The Michigan Persona Project eBook: Part 1

Preparing early childhood colleagues to support the promise of each Michigan child

The Michigan Persona Project began in spring 2021 to develop resources that will provide powerful new tools to support the work of faculty and professional learning providers who prepare personnel to work with young children, including young children with developmental delays and disabilities.

This project is supported by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act through grants from the Michigan Department of Education. For more information about the Michigan Persona Project, contact Kari Holmberg at holmberg_k@ccresa.org.

What's a persona?

Personas are short stories about a child and family. Each persona offers information about the unique composition of the family, details about the child (name, age, likes, dislikes), and insights about who the child is as a learner. The persona also provides details, like whether a child is receiving services for a disability, is a dual language learner, or has experienced traumatic life events. Each persona also has an engaging photo of the child. Personas offer faculty and instructors an effective way to promote individualizing. For example, students might be asked to identify the evidence-based practices they might use to support the child and their family in a persona. Michigan's early childhood and early intervention/early childhood special education agencies, faculty, and organizations are committed to producing students who are prepared to support each and every child. That's why a set of Michigan personas will be developed, tested, and shared in 2021.
To learn more about the project: Michigan Persona Project

Field Testing Information

In this book, you will find ten personas that were written by teams from across the state of Michigan, representing a variety of roles (see more information on teams below). The personas can be used in professional development and higher education settings.

The personas are in chronological order by age of the child. Each persona includes an engaging picture, narrative about the child and family, questions to use in professional development and higher education settings, and suggested resources.

The Table of Contents (found on page 3) has a clickable list of each persona including general tags.

The Michigan Persona Project Team

A deep appreciation is sent to the dedicated people from around the state of Michigan who agreed to collaborate to make this project happen. These include the following teams, consisting of family representatives, professional development providers, and higher education faculty.

The Teams:

The Upper Peninsula Team: • Tammra Houseman, Bay Community College, Team Liaison • Sheryl Hammock, Bay Community College • Becky Davis, Lake Superior State University • Laura Goldthwait, Michigan Department of Education • Kelly Hurshe, Michigan Department of Education • Andrea Caron, Family Representative	The Northern Lower Team: • Lisa Morley, West Shore Community College, Team Liaison • Cheryl Bloomquist, Northwestern Michigan College • Liza Ing, Ferris State University • Kelsey Laird, MiAEYC • Heather Stelzer, Family Representative
The South Central 1 Team: • AnnMarie Bates, Central Michigan University, Team Liaison • Danielle Savory Seggerson, Lansing Community College • Tricia McKay, Lansing Community College • Michelle Stevens, Early Childhood Investment Corporation	The South Central 2 Team: • Becky Garske, Mott Community College, Team Liaison • Rod Reyes, Mott Community College • Christine Kenney, University of Michigan (Flint) • Susan Lechota, PD Provider (Flint) • Brunette Takin, Family Representative • Rashan Ramsey, Family Representative
The West Team: • Ranee Conley, Southwestern Michigan College, Team Liaison • Jean Wassenaar, EOT&TA • Amanda Schneider, Family Representative	The East 1 Team: • Stephanie Wozniak, Monroe Community College, Team Liaison • Felice Moorman, Monroe Community College • Tricia Foster, Eastern Michigan University • Brooke Rains, Child Care Network SE RC Director • Kristen Gibson, Family Representative
The East 2 Team: • Tomoko Wakabayashi, Oakland University • Julie Ricks-Doneen, Oakland University • Sheryl Goldberg, MiAIMH, Team Liaison • Chandra Jones, Family Representative	The Detroit Team: • Christine Hancock, Wayne State University • LaShorage Shaffer, University of Michigan (Dearborn), Team Liaison • Carol Williams, Schoolcraft College • Lisa Perugi, Wayne RESA • Jackie Golden, Family Representative

And the project was supported by the following State Team:

- Kari Holmberg, Clinton County RESA Office of Innovative Projects
- LaShorage Shaffer, University of Michigan (Dearborn)
- Danielle Savory Seggerson, Lansing Community College
- Camille Catlett, Consultant

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Child's Name: Elijah

Tags: infant, Early On® program, in-home child care provider, developmental delay

Seven-month-old Elijah is Jason and Andrea's first child. Elijah was born prematurely at 36.5 weeks and spent 21 days in the NICU in Marquette, MI, 3 hours away from his hometown of Sault Ste. Marie. He was born with clubbed feet, a hole in his heart, and hypospadias. Though Elijah's parents love the slower pace of living in the rural Upper Peninsula (U.P.), they began to find the travel overwhelming as regular medical appointments sent them between 3 and 6 hours from home. Jason and Andrea are strong Catholics and leaned heavily on their faith during that time. They feel fortunate to have adequate sick time and family leave of absences from their jobs to cover their travel time. In addition, the health savings account offered through Jason's employer allowed them to use tax-free monies for other incurred travel expenses like hotel and mileage.

