

Exploring a Scenario: Amelia

The father of two-year-old Amelia came to the director of the program and shared news about his daughter. Amelia had visited her pediatrician for a physical and failed her visual screening. She was sent to an ophthalmologist who had diagnosed her as visually impaired. The family is overwhelmed by the challenge of seeking help for Amelia. Below, you can read about how the site and the family collaborate to meet the child's needs.

Once informed of Amelia's needs, the director of the early childhood program meets with her board of directors and leadership team. All the involved stakeholders encourage the director to make necessary adaptations to provide services to Amelia.

The director of the program assures the family that the program will learn more about how to help meet Amelia's needs. She calls Lighthouse for the Blind and has a phone conference with a specialist on childhood blindness. This specialist gives the director many ideas that she can share with her staff.

The director also calls the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) organization in her city and finds out that Amelia can have an ECI staff member come to the classroom to help her and the teacher. This specialist will also assist the family with ideas and resources.

With support and information from Lighthouse for the Blind and the Early Childhood Intervention organization, the instructional staff work together to modify the classroom setting for Amelia. They rearrange furniture and trade out some educational toys and supplies for some that are safer and more appropriate for Amelia.

Amelia is introduced to the classroom and given time to explore without the other children in the room. She is given time with the teaching team so that she will be comfortable with them. She also meets the Early Childhood Intervention specialist who will be working with the teaching team.

The teaching team explains a little bit about Amelia to the other children in the classroom, and they talk about ways they can help her

get along in the classroom. The team introduces the Early Childhood Intervention specialist to the children. Next, Amelia comes into her new classroom and meets the children.

The teaching team gives Amelia a lot of physical and emotional support and sends positive notes home to the family each day sharing Amelia's successes. They record daily anecdotal notes and write observations to assist them in future planning. The director communicates with the teaching team on a daily basis and asks Amelia's parents to share any challenges or concerns that they may have.

Amelia makes notable progress with the support at school and at home with her family. She is evaluated during the course of the year by the Early Childhood Intervention specialist and school staff. Adaptations are continuously made and implemented by the team. Ongoing informal observations and developmental checklists are used to measure growth and plan instructional activities to meet Amelia's strengths and needs.

In this scenario, the child entering the school had a visual impairment. The process the school used to address this child's need can be used with any need that might arise among the children you serve. Those steps are (1) learning about that need, (2) seeking resources and collaboration with specialists in the community, (3) making adjustments for the child, and (4) following up to monitor the child's progress. Throughout the process, the school staff is in communication with the child's family.