**Prompt:**

Your good friend has opened her own child care home and is providing care for several young children in addition to her own. You receive a call from her and she says

“I have a dilemma. One of the children that I care for full time, Lily, just took her first step! It was such an exciting moment! I could tell it was going to happen so I ran and got the camera and recorded the whole thing! But then when I started thinking about sharing this with her parents, I began to have second thoughts. Her parents are so involved in her care, they ask so many questions, and mom, especially, has very mixed feelings about Lily being in child care and not being able to spend more time with her. Maybe they won’t be so excited that she took her first step at my house instead of when she was with them. Would it be dishonest if I didn’t share this information with them?

**Response:**

My first response to this dilemma is that it’s a very difficult decision to make. On one side you want to always be honest with the parents and on the other side you don’t want to upset the parents by telling them they missed out on a huge “first time moment” especially first steps. If I was a parent and my childcare provider told me I missed my child’s first steps I would feel really disappointed because that is a moment that only happens once and I missed it.

The rationale for being honest with the parents about the child taking their first steps is that honesty is the most important factor in building strong relationships with parents. I think it is better to be honest and maybe disappoint the parents than to be dishonest and lose the parents trust. If I was a parent I wouldn’t feel comfortable leaving my child with someone I didn’t trust. The disadvantages to being honest are that the parent may feel guilty for missing important milestones in their child’s life and feel the need to remove the child from the childcare in order to be there for those moments in the future. Another disadvantage is that the child would miss out on the social experiences of being in a childcare with multiple children.

The rationale for withholding the information about what happened is to prevent the parents from being upset that you were the one to witness their child’s first steps instead of them and allowing the parents the excitement in seeing their child’s “first steps”. If the parent feels they are missing out on their child’s life they may decide to stay home with them instead of using childcare providers. A disadvantage to withholding the information is that if the parents found out you were dishonest they may lose their trust in you and not feel comfortable leaving their child in your care.

Given my friend’s explanation of the parents in this situation I would tell her not to tell them. I feel like these parents particularly the mother would be devastated to hear that from someone else and it is best to withhold that information and not take away that special moment for them. I also think the parents would feel better about leaving her in childcare if they didn’t know because then they wouldn’t think childcare is making them miss out.

My final suggestion is that she should share the information with the parents because honesty overrules sensitivity towards the parents. They need to know everything that happens while their daughter is in childcare regardless if it’s good or bad. I think it is unethical to not share information about the child with the parents. Also she was able to catch the moment on video and could share that with the parents. This way they can hear you talk about the first steps and they also get to witness it for themselves on video.

I have worked in a childcare facility and also volunteered with different agencies working with children and from my experience I have learned that it is always best to share everything with the parents. Most parents feel bad about leaving their children anyways and they usually love hearing about their child’s day while they were away. I haven’t had an experience with witnessing the first steps before the parents but I have witnessed other accomplishments such as a child telling me they had to go potty during potty training, a child learning to use simple sign language to ask for more or say thank you, and other skills learned during childcare. For all of these situations I have found it best to tell the parents because they may be sad they missed it but they would be sadder if they didn’t get to hear about their child’s day. I have had multiple opportunities through my coursework to participate in supervised fieldwork and my practicum to work with children and families in the community.