Elijah's parents did not get connected with the *Early On* program right away after his birth as is protocol for a NICU baby. They didn't recall hearing about it until he was nearly 7 months old but wished they had learned about it sooner so as to help them navigate his developmental delays of speech and gross motor skills. Elijah had to wear casts on his legs and then leg braces for 10-weeks to help correct his clubbed feet. His parents had to trust a medical provider who was 3 hours away and felt a little at a loss about not having more than one pediatric podiatrist to choose from. They weren't completely at ease with the podiatrist, but he was their only option at the time. They also had to make multiple 6-hour trips to Grand Rapids for Elijah's hypospadias repair surgeries. Andrea is very resourceful and learned that the Renucci House, attached to the hospital, is a home away from home for families travelling for medical procedures.

Elijah is a very happy baby with an easy-going personality. He is curious about his surroundings and with casts off, has begun to scoot his way around the house. He is primarily home with his mother but does go to an in-home child care provider on a part time basis. Andrea is so grateful to have found a child care provider who was not only willing to take Elijah to give her a break, but is also interested in his

development and always asking what she can do to help him. She is the one in fact, who mentioned the *Early On* program to Andrea one afternoon when they were discussing Elijah's development. Andrea took her advice and self-referred to *Early On* in her county. Elijah was evaluated, found eligible, and now receives both speech and physical therapy. His parents are thrilled for the professional knowledge that is out of their scope of childhood development, to help him grow and learn. Both his teacher and his parents have noticed that Elijah is very strong visually and loves mobiles, pictures, and other colorful inputs.

Jason and Andrea are nervous about Elijah's future. Their greatest desire is that he will be able to get caught up to his peers and thrive. They worry that his issues might affect his ability to keep up with his peers when he gets to school. Elijah's physical therapist reminds them to focus on today and how they can help him right now to gain skills and strength.

Shortened Version:

Seven-month-old Elijah, Jason and Andrea's first child, was born prematurely in Marquette, MI, 3 hours away from his hometown of Sault Ste. Marie. He was born with clubbed feet, a hole in his heart, and other medical challenges. Though Elijah's parents love the slower pace of living in the rural Upper Peninsula (U.P.), they find the travel overwhelming as their medical providers are between 3 and 6 hours from home. They feel fortunate to have adequate sick time, family leave and health savings accounts offered through their employers.

Elijah is a very happy baby with an easy-going personality. He is curious about his surroundings and with casts off, has begun to scoot his way around the house. He is primarily home with his mother but does go to an in-home child care provider on a part time basis. Andrea is so grateful to have found a child care provider who was not only willing to take Elijah to give her a break, but is also interested in his development and always asking what she can do to help him. She is the one in fact, who mentioned the *Early On* program to Andrea one afternoon when they were discussing Elijah's development. Andrea took her advice and self-referred to *Early On* in her county. Elijah was assessed and enrolled, and now receives both speech and physical therapy. His parents are thrilled for the professional knowledge that is out of their scope of childhood development, to help him grow and learn. Both his teacher and his parents have noticed that Elijah is very strong visually and loves mobiles, pictures, and other colorful inputs.

Possible Questions

- Elijah's parents found out about *Early On* services and supports from his child care provider. What is the process for referring a child to the *Early On* program?
- Andrea and Jason have concerns about how he will keep up with his peers. If you were Elijah's child care provider, how would you engage and support his learning and development? How would you engage and collaborate with Elijah's parents?
- Based on what you know about things Elijah likes and is interested in, if you were his child care provider, how might you support his development in each of the learning strands of the Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs? How would you coordinate that work with his physical therapist and his family?

Suggested Resources

- Building Babies' Brains Through Play: Mini Parenting Master Class
- Curriculum Modifications for Infants and Toddlers
- Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Birth to Kindergarten
- *Early On* Michigan
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework



Child's Name: Jayla

Tags: infant, Down syndrome, Early On

Jayla is seven months old. She lives at home with her mother, father, sister, and 2 brothers in the Detroit area. Jayla is a child living with Down syndrome.

Jayla had genetic testing done at her mother's request and the lab lost the sample. Jayla had genetic testing done again at a different lab and was diagnosed with Down syndrome when she was three weeks old.

Jayla's parents were devastated to get this news. It was more of a shock because doctors, nurses, and even her pediatrician did not notice anything. They asked Jayla's pediatrician for information on children with Down syndrome and resources, but he really was not helpful at all. They were told by Jayla's doctor that "your daughter is retarded, but don't worry – she could end up working at Kroger one day." Thankfully, Jackie, Jayla's mother, is a social worker and she already knew about *Early On*. They reached out to family and friends who had similar situations and joined social media groups with other families going through similar issues. They did research on the internet to find out about issues that can affect a child with Down syndrome.

