Writing Assignment 1

Mi Esculita Maya is a preschool and performing arts center located here in Chico, California. This program is privately owned and funded by parent tuition.   
They offer scholarships to children whose parents cannot afford the program because they want to offer this opportunity to all children. They also offer parent trade for tuition. For example parents can help clean and prepare activities in exchange for part of their child’s tuition costs. I think that this is a great idea. My intern hours are Friday mornings from 8:30am until 11:30am.

This basic philosophy at Mi Esculita Maya is that they are an environmentally friendly program that offers morning and afternoon preschool. They serve organic and home grown food that they grow in their own garden. They strive in the concept of “belongingness” by inviting children from all backgrounds to join their program. They provide multi-ethnic experiences and speak to the children in both Spanish and English.

The program also fallows a month-to-month theme throughout the classrooms. For example this month is community helpers and Mexico. There are guest speakers that come from the community to talk with the children about their jobs and they do activities related to Mexico’s culture. They are all about being a part of the community and teaching that to the children.

I wasn’t able to attend my hours last week due to issues getting time off work, but I was able to go in this Friday in the afternoon. The afternoon isn’t typically the time I would be there so I think that I got a very different experience. There were three other interns from Chico state, along with a guest grandmother teaching the children how to make tortillas, the site supervisor who was filling in for my regular supervisor, two head teachers and an assistant teacher. There were also the afternoon children in attendance rather then the morning children whom I would normally be working with.

When I arrived at the preschool I felt a bit intimidated because there were so many adults and in my experience working in a preschool there was only myself and the other teacher. Therefore it was a little overwhelming with so many adults around. I also felt a little out of place being there in the afternoon and not knowing what to do. I met with the woman who was filling in for my regular supervisor. She didn’t know I was coming and was unaware of where the checks in binder or nametags were. I wasn’t really sure what to do so I stood and observed for about ten minutes. The children were free playing at different stations throughout the rooms. I sat down and interacted with the children and a couple of four year old girls came up and asked my name and began to have a conversation with me.

After awhile the children moved into the dance studio for circle time and then onto three different stations. One of the stations was making tortillas and two other interns were already helping at that particular center. Some children were outside and the other children were painting egg cartons. I decided to help out with the painting project. I was asked to clean the brushes often so the children could use a different color of paint. After the activities were done I was asked to clean the tables, clean the paints they had used, and put the supplies away. Afterwards I was asked to get snack plates, cups, silverware, juice, and water ready. I didn’t know where anything was and sort of felt in the way when I had to keep asking people where things were located. After I got the snack trays ready I set the snack tables in both rooms.

I felt like most of my time was spent helping with cleaning and preparing, but this makes since because there were so many adults and it wasn’t my normal time to be there. I hope that as I get more used to the program and the center that I will be able to interact with the children more. I really enjoy all the different activities and opportunities that they have available for the children.

After spending some time at Mi Esculita Maya I recognized that their program is similar to some concepts discussed in our textbook Teahcing Young Children written by Michael L. Henniger. A theorist named Maria Montessori (Henniger, 2009,) believed in the unity of the mental and the physical. She believed that the full development of the intellect wasn’t possible without the physical. At the program where I am interning the children do a lot of physical activities throughout the day and they also have a dance studio.

Some other things from the readings that came to mind while being at the center this past Friday was the use of guidance (Henniger, 2009). There was a lot of use of guidance not only verbal but also physical. Physical guidance is the use of physical touch, leading a child by the hand, and smiling. Verbal guidance is active listening, positive direction, redirection, and giving clear choices. I also noticed that the program felt strongly about building relationships not only with the children but also with the families, community, and teachers. These are all forms of guidance mentioned in the textbook that I saw the teachers exhibit while I was at the program.

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References

Henniger, M.L. (2009). *Teaching young children*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.