

Introduction & Attitudes

I. Highlights

- A. Environment matters: sets the tone, is easier to change than people are.
- B. Our job is to learn to care for children with special needs *and* to support their families in caring for them.
- C. Attitude is everything! Need to recognize each child's strengths, decide whether or not we're going to let life problems stop us.
- D. Behavior problems (biting and others) are one of the major issues that our teachers face. Need to focus on relationships and support families in building trust and consistency between home and school.

II. Homework

- A. Bring a picture of myself for my folder.
- B. Read Chapter 1, write Journal 1 by next week.

III. Ms. Zarghami

- A. AMI Montessori teacher trained in England (born in Tehran). Came to US in 1966. Has family members with special needs. 2 adult sons, 2 college-age and 2 school-age grandkids. Likes cooking, feels strongly about nutrition and involving children in the cooking, colorful presentation of the food
- B. Masters in multicultural education, thesis on 2nd generation bilingual kids
- C. Is also an infant specialist. That's the time to really observe and catch children with special needs. Amazing difference if caught before age 1! Lot more emphasis on that than 5 or 10 years ago. Comes to centers to train infant/toddler teachers on-site for PITC.
- D. Is also a CARES Plus representative at DeAnza.

E. Adjunct faculty at WVC, also teaches at DeAnza.

IV. Environment gives messages.

- A. How we felt walking into the room sets the tone. Funny smell? Big/small?
Familiar or cozy or not?
- B. Difficult to change people, easier to change environment when something isn't working

V. This Course

- A. Goal is not just to care for kids correctly while they're in our care, but also really supporting the families, being a resource for them and being knowledgeable about what community can offer them.
 - 1. Parents come to us like we know everything.
 - 2. When we feel like we don't know how to help these kids, parents feel the same way, but very difficult for them to admit it!
- B. If we have a book or toy we have modified to meet a child's need, can bring it for extra credit. Sign up for that.

VI. Attitude is everything.

- A. Video: Member of University of Louisville marching band is a two-person team: Patrick plays music, dad pushes his wheelchair.
 - 1. Blind and motor issues, but by age 1 could find notes he heard on the piano, play requests on piano by age 2.
 - 2. Now plays piano and trumpet. Dad also goes to class with him, works the graveyard shift to make it work.
 - 3. When hear him play, people rethink, "Wow, imagine the possibilities I didn't even consider when I first saw this young man."

4. "The music of opportunity and the sound of potential."
- B. Our attitude toward life problems (our own or the people around us) changes everything.
- C. Write the word "attitude" and write other words that come to mind:
1. Positive, smiling, radiant, cheerful, optimistic
 2. Contagious
 3. Negative, cloudy, pessimism
 4. Seeing the best in people
 5. Outcomes
 6. Inspirational posters
 7. Toddlers & teenagers
 8. Eye rolling, sarcasm, snarky
 9. Tolerant
 10. Respectful
 11. Moody
 12. Perspective
- D. "The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude in life."
1. More important than facts, the past, money, success, what others think/say/do, appearance, giftedness, or skill
 2. Will make or break a company
 3. Remarkable thing is we have a choice every day about the attitude we have for that day. Cannot change the past or the inevitable, can change attitude in the moment.
 4. Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it.

VII. Behavior Problems are rampant in this area. What do we see?

- A. It's okay for them to cry. It's okay to say no. Parents don't seem to be willing or able to discipline them. (They tell us so.) This brings huge problems because it's so inconsistent between home and school.
- B. Struggle to get parents to tell us ahead of time (he's been kicked out of other schools for biting, his parents are divorcing, etc.) so we can be on the watch and head problems off.
- C. Home culture has a lot to do with it. Different cultures have different approaches to behavior, different definitions of what's acceptable. That inconsistency is problematic for the kids. Often the parents are also just overwhelmed, children are overscheduled instead of spending simple quality time with their parents.
- D. It's often not the child that's the problem, it's the parent. When children hit and pull on their parents, throw things, and parents let it happen, parents don't know what to do or are not willing to do it.
- E. Parents don't understand the brain development involved, hard for them to make the shift from controlling their babies to going with the flow as children become more independent. Sometimes don't know how to balance parenting vs. friendship with kids' developing capabilities. Kids need parents to be their frontal lobe until it develops for themselves. Child needs the parent to be the guiding/limit-setting voice, help them learn to make good choices.
- F. Research tells us we need to provide consistency between home and school. How are we supposed to do that when there are no boundaries at home?
- G. ECE is all about relationships for all children. Parents won't listen to what we say unless there is a warm, close relationship first. Even the parents who want to drop-and-go because they're so frustrated. Once the relationship is established, then can gradually help them develop consistency between home and school.

1. Have to know our children's home culture. In one culture, teachers shouldn't be friends with kids or parents. In others, great to go up and be huggy-kissy with everyone. Can make consistency challenging.
2. Parents know the child better than we do. May not know what to do with them, but do know the child, so we need to build the relationship in order to bring that knowledge into partnership.
3. The way parents meet infants' needs sends messages about how important the child is. Need to role model, set limits.
4. Feeling you want to have with parents is so much trust that they would give you their car keys and the keys to their house. Kid is more important than those things, and they're handing that child to you.
5. Wish we could require child development classes for parents! Are free in Europe, hard to find here.

H. Biting

1. Different policies in different schools. Often try to differentiate between biting with or without the intent to harm.
2. Make sure they're eating enough, maybe add another snack in the morning.
3. Have crunchy chewable foods for children who bite a lot. Frozen bagels or frozen teething rings or frozen wet washcloths are great for calming them down and taking care of that impulse to bite.
4. Often is from an inability to communicate, so need problem-solving approach to conflict, teach "Stop!" or "Move back!" signs and words to empower them when someone is intruding on their body or their space.
5. Teachers need to do a lot of puppet shows, role playing with other teachers, etc. when seeing unacceptable behaviors. Tell the stories of what happens and what to do about it. Make a big deal when someone is hurt -- be very careful, put lotion on it, massage it, to help develop the compassion/empathy. Talk

about it at group time twice a day every day. Shoving or kicking or biting is painful.

6. Always keep in mind the developmental appropriateness -- a 4-year-old may do it on purpose, a 2-year-old will look at their own foot and say, "It doesn't hurt when I kick him," don't understand why the other child is crying. Haven't developed perspective-taking. It's no more realistic to ask a child to take perspective before they're ready than to ask a 6-month-old to stand up and walk.