Jayla has multiple appointments each week. She has seen a cardiologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, geneticists, pediatrician, neurologist etc. Jayla just completed a sleep study. She wears a doc band on her head to correct plagiocephaly. She has to get her thyroid checked every six months. There may be a possibility that she will not be able to speak or be able to swallow.

Jayla's family knows that getting an early start will give Jayla a chance to live her best possible life. The family receives support through their church, which is an extended family as well.

Shortened Version:

Jayla Rose Lynn is seven months old. She lives at home with her mother, father, sister, and 2 brothers in the Detroit area. When she was 3 weeks old, genetic testing revealed that she has Down syndrome.

Jayla's parents were devastated to get this news. They asked Jayla's pediatrician for information on children with Down syndrome and resources, but he really was not helpful at all. They were told by Jayla's doctor that "your daughter is retarded, but don't worry – she could end up working at Kroger one day." Thankfully, Jackie, Jayla's mother, is a social worker and she already knew about *Early On*. They reached out to family and friends who had similar situations and joined social media groups with other families going through similar issues. They did research on the internet to find out about issues that can affect a child with Down syndrome.

Jayla has multiple appointments each week. She has seen a cardiologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, geneticists, pediatrician, neurologist etc. Jayla just completed a sleep study. She wears a doc band on her head to correct plagiocephaly. She has to get her thyroid checked every six months. There may be a possibility that she will not be able to speak or be able to swallow.

Jayla's family knows that getting an early start will give Jayla a chance to live her best possible life. The family receives support through their church, which is an extended family as well.

Possible Questions:

- Jayla is currently receiving therapy services (speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy) at home through *Early On*. If you were one of Jayla's therapists, how would you learn about the daily routines of the family so you could coordinate what you're working on with daily opportunities for Jayla to practice?
- With so many therapists and medical professionals in Jayla's life, keeping everyone up to date could be very challenging. What might be some ways to facilitate collaboration among the members of Jayla's team?
- What are some of the Michigan organizations that might support Jayla's parents to connect with other families who have children with Down syndrome?

Suggested Resources:

- Building Babies' Brains Through Play: Mini Parenting Master Class
- Curriculum Modifications for Infants and Toddlers
- Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Birth to Kindergarten
- *Early On* Michigan
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework



Child's Name: Ryan

Tags: infant, premature birth, Early On, IFSP

Ryan is a lively 12-month-old who was born premature at 31 weeks in Flint, MI during the Water Crisis recovery period. He is an only child who currently lives with his mother, Rashan, but has a strong active relationship with his father. In addition, his parents have an extensive extended family support system. Ryan enjoys books, coloring, music, and animals (particularly dogs). His mother reads to him daily and he really likes playing with toy cars and loves singing his favorite song, ABC's.

Ryan qualified for *Early On* services and has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) with weekly home-based visits. During these visits, Ryan's provider encourages him to strengthen his fine motor and expressive language development and continue progress in his gross motor skills. He is also very active; large motor development is on target and possibly even advanced, as Rashan reports that Ryan started walking at 9 months. Currently Ryan's development is almost at his chronological age vs. his adjusted age based upon premature birth. Rashan has indicated that Ryan demonstrates determination and resiliency when attempting new challenges provided by his *Early On* provider. His IFSP also includes support for Rashan with strategies to manage Ryan's asthma which currently requires two daily breathing machine treatments and an inhaler as needed. They're also working together to encourage Ryan to sleep in his own bed which is a priority for Rashan.

Rashan is planning to place Ryan into child care this coming school year and she is concerned about how he will transition into an environment where he is not the total focus of attention. She's also worried that the new setting might not be as focused on Ryan's continued developmental progress, but she is hoping the classroom teachers will use his interest in books, cars, dogs and music to support his development and sense of belonging in the new classroom.

Shortened Version:

Ryan is a lively 12-month-old who was born prematurely at 31 weeks in Flint, MI during the Water Crisis recovery period. He is an only child who currently lives with his mother, Rashan, but has a strong active relation-ship with his father. In addition, his parents have an extensive extended family support system. Ryan enjoys books, coloring, music, and animals (particularly dogs). His mother reads to him daily and he really likes playing with toy cars and loves singing his favorite song, ABC's.

Ryan has qualified for *Early On* services including an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) with weekly home-based teacher visits. During these visits, Ryan's teachers encourages him to strengthen his fine motor and expressive language development and continue progress in his gross motor skills. He is also very active; large motor development is on target and possibly even advanced, as Rashan reports that Ryan started walking at 9 months. Currently Ryan`s development is almost at his chronological age vs. his adjusted age based upon premature birth. Rashan has indicated that Ryan demonstrates determination and resiliency when attempting new challenges provided by his *Early On* providers. His IFSP also includes support for Rashan with strategies to manage Ryan's asthma which currently requires two daily breathing machine treatments and an inhaler as needed. They're also working together to encourage Ryan to sleep in his own bed which is a priority for Rashan.

