**Reflective Prompt SLO 3**

My personal response is that the director is very self oriented and more concerned with the status of her program than the well-being of the children. She mentions that her program has very high standards and that she believes that this one child may cause the program to collapse entirely. This is a red flag that this director is not very experienced or skilled in working with children with behavior challenges which seem pretty normal for an eight year old child. The fact that this director is not letting any of the staff speak is also a good indication that she does not allow for many other opinions to be considered when making decisions for the program. This may be dangerous, especially if her judgment is off.

I have learned that all children learn and thrive in different environments. Eight year old Michael does not do well in a room filled with children trying to focus and study in an afterschool program. He was just in school for several hours and may need to run around and get some energy out before he is able to concentrate on homework.

This behavior is typical for a child this age. I have also learned that just because a child coming from a household with one parent who lets them plays video games and eats junk food, doesn’t mean that this child qualifies as having a behavior disorder. It is important as a child development professional, or as anyone working with children, to see the child for who they are and not for what type of background or household they come from. Giving the child the respect they deserve will allow for them to reach their highest potential, rather than be crushed under the negativity of someone expecting them to fail.

I would let the director know that an eight year old demonstrating distracting behaviors at homework time is completely normal. I would also bring up the comment the director made about the child having a behavior disorder. I would explain that it takes much more than a glance at one’s family and eating habits to diagnose a behavior disorder. I would explain that I cannot morally or honestly sign a paper stating that Michael should be removed from the afterschool program. I would then explain the fact that Michael probably benefits from the program tremendously because it gives him somewhere to go afterschool as appose to going home to an empty house. Finally, I would explain that I do not have the power to make a decision like that even if I wanted to. There would have to be a professional to diagnose Michael with a behavior disorder and then I would have to observe him in the afterschool care setting. I couldn’t simply go off the word of the director.

The program director’s values and personal standards are getting in the way of Michael and his mother’s success and acceptance in the program. The director states that Michael plays video games and eats junk food. Whether this is true or not, this information about this child should not make any type of impact on whether or not Michael is allowed to stay in the program. The director also states that Michael’s mother is a single parent and has never been married and that Michael has no father figure in the home. This shouldn’t have anything to do with Michael’s acceptance in or ability to remain a part of the program. The director clearly has her own ideas about families and foods that are healthy versus non-healthy. These values, or judgments are getting in the way of Michael and his mother to the point where the director is trying to kick Michael out completely.

I think that this program may be beneficial to some children who are involved in it. However, it seems to be a very strict program with minimal opportunities for children to interact with the staff and other students and have fun in a non-structured manner. The director describes her program as having high standards. She also describes the children in the program as coming from broken families. In one sense, this program may provide the structure and support some children need afterschool to complete their homework and be successful in school. On the other hand, the program seems much too strict and the director seems too judgmental to allow the children to fully succeed. The director is clearly judgmental about her idea of an ideal family. This type of judgment is exactly what children coming from broken homes do not need.

I do think this program may have long term effects on the children and families involved in it. Some children may have positive long term effects. These may include success in school and an ability to focus and complete their homework, which is a large part of the program. This success in school would also positively affect the child’s parents. Other children may have long term negative effects. Children may feel judged or not fully accepted in this program because of the living situations they come from. They may not develop a strong sense of self esteem, which is critical at this age. This would, in turn, have negative effects on the parents.

* A warm and welcoming staff that is willing to work with the children and families who are a part of the program
* Some type of curriculum or organized activities that are developmentally appropriate for the children in the program
* A decent facility for the program to be held in that is large enough to comfortably fit the children and staff
* Time for children to run around outside
* A field or play structure for children

I have learned about the information I used in my response in several child development classes. One class that focused on different types of families and the importance of maintaining a non-biased view of them was CHLD 382. The section on compassion discussed different types of families which may be broken or dysfunctional. Professor Walton discussed the importance of looking at the child alone and not as a combination their parents or relatives and lifestyles. The school aged child class also discussed learning disorders and the misdiagnosis of many children in the United States. Child Development 282 also discussed children coming from different backgrounds with different cultures as well as the importance of understanding that each child has his or her own learning style.