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ECE 209

May 06, 2021

Commentary Paper

Mariana is a 12 months old baby, her mother's name is Margarita, her father's name is Omar and her brother's name is Thiago. Her lovely family lives in Jackson Heights, Queens. I know the family because Omar used to work with my father. Mariana has a very light skin tone, with short light brown hair and a sweet ponytail hairstyle. Mariana was wearing pink pants, a blue sweatshirt, and pink socks.

Margarita realized she was pregnant when she was 2 months pregnant, her reaction was surprising however her loved ones reacted happily. She was emotionally happy and at the same time nervous, but due to her symptoms it was difficult as she had severe headaches, nausea, vomiting and lack of appetite. During her pregnancy she walked in the nearest park, but she doesn't know if that specific activity made her labor easier or difficult because she had her baby in the cesarean section. She had some mango and taco cravings. Her birth experience was difficult because she had a cesarean, yet her husband was there supporting her the entire time. The first day she brought the baby home was difficult because of the cesarean and in addition because she has another son who was 2 1/2 years old at the time. After pregnancy she felt tired but happy with her baby. Mariana ate every 2 hours and slept about 4 times a day during the first week at home. During the first days the baby slept on her moses and her mother was able to

understand the baby's different cries because of the baby's schedule. Margarita used bottled feed but mostly breastfeed to feed Mariana.

The baby spends more time and is more attached with her mother. The extended family doesn't play any role in raising the baby since the mother doesn't work but if she has something to do her husband will take care of the baby. Mariana's family is made up of her mother, father and brother. Mariana and her brother have a strong relationship, however It's difficult to raise more than one baby because they have little age difference. Mariana reacts to strangers by crying for a moment and then she is normal. The baby takes a few minutes to get to know a new person. When Mariana is upset her mother carries her to soothe her, however she is a very easy going girl, she just cries if she is uncomfortable with something, if she is hungry or sleepy.

Mariana's favorite activity is playing with her brother's cars, also Mariana likes to play with sound toys such as music activity tables and go walkers. Mariana's special toy is a stuffed unicorn but she doesn't sleep with it. Mariana and her mother play with piano, stuffed animals and books. Her mother reads to her a book the doctor gave to Mariana about how to speak to a baby, for example, who is your father, who is your mother and it is full of tender promises that parents have for his/her baby. Also another one about animals. Mariana's mother provides her with enough toys for her wellbeing and healthy development.

The baby started to put the balls inside the shape sorting toy. She threw the balls to the floor and she started playing with a two-bottle shaker she found on the carpet. Shaking both of them at the same time with her hands, then she passed one to the caregiver to engage her to do the same, showing full excitement while shaking her hands. Mariana demonstrates that she explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, and throwing. Some important cognitive skills that lead to the foundation of learning. Paterson (2012) argues "Effective, engaged learners

are curious, focus attention, remember earlier experiences, gather information, solve problems and persist even when they are frustrated by a difficult task”.

While Mariana was seated on the brown carpet with her caregiver she grasped a red ball with her right hand and put it in her mouth again. She passed the red ball to her caregiver and her caregiver made sure to say THANK YOU, then the caregiver gave her back. The baby is full of excitement and tries to say the same word with a big smile on her face. Passing the balls to her caregiver and vice versa. Mariana demonstrates that she tries to say the same words the caregiver says. R's are important for a baby's language development because when caregivers are respectful and responsive to the baby, those behaviors provide an enriching dialogue. Kovach & Da Ros-Voseles (2011) states “Relationships are the most important ingredient that fuels the baby and assures the baby's optimum health in his first year of life”.

Mariana was seated on her caregiver's legs, putting her finger in her mouth while her caregiver was engaging her to play with a shaker toy, she grasped the toy with her two hands while she still seated on her caregiver's legs, she seemed to enjoy to touch her toy and discover what she heard while she shakes and move the figures, she said “yeah”. Mariana demonstrates to repeat sounds or actions to get attention. In accordance, Wittmer states “When children have warm, caring, and positive relationships with their caregivers, they show a higher level of social competence” Also the way adults treat young children is important for their emotional and social development.