Rashan is planning to place Ryan into child care this coming school year and she is concerned about how he will transition into an environment where he is not the total focus of attention. She's also worried that the new setting might not be as focused on Ryan's continued developmental progress, but she is hoping the classroom teachers will use his interest in books, cars, dogs and music to support his development and sense of belonging in the new classroom.

Possible Questions:

- Ryan is currently receiving early intervention services at home through *Early On*. If you were one of Ryan's therapists, how would you learn about the daily routines of the family so you could coordinate what you're working on with daily opportunities for Ryan to practice?
- What strategies can Ryan's teachers use to assist his transition into child care?
- When Ryan is also attending a child care program, how can his classroom teachers collaborate with his *Early On* providers?
- Ryan's father and other family members are active participants in his life. What are practices that might facilitate keeping everyone engaged in and supportive of Ryan's ongoing progress?

Suggested Resources:

- Building Babies' Brains Through Play: Mini Parenting Master Class
- Curriculum Modifications for Infants and Toddlers
- Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Birth to Kindergarten
- *Early On* Michigan
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework
- Southeast Early Childhood Support Network (includes Genesee County)



Child's Name: Jonathan

Tags: toddler, hearing loss, language delay

Jonathan is 2 years old and has a new baby brother on the way. He was born with a bilateral sensorineural profound hearing loss and received cochlear implants at 14 months old. Jonathan is a high-energy child who likes to run and play outside. He enjoys building with Duplo Legos and exploring with form puzzles. Jonathan's family lives in a rural community in western Michigan and both parents work full time and have long commutes to work. Jonathan goes to child care three days a week and his grandmother watches him two days a week. She brings him to an *Early On* playgroup each week to work on language development. Jonathan also receives in-home *Early On* services from a Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) Teacher Consultant and a Speech Pathologist once a week when mom and dad can be present for the visits. Jonathan's family feels isolated and alone at times. They have only met other families who have a child who is deaf or hard of hearing through social media sites.

Jonathan has begun to develop his listening and verbal skills, but not as fast as his parents would have hoped. Jonathan's mother, Sarah, and father, Andrew, would like to explore additional supports such as a visual language that are available to help Jonathan communicate. Amanda is interested in exploring American Sign Language (ASL) and would like support from the early intervention team in teaching Jonathan. She is also interested in finding a way she can learn ASL so she can support Jonathan at home.

Jonathan struggles at times with his peers. He gets very close to other children's faces so that he can hear and look at their mouths. He does not always hear the questions that other children are asking or hear them call his name. Sometimes it seems that Jonathan chooses to play by himself instead of with others because it is less work for him.

Possible Questions:

- What are effective practices for supporting Jonathan in his interactions and play with his peers?
- Which adaptations to the child care environment might help Jonathan to be more comfortable and successful?
- Since Jonathan is just developing his listening skills, what are ways to support his participation using other channels, e.g., visual supports?
- It is likely that the other children will notice the external signs of Jonathan's cochlear implants. If you were his teacher and the other children asked, what might you say to them?

Suggested Resources:

- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services: Information for the Parent of a Child with Hearing Loss
- Michigan Department of Education – Resource for Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework
- Practice Improvement Tools: Interaction Checklists (especially child social communication and child-child interactions)
- Practice Improvement Tools: Interaction Practice Guides
- What Educators Need to Know About Cochlear Implants
- Years Later, Child's Cochlear Implants Are His "Ears"
- ASL Deafined



Child's Name: Hwan Kim

Tags: toddler, dual language learner, center-based care

Hwan Kim is a 2 ½ year old boy whose mother, Bong Cha, and father, Kun Woo, are graduate students at Wayne State University. Bong Cha and Kun Woo came to the United States from Seoul, South Korea when Hwan was 1 ½ years old. Hwan stayed in Korea with his maternal grandparents while his parents came to get settled and begin their studies at the University. Both parents are doctoral candidates.

Four months ago, when Hwan was a little over 2 years old, he traveled to the U.S. with his maternal grandmother, Eun Ae, who stayed with the family for a month before returning to Seoul. Bong Cha and Kun Woo enrolled Hwan right away in the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute Early Childhood Center on campus 3 days per week. On these three days, both parents have classes or are working on research projects. On the days Hwan stays home, the parents take turns taking care of him. He really enjoys going to the Kagopa Korean market near their home, and his favorite snack is Korean rice crackers which he sometimes brings to the early childhood center for snack.

It has been an emotional transition period for all family members. Hwan cries every day when his parents drop him off and he often cries intermittently throughout the six hours he is there, sometimes crying himself to sleep at times other than naptime.

Hwan repeats a few words over and over throughout the day: "Eomma" (mommy), "Halmeoni" (grandma), "gada" (go) and "jib" (home). His teachers have learned these words and often repeat back to him "you want mommy" or "you want to go home." Both parents have expressed concern to Hwan's teachers about his language because he does not say many words in Korean at home, other than a few more words indicating favorite foods. They are concerned that when they pick him up from school, he is often by himself playing with the trucks on a favorite ramp.

Possible Questions:

- In what ways can the teachers build on Hwan Kim's interest in trucks and ramps to engage him more during other parts of the day?
- How might you approach Hwan Kim's parents' concern regarding his limited language in his native language? What would the process be to refer Hwam Kim for an evaluation for speech?
- What suggestions might the teachers make to Hwan Kim's parents to help them think of ways to continue to support his language development in Korean? For example, what activities could they do at the grocery store to build language use and vocabulary?
- Based on what you know about things Hwan Kim likes and is interested in, how might you support his development in each of the learning strands of the Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs?
- What other resources in the community or neighborhood might be available to Hwan Kim's family to continue to build connections and a support network? Church? Cultural center? Other families?

Suggested Resources:

- Dual Language Learner Supports for Early Learning Settings
- *Early On* Referral
- Enhancing Practices with Infants and Toddlers from Diverse Language and Cultural Backgrounds
- The Gift of Home Language The Gift of Home Language
- The Importance of Home Language Series
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework
- Specific Strategies to Support Dual Language Learners (DLLs) When Adults Do Not Speak Their Language
- Stages and Strategies of Preschool Second Language Acquisition
- Engaging Multilingual Families: Family Engagement Principles



Child’s Name: Neryl

Tags: toddler, dual language learner, Early Head Start

Neryl is a two-and-a-half-year-old who is inquisitive, courageous, and has a love for learning. Neryl moved with his family to Genesee County, from Benin, Africa when he was a year and a half. His first experiences with school included Early Head Start at two years and then at two and a half, Neryl was enrolled in a young preschool classroom at the college where his mother, Brunette, was taking classes. Neryl’s father, Neree, was working toward a graduate degree at the same time. Education is highly regarded in his family. Neryl’s early educational experiences in America were his first encounter with English as Neree and Brunette spoke to him solely in French at home.

In both educational settings, Early Head Start and the young preschool program, the teachers valued Neryl and his family’s French language. When speaking, Neryl often combined English and French. Neryl could say for example: I want to drink "de l’eau" which means I want to drink water. The teachers encouraged both French and English in the learning experience. This included sharing children’s books in French, speaking to Neryl in French (often utilizing Google Translate), and singing lullaby songs to him in French. Neree and Brunette appreciated the focus on both English and French to make Neryl feel comfortable, safe, and nurtured.

Neryl loves to be at school, a space in which he feels very comfortable. Neree and Brunette shared that Neryl views his classroom as his own “personal play park” where he can investigate and interact with toys and peers tirelessly. Neree and Brunette are avid supporters of Neryl’s learning, especially his ability to communicate in English. Both parents speak fluent English and are beginning to speak to Neryl in English at home to support him as he develops.

Shortened Version:

Neryl is a two-and-a-half-year-old who is inquisitive, courageous, and has a love for learning. Neryl moved with his family to Genesee County from Benin, Africa when he was a year and a half. He is in a young preschool program at the lab school for the college where his mother, Brunette, is taking classes. Neryl's father, Neree, is working toward a graduate degree. Both parents say education is highly regarded in their family. While Neryl's parents are both fluent in English, they spoke French exclusively at home before he started young preschool.

At school, the teachers value and encourage both French and English experiences. This includes sharing children's books in French, speaking to Neryl in French (often utilizing Google Translate), and singing lullaby songs to him in French. They have made Neryl feel so comfortable, safe, and nurtured that he views his classroom as his own "personal play park" where he can investigate and interact with toys and peers tirelessly. Brunette and Neree have recently shared that they are beginning to speak to Neryl in English at home to support him as he develops.

Possible Questions:

- How might you support Neryl to speak both French and English in the classroom?
- What support might you offer Neree and Brunette as they begin speaking English in the home?
- What other resources or strategies might you incorporate into the classroom experience to support Neryl and his family?
- What questions do you have in order to learn more about Neryl and how to best support his development?

