autism spectrum and has some sensory and nutritional issues. Kaleb attends a child care center 3 full days a week at the university where Marie is a graduate student. In this classroom, there are 14 children ranging in age from 18 months to 3 years old. Kaleb also attends the school district special education program 2 days a week for 1 ½ hours. In this program, there are 4-6 children, all of whom have been identified with special needs. Recently, the school district decided to provide some of their services in natural environments. Rose, the early childhood special education (ECSE) teacher, has begun to do home visits for most of the families in her program. Since Kaleb is in child care while Marie is in classes or working on campus, Marie asked if Rose’s visits could take place at the child care center. Rose now comes to the university child care center once a week to see Kaleb.

Marie is concerned because she has observed that Kaleb acts differently in the two programs that he attends. Marie feels that the school district program is too structured and does not engage Kaleb in ways that interest him. She feels that the focus when he is there is working on isolated goals and that Kaleb often “shuts down” or “acts out” because he simply doesn’t want to do what they are asking him to do, such as practicing certain sounds. Marie feels that the early childhood (EC) teachers are more flexible, and Kaleb has more choices about what activities he gets to do. From the ECSE program, Marie often hears about Kaleb’s challenging behaviors. At child care, she hears about how much more he is talking, staying at circle time activities, and starting to play alongside other children. Marie wants Kaleb to have all the services he will need now and throughout his school years, but she has mixed feelings about sending him to the ECSE program.

What are similarities and differences between the cases of Lacy and Kaleb?

Similarities:

Differences:

Write a one sentence statement that describes differences between special education and early childhood education approaches, based on these scenarios: