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Student Learning Objective 6 – Developmental Context

*SLO VI. Developmental Context*

*Students will understand the multiple child rearing contexts in which children grow and develop. Students will appreciate and interpret how social class, parents, families, peers, type of children's programs, culture, societal changes, and communities influence the course of development.*

You have a new job in a new town. It is an unfamiliar culture for you and you are a beginner with the language that most of the families speak, but you are confident knowing that your education prepared you well to work with children and families from a variety of social classes with differing belief systems.

You job is an early childhood interventionist at the state-funded Regional Center. One of the young children on your caseload has a visual disability. Your supervisor lets you know that the physician has determined that the child’s eyes are not functional and has spoken to the family about her recommendation to remove the child’s eyes and to replace them with prostheses in order to eliminate the constant discharge. This will allow her to attend school more regularly because she will be healthier and other children in the classroom will not be at a health risk. The family has missed several appointments with the doctor and they would like you to do a home visit to get a handle on what’s going on.

So, you go to the home. You are feeling positive; you have bonded with this child and feel like you have a good relationship with the family. During the home visit, you bring up the topic of the family missing appointments with the doctor and the doctor’s recommendations. The mom responds, “Oh, we’re not going to have an operation like that. Our whole church is praying for a miracle. How could God do a miracle and restore her eyesight if her eyes aren’t even there?”

It is difficult to say what my immediate response to the family would be exactly. When dealing with religion it can be difficult because some religions do not believe in medical intervention. Also, sometimes parents may just be nervous so they rely on God for a miracle in their life. I personally, would immediately think that the parents should receive the operation but I would not want to offend them by pushing my views onto them.

I would have to think about what I was going to say to the mom, because as I mentioned above, I would not want to offend her or her family. I would want to let her know the risks of not having the operation. I would explain to her that the physician has determined that the child’s eyes are non functional. I would also want to emphasis the importance of having the child attend school, and with the constant discharge from her eyes, she can not attend because of the potential health risk for other students.

When getting ready to leave the home visit, I would urge the family to rethink their position on the operation. I would offer them my number and ask that they call me with any questions. I would also offer my support with what they choose because ultimately my main goal is the health of their child. I think that showing my support for the family would help build a relationship; because eventually they may come around and seek to have the operation.

I imagine other professionals would urge the family to seek the operation for the girl as well. I think they would recommend the operation for the child because it is in her best health interest. The physicians and other professionals would have to explain the risks of her not having the operation but explain it without offending the families’ religious views.

When considering the situation the most important part of it is the child. You have to ultimately consider what she wants to do; she may really want to have the operation but may be nervous to explain this to her family. Ultimately the family needs to consider their daughters health; they may pray but eventually hopefully they will come around to having the operation for their daughter.

My final suggestion for the family would be to have the operation. It ultimately would be the best outcome for the child in the long run. I would continue to offer support for my role and continue to discuss the operation with the family; and hope they will eventually agree to the operation for their daughter.

 To come to this conclusion, I just immediately thought of the health of the child and what the professionals originally suggested. I personally have not been involved in a situation where there was a strong cultural clash of values. A class that I have taken that may assist me in this scenario would be Psychology 151: Socio-Cultural Context of Psychological Development.