Suggested Resources:

- Bilingual Language Development Module
- Dual Language Learner Supports for Early Learning Settings
- The Gift of Home Language
- 42 Lullabies from Around the World
- Lullabies Connect: Lullabies of the World Unite!
- Goodnight, Buenas Noches: Foreign Language Lullabies Help Babies Relax Too
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework
- Specific Strategies to Support Dual Language Learners (DLLs) When Adults Do Not Speak Their Language
- Stages and Strategies of Preschool Second Language Acquisition



Child's Name: Levi

Tags: preschooler, housing insecurity, home-based child care

Levi is a wide-eyed and inquisitive 3 ½ year old who is the second youngest in a blended family of six. Levi's family has struggled with finding and maintaining permanent housing for the last two years. Prior to becoming homeless, Levi's mother, Melissa, lived on her own after separating from her children's father. Employed as a nurse aide and earning minimum wage, Melissa struggled to afford the rent on various apartments for herself and her three children. After marrying Tim, the double income made it easier for Melissa to provide for her children. Then Tim lost his job, leaving the family with an inadequate income once again. It became increasingly difficult to afford rising rent payments, and they moved in with family for some time, before eventually entering a homeless shelter. Adding to their struggles, Melissa lost her job, leaving the family with no source of income. Another source of stress occurred when Tim's three children from a previous relationship came to live with them. Currently, the family is part of a government program that allows for subsidized family housing for two years before the family is expected to obtain housing at fair market value.

Levi and his younger sister attend Debbie's Child Care, a quality-rated, licensed home-based child care program in a rural part of Jackson county. Debbie has a spacious yard and an above-ground pool, and her husband helps with the children in the morning before heading to bed after his third shift job. The majority of Levi's day is spent in a finished basement which is one large open room filled with a variety of toys and play areas. The children eat snacks and meals "family style" on the main level and go outside at least twice a day. Debbie's high school age daughter helps in the afternoons after school. Debbie's family has two dogs and one cat, and in the three months of attendance at this program, Levi has become quite attached to one of the dogs, Lucy, and often cries when she goes outside without him. Debbie has a strong desire to create lasting bonds with the children who attend her program, as she sees them as an extension of her own family.

Currently there are five other children from three families who attend the child care, ranging in age from 6 months to 5 years. Levi and his family recently attended the local county fair and he shrieked in delight at seeing all the animals and was especially intrigued by the goats. His stepdad is a huge Spartans fan and never misses watching the football games on Saturdays in the fall. Levi will often come to child care on Mondays wearing his stepdad's Michigan State ball cap and cries when someone tries to take it off his head. Levi is fond of the block area and always includes the animal and people blocks in his structures. Debbie has noticed that Levi becomes upset, crying and pushing other children away, when they try to play with him or touch his building structures. Despite Debbie's reassurance that they will always be available for play, Levi hides the animal and people blocks when it is time to clean up so that other children cannot play with them.

Shortened Version:

Levi is a wide-eyed and inquisitive 3 ½ year old who is the second youngest in a blended family of six. This year has been particularly stressful for his family. Levi's mother, Melissa, and step-father, Tim, have recently lost their jobs and Tim's three children from a previous relationship came to live with them. Fortunately, the family is part of a government program that allows for subsidized family housing for two years.

Levi and his younger sister attend Debbie's Child Care, a quality-rated, licensed home-based child care program in a rural part of Jackson county. Levi often comes to Debbie's on Mondays wearing his stepdad's Michigan State ball cap and cries when someone tries to take it off his head. Levi is fond of the block area and always includes the animal and people blocks in his structures. Debbie has noticed that Levi becomes upset, crying and pushing other children away, when they try to play with him or touch his building structures. Despite Debbie's reassurance that they will always be available for play, Levi hides the animal and people blocks when it is time to clean up so that other children cannot play with them.

Possible Questions:

- How might Debbie use her setting to support Levi and his family?
- How can Debbie be responsive to Levi while still supporting the other children at various ages and developmental levels?
- How might Debbie be responsive to Levi's family and support their needs?
- What do you think Levi has learned about relationships based on his experiences?
- What are resources that Michigan early childhood educators can draw upon for information about homelessness and housing insecurity?

Suggested Resources:

- Housing and Homeless Services
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework
- National Center for Homeless Education's Resources on Parent Involvement
- Recognizing and Addressing Trauma in Infants, Young Children, and their Families
- Self-Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness
- Southeast Early Childhood Support Network (includes Jackson County)
- Michigan Department of Education Early Childhood to Grade 12 Social and Emotional Learning Competencies and Indicators
- The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children



Child’s Name: Aiyanna

Tags: preschooler, Tribal Head Start, language delay, pica

Four-year-old Aiyanna lives with her family (Mom, Dad, and 3 siblings) on the reservation. Her grandmother (a Tribal elder) also lives within walking distance from her house on the reservation. She is a very curious child and loves to be outdoors with her siblings, especially on the playground that is located in the center circle of her reservation. She loves Disney, makeup, and babies. However, she also loves the mud and being outdoors in the elements playing in the fields near her house. Aiyanna is not a fan of loud activities or large groups. She is usually seen playing with 1-2 children or quietly playing by herself with baby dolls. Aiyanna doesn't have a ton of language and is currently receiving speech therapy, a service her family was hesitant to receive since they are a prominent family within their tribe. She has also been diagnosed with pica (an eating disorder in which people compulsively eat one or more nonfood items, such as ice, clay, paper, ash, or dirt) and high lead levels.

