**Prompt:**

In August, 2012, you receive this note from one of your fellow classmates group members about her new job: “When I started working here in July, I was so excited to work with the previous Head Teacher. She seemed like a very passionate, caring, hardworking teacher. A month into the job, I have started to notice certain behaviors that make me really uncomfortable and sad. I can’t believe the teacher I’m working with is doing certain things, especially since everyone in this center loves her and respects her. I am leaving the center feeling emotionally, mentally, and physically exhausted!

**Response:**

As a child development professional I can say that an environment appropriate for toddlers needs to be very clean and sanitary and it takes a team of professionals to provide toddlers with the most high quality care. Teachers working with children need to work together to ensure all the children are safe and engage in positive communication with each other and with the children. Toddlers are in the stage of development where they are learning new skills and learning about themselves and others and it is the teacher’s responsibility to support and guide each child through experiences and interactions in the environment.

As an early childhood educator it is important to demonstrate professionalism towards families, children, and other educators. Professionalism includes using appropriate communication skills, being a good role model for children, create a learning environment, and use positive disciplinary techniques. Some of these techniques include positive redirection and refraining from using the word “no” by stating things in a positive manner. It’s also important for teachers to see every moment as a teachable moment which allows for more teaching rather than more discipline.

This scenario does not demonstrate qualities or characteristics of a good leader. The Head Teacher is referring to herself as a superior to other staff members and also to the children in the program. Rather than being a positive role model and supporting children’s development she is demeaning towards the children which makes them feel bad about themselves and models inappropriate behavior while she is working directly with children.

There is a lot of research about providing high quality programs and care for children. There is also research about effective teaching and disciplinary practices such as the “Guides to Speech and Action” and positive teaching models. The most effective teacher is collaborative, reflective, and utilizes all teachable moments.

In order to provide learning experiences and curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for children it is necessary to understand each individual child’s ability and skill level and personal interests. Evaluation tools such as the Desired Results Developmental Profile would be very useful in determining where each child is at and then developing appropriate classroom experiences to support the child’s growth and development.

The Head teacher could use collaboration to her benefit and to the benefit of the children. It’s important to recognize that every child development professional brings their own expertise and experiences to the table and they should be valued and respected. One teacher has one perspective and only sees one side to everything, working collaboratively with other teachers will expand the perspectives and knowledge base.

My suggestion is to search for another job working with children in an environment that respects you as a professional and values your ideas and expertise in the area. A program that values teamwork and focuses on providing the highest quality of care for children is more beneficial to you as a professional and to the children you are serving. My best piece of advice is to recognize yourself as a confident and competent early childhood professional and find a program that will value you and your abilities and skills.

The main priority of a childcare program is the children and family but in order for the program to be successful staff members need to work together as a team. Teamwork includes, positive communication and collaborative reflection. This not only benefits the staff members but also benefits the children and families within the program.

I have applied this information to a real-life situation during my experience as a practicum student working in a classroom with toddlers. The teachers and staff of this program worked together as a team and everyone was involved in the planning process of the curriculum. This method was very effective because one teacher doesn’t see everything that goes on in the classroom and may develop stronger relationships with certain children and these experiences and knowledge are very helpful when planning developmentally appropriate curriculum.