Mariana starts crawling around her house and walks holding on to the walls and chairs, she claps when she can stand up alone for some seconds. She crawls to the living room again and finds on the carpet her bottle cap, then she continues crawling to the play area, while she is there she makes 3 steps by herself then she continues crawling. Mariana demonstrates pulling up to

stand, walks holding on to furniture (“cruising”) and takes a few steps without holding on. Infant physical development is related to brain development because early movement is essential for neuronal stimulation and healthy brain development. Baby’s movements increase their awareness of their surroundings and their world. Pica (2010) states “with each new experience, new neural connections are made”.

I found Mariana's temperament Easy or flexible. Mariana shows great interest in new things, she tries to copy what her caregiver does and she seems to be happy all the time. Allard and Amy Hunter states “Easy or Flexible children tend to be happy, regular in sleeping and eating habits, adaptable, calm, and not easily upset.

Mariana ethnicity is Latin, Central American. She is raising Mariana to be independent and dependent at the same time as Margarita’s mother raised her in her country. Christmas, New Year, Mothers and Fathers Day are important traditions, holidays and special celebrations for her family. They do family meetings and dinners to honor those traditions and celebrations. Mariana’s mother is very strict raising her because she wants to instill good values in her, such as respect, honesty, kindness, tolerance and among others. As an infant teacher we need to provide a safe, inclusive learning environment and use creativity to involve a diverse student classroom in fun activities, either using family photos on the wall, books or culture pictures. An infant classroom should be based on the 3 R’s respect, reciprocity and responsiveness because teachers must respond to the baby’s needs, wishes and respect their interest and background. For example, it is great when an infant classroom has phase-in because that is how the relationship with the parents begins and makes parents feel welcome to the program, with the phase-in I would have the opportunity to get to know more about the infants and their parents, I would be able to build a

strong relationship with them and it gives the parents the opportunity to share with me the ways they support their child's development at home using their culture customs.

Mariana's family is both individualistic and collectivistic because the family encourages the child to help, share and respect others, but also to achieve things for him/herself. As an infant teacher I can organize the classroom and create activities that focus on collectivism, fostering teamwork, so that I can engage with families as a team.

Mariana's family establishes a schedule to determine the time for feeding and sleeping. Mariana wakes up at 9 a.m., has her breakfast (egg, fruit, or oatmeal), and her mother showers her at 11:00 a.m. When it's 11:30a.m , she takes a 2-hour nap, then has lunch at 2 p.m. After lunch, she plays for 3 hours. Then around 5 pm her mother breastfeeds her and she takes a 1 hour nap, then she wakes up and plays with her brother for about 2 hours and then at 9 pm her mother showers her again and gives her a bottle feed to sleep. Mariana's sleep on her crib and when she was 6 months old she started eating solid foods. For the toilet training she plans to do it when mariana shows readiness to leave the diaper. It would be a bit difficult to follow the baby's schedule since there are daily routines in the daycare, although I will do the best I can, I will explain that situation to the family and try to find a solution that benefits both of us.

To conclude, during this assignment I learned a lot about the baby's cognitive, social, emotional, language and physical development, also about the baby's temperament, about the baby's culture, daily routines, and if the family is collectivist or individualist. I learned the importance of a strong and respectful relationship with the baby's families, the importance of knowing about their cultural beliefs and how to support and practice their cultural customs in the infant classroom. I learned about the importance of providing a rich, safe and inclusive environment for babies, I learned the importance of meeting their needs, and desires to form a

strong attachment with them as well as with their families. This assignment connects with the class because it includes almost all the information I learned during this semester, and it provides me the opportunity to gain more knowledge while observing a baby and interviewing a family. This assignment will help me to be a better infant teacher because thanks to the readings and videos provided during this semester I gained a lot of information and awareness about children's development.