Aiyanna's family has taken advantage of the Tribal Head Start program, and her father is able to attend college with assistance from his tribe. He is currently in a bachelor's program at a university. He receives vouchers from the tribe to purchase professional clothing and business attire to wear while in his internship and is employed by the tribe.

They are a very quiet family and don't care to discuss much other than what is asked of them, and what is necessary.

Possible Questions:

- How might you find out more information about the twelve federally recognized tribes in Michigan to learn more about their customs and priorities? For example, which tribes have a reservation?
- Aiyanna's family is concerned about her eating disorder. How might her teachers collaborate with her family to monitor her progress in this area?
- Based on what you know about things Aiyanna likes and is interested in, if you were her teacher, how might you support her development in each of the learning strands of the Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten Programs? How would you coordinate that work with her speech therapist and her family?
- In small and large group activities in the Head Start classroom, how would you individualize to support Aiyanna's successful participation?
- What are ways you could learn more about Aiyanna's heritage and reflect what you learn in the Head Start setting?

Suggested Resources:

- Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Birth to Kindergarten
- Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Inc. (Head Start Services)
- Tribal Early Learning Initiative
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework
- Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders
- Pica



Child's Name: Maya

Tags: preschooler, technology, play advocacy, GSRP classroom

Four-year-old Maya and her family live in an affluent suburb in mid-Michigan. Her family consists of her 2 moms, Rita and Stephanie, and 3 children: John (age 16), Nolan (age 12), and Maya. Maya attends a Great Start Readiness program (GSRP) housed in a local public-school building.

Rita and Stephanie are dedicated to their children. Rita is the CFO at a regional company and Stephanie paused her career when John was born. They want to ensure that their children are well-rounded and successful. Academics and extracurricular activities are equally valued. The family spends much of their time traveling throughout Michigan and its neighboring states to attend John and Nolan's club soccer and AAU basketball tournaments. Maya often travels with them, engaging in learning apps on her personal iPad.

Maya has a busy schedule during the week. After her full-day GSRP program, she often has an evening lesson such as gymnastics, swim class, or violin. Her nanny, a student at MSU enrolled in the education program, takes care of Maya after school and chauffeurs her to her lessons.

In the classroom, Maya is an eager and helpful student. She seems to feel most comfortable when chatting with the teacher or helping the teacher with classroom tasks, such as passing out pencils or watering the plants. Maya also loves books – looking through picture books, being read to, or pretending to write her own. By the early afternoon, Maya is visibly tired and seems sluggish.

At the family conference, Rita and Stephanie have expressed concerns about the preschool curriculum. They do not feel that it is rigorous enough and wish that Maya spent less time playing and more time learning. They want to support the school in integrating more technology (such as a Smartboard, iPads for each student, etc.) into the curriculum.

Shortened Version:

Four-year-old Maya attends a Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) in an affluent suburb in mid-Michigan. Her moms, Rita and Stephanie, are dedicated to Maya and her two older brothers. They want to ensure that their children are well-rounded and successful. Academics and extracurricular activities are equally valued, as seen in Maya's after school participation in gymnastics, swim class, and violin lessons.

In the preschool classroom, Maya is an eager and helpful student. She seems to feel most comfortable when chatting with the teacher or helping the teacher with classroom tasks, such as passing out pencils or watering the plants. By afternoon, her teachers have noticed, Maya is visibly tired and seems sluggish.

At a recent family conference, Rita and Stephanie expressed concerns about the rigor of the preschool program. They expressed the wish that Maya spend less time playing and more time learning. They want to support the teachers in integrating more technology (such as a Smartboard, iPads for each student, etc.) into the curriculum.

Possible Questions:

- If you were Maya's teacher, what are ways you would engage and support Maya's family? For example, how would you incorporate artifacts and examples from Maya's home?
- How would you promote opportunities for the children in Maya's class to explore, thoughtfully ask about, and understand diverse family structures? How would you help the children to develop a vocabulary and process for thoughtfully discussing differences?
- If you were Maya's teacher, how might you respond to the family's concerns that a play-based learning approach is not "rigorous enough?"
- If you were Maya's teacher, how might you structure a conversation about how to balance scheduled activities and free time? What are some evidence-based resources for examining this topic?

