

Department of Human Services

Child Care Aware Testimony

January 5, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to share information with you today regarding behavioral health and children in child care. My name is Missi Baranko and I am employed with Child Care Aware as an Inclusion Specialist. One of my main roles is providing consultation and support to child care providers caring for children with challenging behaviors. Today I am going to share a few stories about the experiences of the child, family and child care provider.

Linda shared a data sheet that lists some of the behaviors that are happening in child care. Here are some of the stories behind the list.

Last year I was called to provide consultation to a child enrolled in childcare. The provider stated that the child was having very aggressive behaviors and they did not know what to do. This had been going on for 3-4 months. Some examples of behaviors were the child sitting on another child and hitting him, pushing other children, and using very inappropriate words. I provided consultation and we also did developmental screenings. We met with the parents together to share information on strategies to use at home and in the classroom. We also talked about referrals in the community such as preschool special education and possible outpatient therapy services. About a week later I received a phone call from very angry parents to let me know that their child was expelled from the childcare facility. When I contacted the program they shared that they had received ultimatums from other parents that if the facility did not dismiss or expel the child they would be removing their child from care. The facility felt they had no choice. The family called their previous provider and luckily he was able to go back to the previous facility. Unfortunately he was only there for a few months and was expelled. At this time the parents called me and asked for help with his next child care experience. I had the opportunity to meet with his new teacher, to share information, and to observe him in his new setting right away. This was very successful. The family ended up moving to a new community soon afterward and again the parents contacted me to help with the new child care setting. This again was a success and this child continues to have great days in childcare.

Another story that I would like to share is about a little guy who was 3 ½ when I began consulting in his classroom. This little guy did not have a diagnosis yet, but was experiencing many delays, especially in social skills. Some of his other challenges were smearing his feces during nap time. The staff shared that the first time it happened they were sitting with another child, in the same room when they noticed that something smelled bad. They then noticed that this child was not sleeping and had smeared his feces all over his nap mat, the wall and himself. This child also was a “runner” and escaped the room multiple times. The staff continued to create ways to keep him safe, closing off door access, adding additional staff to the room, etc, but often found that one second of not having their eyes on him was all he needed to get out of

the room at a time like drop off or pick up time. The child also had many sensory needs and had to be taken to a medical doctor as he put rocks and other small items in his nose and ears.

Lastly I want to share about a child diagnosed with Autism. The childcare provider called me with questions on how to engage him in the day with the other children. When I met with the provider and the mom we found out that the child had a para professional with him when he attended preschool special education services, about 12 hours a week. Unfortunately, when he came to childcare for the other 30 hours a week he did not have any additional support. The facility was not able to provide a one to one staff person for him due to the financial burden of this. They were struggling to keep him engaged and even participating in routines such as eating due to his sensory needs and being overwhelmed. During the meeting with the mom we had discuss difficult choices to make regarding trying to meet his nutritional needs or his social needs.

So how do these behaviors affect those involved?

Child

- Lack of connection with provider
- Feeling bad about themselves
- Continued negative behaviors

Family

- Loss of work
- Lack of resources
- Feeling of failure
- What to do when the child has siblings – where do they go?

Provider

- Feeling of failure
- Lack of information
- Hard choices (dismissing child or losing other children)

Systemic Challenges

- Children who receive intense support in other environments (such as preschool special education) and receive no support in child care
- Lack of collaboration amongst other supports and providers
 - Need of assistance in orchestrating supports and services