

Reflecting on Expectations for Behavior

We each approach our work with staff members differently, but we can learn from one another. Watch the Realistic Expectations for Behavior Video. Then answer the questions that follow. There are no right or wrong answers. Simply think about the situation and how you might respond.

1. What tensions did the speaker feel during the situation?

The speaker realized adults were missing a potential warning sign. She could recognize the relief from the staff members that the new child was having an easy transition. However, she worried that this transition was not typical. A child that age should have some attachments and should show some fear or anxiety over such major transitions.

2. What expectations did the teachers bring to their interactions with the child? How did the child conform or not conform to their expectations?

The teachers expected the child to cry, but he did not. The fact that they were not concerned about the lack of crying, however, tells us they may have expectations for the child that are beyond his developmental level.

3. In many instances, a child's challenging behavior may give us a clue that the adult has unrealistic expectations. The opposite occurred in this situation: the adults' happiness over a lack of "challenging behavior" (crying) was problematic. Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation?

Responses vary.

4. How do you feel when it becomes clear that staff members have unrealistic expectations for behavior?

Responses vary.

5. What would you say to these staff members to enhance their knowledge of child development?

You might approach this concern in a number of ways. It is important to acknowledge the adults' fears and concerns while still promoting understanding of development. You might say:

- *I can tell it was a relief that this child had such a calm day. I'm wondering how his behavior compared with other children you have had.*
- *What do you know about this child's experiences before he got here this morning. How do you think he was feeling? How was he expressing that?*