Suggested Resources:

- Is Your Child Overscheduled? Kids Need 'Down Time.'
- The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Development
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework
- Great Start Readiness Program
- NAEYC Position Statement: Technology and Media



Child's Name: Julianna

Tags: preschooler, GSRP classroom

Julianna is a four-year-old who attends a state-funded Great Start Readiness program (GSRP) preschool classroom for at risk 4-year-olds in Monroe, Michigan. She lives with her mother, Emma, who is recently divorced. Her father, Sam, lives nearby but her preschool teachers have never met him. His visits to Julianna are unpredictable, and Emma shares that it usually ends in them screaming and fighting with each other, but "Julianna is never in the room" at those times. Since Emma works long hours, Julianna's Grandma, Joyce, and Aunt Suzi, Emma's 19-year old sister, share the care of Julianna after preschool. Emma drops her off at preschool and her grandmother or Aunt Suzi usually pick her up. Neither the teachers nor Julianna knows at the start of the day which adult to expect at pick up time. Julianna seems happier and more excited on days that her Aunt Suzi comes. She says that Aunt Suzi lets her have all the sweets at Grandma's house whereas Grandma makes her wait until after dinner.

Julianna's teachers conduct home visits twice a year. In the beginning-of-the-year visit, Megan, Julianna's new teacher, visited Julianna's home. The one-bedroom apartment is fairly spacious but made to feel much smaller due to "things" packed in multiple trash bags laid across the room. As Megan enters the apartment, Emma apologizes for the mess. She explains that her ex-husband came by last night and "had a fit", thus ripping and throwing all the mail on the floor. When Megan asks whether this happens often, Emma responds that it rarely happens; probably no more than once in two months. Emma then tells Megan how busy her work schedule is, but how she is really excited for Julianna to be attending the high-quality preschool that she knows will help Julianna succeed later in school.

As Megan gets to know Julianna, a couple of concerns surface. First, Megan realizes that Julianna is small and light for her age. She often comes with her hair uncombed and in the same outfit as the day before. Megan also begins to realize a faint body odor from Julianna. During free play, she loves playing by herself in the

house area caring for dolls. Julianna also loves to be read to, especially when she can sit close to the teacher. She also likes to color and work with manipulatives unless there are too many children trying to use the same materials or sitting too closely. She has one little classmate, Felicia, with whom she loves to play "house."

Julianna is a quiet and cautious child. She is extremely sensitive to loud noise. One day, three of Julianna's classmates decided to play a "marching band." As they walked around the classroom making loud banging noises, Julianna placed her hands over her ears and screamed for them to stop. Megan tried to help the children work out solutions, as usual, but she could not calm Julianna down for almost ten minutes. Megan is uncertain whether these are signs of abuse or neglect, and whether the loud noise is a trigger for some traumatic experience, such as domestic violence, given what she has gathered from her home visits and Julianna's behavior. Julianna's ability to take in new information seems to vary from day to day. She might catch on and try new tasks quickly one day and the next seem to be in her own world and disinterested.

Shortened Version:

Julianna is a four-year-old who attends a state-funded preschool classroom for at risk children in Monroe, Michigan. She lives with her mother, Emma, who is recently divorced. Her father, Sam, lives nearby but her new teacher, Megan, has never met him. His visits to Julianna are unpredictable, and Emma shares that it usually ends in them screaming and fighting with each other, but "Julianna is never in the room" at those times. Since Emma works long hours, Julianna's Grandma, Joyce, and Aunt Suzi, Emma's 19-year old sister, share the care of Julianna after preschool. Emma drops her off at preschool and her grandmother or Aunt Suzi usually pick her up. Neither the teachers nor Julianna knows at the start of the day which adult to expect at pick up time.

Megan has noticed that Julianna is small and light for her age, and often comes with her hair uncombed and in the same outfit as the day before. Megan also begins to realize a faint body odor from Julianna. During free play, she loves playing by herself in the house area, caring for dolls. Julianna also loves to be read to, especially when she can sit close to the teacher. She also likes to color and work with manipulatives unless there are too many children trying to use the same materials or sitting too closely. Megan has noticed that Julianna's ability to take in new information seems to vary from day to day. She might catch on and try new tasks quickly one day and the next seem to be in her own world and disinterested.

Possible Questions:

Imagine that you are Julianna's teacher, Megan.

- If you wanted to schedule a family-teacher conference, who would you want to attend? Why?
- At the family-teacher conference, what are the thoughtful questions you would like to ask to learn more about Julianna's life and routines at home? What else would you want to discuss?
- In the classroom, what are ways in which you could learn more about and document the variability in Julianna's attention? What might be ways to support Julianna in being more comfortable being around and interacting with her classmates?

Suggested Resources:

- Center on the Developing Child (Harvard University): Resources on Neglect
- Practice Improvement Tools: Interaction Resources from Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
- The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations
- The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
- Michigan 0-8 Social and Emotional Toolkit
- MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework