

Handout 16: Mary Ellin's Point of View

Mary Ellin is Sasha's Head Start teacher. She likes Sasha a lot. She thinks Sasha is very creative. Her drawing skills are advanced for a child her age. She's also very expressive during creative movement, and she puts together amazing outfits for dress-up. Mary Ellin also has noticed that Sasha is very sensitive to how other children are feeling.

Mary Ellin is pleased with how well Sasha has adjusted to the class. She is holding her own, skillwise. Assessments show her development to be progressing normally in motor and cognitive tasks. Mary Ellin believes that Sasha needs the most help with social and language skills because of her speech delays. Because Sasha still has a hard time expressing herself, the other children aren't always willing to hear her out. They get distracted or interrupt her. Mary Ellin has noticed that when this happens, Sasha seems to retreat into her drawing.

Mary Ellin would like to work more intensely with Sasha, but unfortunately she doesn't have much time to focus on any one child. She used to have a lot of parent volunteers, so the children could get the one-on-one attention they need and enjoy. But for some reason, only a few parents have volunteered in the class this year.

Mary Ellin met Sasha's mother, briefly, at a Parents' Night function. She knows that the family worker has visited Sasha's home, but she doesn't know how it went. She remembers that Sasha's mother did not come in during the last round of parent-teacher conferences, but she is not sure why.

Discuss these questions from Mary Ellin's point of view:

1. What do you want Sasha's mother to know?
2. What do you want to learn from Sasha's mother?
3. What conference arrangements would work best for you (time, place, involvement of others, arrangements for child care, transportation, etc.)?
4. What would be a good way to make those arrangements?