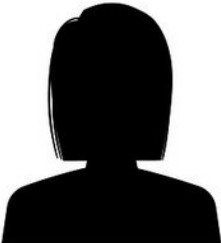


Part 1 – Scenario:

A health visitor is concerned about a child's development. Parents do not like the health visitor as they find them condescending. You have noticed that this happens in meetings, but you can see that the health visitor comes from a different culture than the parents and her behaviour could be seen as cold and dismissive.

Background Description

Stepmother (16 years old) 	Dropping child off at school without any inform Did not have any explanation after concern discussed meeting with health visitor Barrier to speak English
Father (20 years old) 	Smoker but he has overcome his addictions Night shift working in a car industry as a repair worker Had criminal and violence records when he was 16
Child A (3-year-old) 	Altered mood Physical health problems (eczema and psoriasis), malnutrition and language delays Poor hygiene Pale skin and underweight Did not contact with her mother since child B birth

Child B (18 months) 	Poor general hygiene Underweight
Child C (6 months) 	Poor general hygiene Underweight
Health visitor 	Different cultures with parents Transition Child A to speech and language therapist at last healthy meeting Provided and supported healthy weight and healthy nutrition conversations team to parents Identify Child A, B, C are high risk of neglect on the report

ECEY 6004 – Part 1 Reflective Portfolio:**Title: Inclusive Leadership in Supporting Vulnerable Children and Families based on part 1 scenario**

(2673 words)

Introduction

Inclusive leadership plays a pivotal role in addressing complex family dynamics and supporting vulnerable children. In this portfolio, that will examine a scenario involving a health visitor's concerns about the development of three children in that family, where cultural differences and perceived barriers hinder effective collaboration. Evidence underscores that inclusive leadership fosters trust, mutual understanding, and culturally responsive care, which are crucial for achieving positive outcomes in such cases (Hollander, 2012). Betancourt *et al.*, (2002) supported how culturally responsive care, facilitated by inclusive leadership, improves trust and outcomes in multicultural environments. Inclusive leadership is defined as the practice of fostering an environment where individuals feel valued, respected, and supported regardless of their background or circumstances (Carmeli *et al.*, 2010). This approach involves recognising and addressing systemic barriers, promoting cultural competence, and ensuring equitable access to resources and support (Roberson, 2006). Within child and family services, inclusive leadership is essential for bridging communication gaps, addressing neglect, and supporting development needs. The scenario highlights critical issues, including cultural misunderstandings between the health visitor and parents, the parent's resistance to professional interventions, and the children's evident neglect and development delays. Research shows that cultural mismatches and ineffective communication can lead to mistrust and disengagement between families and professionals, reducing the effectiveness of interventions (Betancourt et al, 2002). Furthermore, socioeconomic challenges and parental inexperience exacerbate the risks of neglect, emphasising the need for targeted and culturally sensitive support strategies (World Health Organisation, 2013).

This portfolio will focus on how inclusive leadership can address these barriers and support the wellbeing of children. By exploring strategies to build trust, empower parents, and enhance professional-family collaboration, this analysis will provide actionable solutions to foster positive change. The findings will highlight the importance of culturally competent, empathetic, and family-centered approaches in addressing neglect and supporting vulnerable children.

The Impact on Children A, B and C

In this scenario, Children A, B and C are at the center of the concern regarding neglect, physical health problems- eczema and psoriasis and language delays on Child A. These children are affected by multiple issues including malnutrition- underweight, poor hygiene, emotional neglect and potential long-term health and development problems. These issues reflect the scenario's broader focus, which is to address the health and developmental concerns of these children in a way that is culturally sensitive and supportive of family dynamics. The children are at a critical stage in their development, where early interventions can have significant positive effects.

Neglect has long been recognised as one of the most detrimental factors to a child's development. Studies have consistently shown that children who experience neglect, particularly in the early years, face a higher risk of physical, cognitive, and emotional issues. Black et al., (2013) conducted a study on malnutrition and development, emphasising that children who suffer from chronic malnutrition in their early years' experience lasting physical and cognitive deficits, including poor academic performance, motor skill delays, and emotional issues. Eczema and psoriasis are chronic skin conditions that can significantly impact young children's learning and development. Children with eczema often experience intense itching, leading to frequent awakenings and poor sleep quality (National Eczema Association, n.d.). Research indicates that atopic dermatitis and psoriasis may negatively affect cognitive processes (Kuryllo *et.al.*, 2024). This could explain in child A, B and C's physical health problems and development delays, which are evident in their poor hygiene and underweight conditions. Child A's referral to a speech and language therapist suggests that these developmental delays are significant and need immediate attention. Research by Roberts et al., (2015) supports the need for early identification and intervention for children with speech and language delays, particularly for children from vulnerable backgrounds. The lack of maternal interaction with Child A since the birth of Child B may contribute to attachment issues, which can affect emotional and psychological growth. The attachment theory by Bowlby (1982) highlights how critical early caregiving relationships are for emotional regulation and long-term mental health.

These pieces of evidence underscore the importance of an inclusive leadership approach that ensures the health, emotional, and developmental needs of the children are met through targeted interventions. These interventions should be culturally sensitive, family-oriented, and collaborative to address the specific challenges faced by these children and their family context. By applying this knowledge, inclusive leadership can guide and collaborate with healthcare professionals to conduct thorough assessments of each child's physical health, nutritional status, language development and emotional well-being. Identify specific needs and tailor interventions accordingly. Then develop Individualised Education Plan (IEPs) or Individualised Family Service

Plans (IFSPs) that address each child's unique needs, incorporating input from families and specialists (Childcare, 2019). Provide accessible resources and demonstrations for parents to improve their hygiene and nutrition practices. Work with nutritionists to provide balanced meals and snacks that address malnutrition and support healthy weight gain. Create a nurturing and responsive environment that fosters secure attachments and consider involving child psychologists for additional support. Support health visitors for their regular health and development assessment to track progress and rebuild trust relationship with family. Foster communication with parents and health visitor, respecting cultural background and involving them in decision making processes. Provide ongoing professional development for staff on topics such as trauma-informed care, cultural competence and inclusive practices. Equip staff with the skills necessary to effectively support diverse needs.

Impact on the family and its relation to the overall focus

The family environment plays a pivotal role in the health and development of children. In this scenario, several family-related factors contribute to challenges faced by Children A, B and C. Chiamulera (2024) research shows that severe neglect disrupts young children's cognitive and executive functions, stress response systems, and brain architecture. Without intervention, these disruptions can lead to learning problems, social adjustment difficulties, mental health problems, and physical diseases. Children exposed to environments where parents have substance use issues or criminal histories are at increased risk for various developmental and behavioural issues. The father's history of smoking, substance use, and criminal behaviour may contribute to an unstable home environment, affecting the children's emotional and psychological well-being. These children may experience higher levels of stress, instability, and neglect, which can adversely affect their development (Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, 2024). The health visitor's different cultural background and perceived condescending behaviour may hinder effective communication with the parents, affecting the quality of care and support provided to the children. Effective communication between healthcare providers and families is crucial for successful interventions (Petersen *et al.*, 2014).

The evidence underscores the critical role of family dynamics in child development. Interventions targeting family-related factors can mitigate the adverse effects of neglect and create a more stable and supportive environment for the children (SEO, 2024). Understanding and addressing cultural and communication barriers between healthcare providers and families can improve the effectiveness of interventions (Family Planning of South Central New York, 2021). Recognising the impact of family dynamics aligns with the principles of inclusive

leadership, which emphasises the importance of family involvement in the care process. Engaging families in the intervention process ensures that solutions are tailored to their specific needs and circumstances, leading to more sustainable and effective outcomes (Kuo, 2012).

Parents may feel judged or misunderstood, particularly given their young age and past experiences. Inclusive leadership involves creating a non-judgmental environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and included, regardless of their backgrounds, experiences, or identities to empower parents in their caregiving roles. By building these relationships, inclusive leaders can create a safe space where families feel empowered to participate in the care process, ensuring that interventions are culturally sensitive and responsive to their unique circumstances (DEI,2024). Connect parents with community resources such as substance abuse counseling, mental health services, and parenting programs. Collaborate with local agencies to provide comprehensive support tailored to the family's needs. Smith (2022) stated family leadership programs are designed to support parenting adults and caregivers with knowledge and skills to build confidence in themselves as leaders in their communities. Establish regular, open communication channels with parents to involve them in their children's education and development. Organise workshops and meetings that encourage parental participation and provide education on child development and effective parenting strategies.

Equip professionals with tools to understand and respect cultural nuances, minimizing misunderstandings. Family-centered care (FCC) is a partnership approach to healthcare decision-making between the family and healthcare providers. The core principle of FCC included listening to and honoring the family's perspectives and choices, incorporating their knowledge, values, beliefs, and cultural background into the child's care planning and delivery. Provide and share complete and unbiased information to families. Encouraging and supporting families to participate in care and decision-making at the level they choose and collaborating with families in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, n.d.).

However, when parents are reluctant or unable to participate, it might lack of transportation, demanding work schedules or the need for childcare can hinder parent's ability to attend nursery activities or training. By identifying these barriers, programs can develop tailored solutions to facilitate participation like providing various avenues for engagement, including virtual meetings, recorded sessions, or writtening materials, allowing parents to participate at their convenience (Okrand, 2023).

The impact on Professionals (Early Year Practitioners role of Inclusive leadership)

Inclusive leadership among Early Years Practitioners plays a pivotal role in addressing the developmental challenges faced by children A, B and C in the scenario.



(source: Puentes, 2021)

Ferdam's Theory of inclusive leadership emphasises the pivotal role leaders play in fostering environments where diversity is leveraged, and all individuals feel valued and engaged. This approach is particularly relevant in early years settings where inclusive leadership can significantly impact children's development and well-being. By fostering an environment that values diversity, equality, and inclusion, practitioners can create supportive and nurturing settings that cater to the unique needs of each child. Jorden (2015) emphasises the importance of inclusive leadership in Early Year settings. Highlighting how inclusive leadership can directly influence the children's well-being by ensuring that Early Years Practitioners recognise individual's needs. Enabling tailored interventions that address health concerns and developmental delays.

Cultivate environments that respect and celebrate diversity, ensuring that all children, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, have equitable access to learning opportunities. This involves implementing policies and practices that promote inclusion and address systemic barriers (Childhood Education International, n.d). By cultivating a culture of inclusion, practitioners can

create safe and welcoming environment spaces where children feel valued and supported, which is essential for their emotional, social development and support children's health and development needs (The Division for Early Childhood of the Council, 2016).

Ferdman *et al.*, (2020) underscores the importance of collaboration among educators, families, and communities. In Early Year Setting, inclusive leaders actively engage with families, understanding their unique contexts and involving them in the educational process. This partnership enhances the support system for children and fosters a sense of belonging. Crucial for creating consistent support systems for the children, inclusive leadership should encourage collaboration with families, understanding their backgrounds, and involving them in the care process (KIT, 2024).

Inclusive leadership involves continuous learning and development. This commitment to growth aligns with Ferdman's emphasis on the dynamic nature of inclusive leadership (Ferdman *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, practitioners may face challenges in adopting inclusive practices due to limited resources, lack of training, or systemic constraints. A study by Kaur *et al.*, (2023) identified that a lack of labor and time constraints are major obstacles to effective inclusion. Educators reported that the additional time required to support diverse learners strains existing resources, making it difficult to meet all student's needs adequately. Many teachers lack sufficient training in the basics of correctional education and teaching curriculum criteria for diverse groups. This gap in professional development leaves educators underprepared to implement inclusive practices effectively. Systemic barriers, such as rigid curriculum frameworks and standardised testing, can hinder the provision of individualised support and accommodations for diverse learners. These systemic issues often limit educator's flexibility to adapt teaching methods to meet the needs of all children in the setting (Bindhani *et al.*, 2024).

However, providing comprehensive training programs focused on inclusive education can equip practitioners with the necessary skills and knowledge. This includes workshops on cultural competence, differentiated instruction and strategies for engaging families for diverse backgrounds (Theoria Technical College, 2024). Advocating for increased funding and resources is essential to support inclusive education. This can involve securing materials that cater to diverse learning needs, hiring additional support staff, and ensuring access to specialised services. Adequate resources enable practitioners to provide individualised support to each child (The ISN Team, 2024). Policies that allow for individualised learning plans and recognise diverse developmental trajectories can facilitate more effective inclusion. Engaging with policymakers to revise rigid curriculum frameworks and assessment methods can create a more

flexible educational environment for children (Park University, 2024). These are the methods where inclusive leadership can significantly impact children's development and well-being.

Impact of Inclusive Leadership on Communities

Inclusive leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping and enhancing community dynamics, particularly in early years settings. It involves recognising, valuing, and leveraging diverse perspectives within a community by fostering an environment that values diversity, equity, and inclusion, leaders can create supportive and nurturing spaces that cater to the unique needs of each child and their families. This means acknowledging the varied backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of children and their families. According to Join the collective (2024) that Inclusive leaders can actively seek out and respect diverse viewpoints within their communities, fostering a sense of belonging and engagement among all members. Bridge gaps between different community groups, leading to stronger social bonds and mutual understanding to promote social cohesion. Encourages collaboration, enabling communities to address challenges collectively and develop solutions that consider the needs of all communities.

Early Years settings with inclusive leaders are more likely to outperform their competitors, as diverse groups bring a variety of perspectives and experiences that lead to better decision-making (Kaye, 2023). Foster an environment where diverse ideas are valued, leading to increased innovation and creative problem-solving (Radicioni, 2023). Kaye (2023) emphasised that although supporting inclusive leadership in communities has so many positive outcomes but implementing inclusive practices can also face resistance from individuals accustomed to traditional methods, potentially slowing progress. While managing diversity brings valuable insights, it can also lead to conflicts if not managed effectively, requiring leaders to be adept at conflict resolution and fostering open communication.

Understanding the role of inclusive leadership within communities is crucial for developing strategies that support the holistic development of children and their families in early years settings. By analysing both the benefits and challenges, practitioners can recognise the unique needs of each child and family, leading to more effective and personalised support strategies like coordinating a visit trip to food bank in community, let parents get more information about that if they need. Collaborating with family support agencies can provide parents with resources and guidance to navigate challenges related to their child's development. Foster collaborative environments to encourage families and community members in the educational process, creating a supportive network. Practitioners can collaborate with community members to organise some nutrition or cooking workshops for children A and their family in the setting that can educate parents and support their family to enhance their knowledge for about healthy

wellbeing. Engaging with these services fosters a supportive network around family, promoting resilience and well-being (Early childhood-child welfare, 2021). Coordinating with health professionals, practitioners can address any health-related concerns like pale skin and underweight problems, that may impact child A, B and C's development and learning (UNICEF, 2022). Working alongside community health organisations can ensure that children receive necessary medical evaluations and interventions. This collaboration can facilitate access to immunisations, nutritional guidance, and health screenings, contributing to the overall well-being of the children.

Inclusive leadership is essential in early years settings. This approach enhances community engagement, promotes social cohesion, and encourages collaborative problem solving. However, implementing inclusive practices can face resistance and may lead to conflicts if not managed effectively. Understanding these dynamics enables practitioners to develop tailored interventions and foster collaborative environments, ultimately supporting the holistic development of children and their families.

Part 2: Evaluation of Special Education Needs and Disability Policy of Aston University Nursery & Pre-school (Lloyd, 2022).

(1,450 words)

Aston University Nursery and Pre-school's policy on Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability (SEND) plays a key role in promoting inclusive education. The nursery's commitment to inclusion is aligned with the principles of equality and diversity, ensuring that all children, regardless of their needs or background, receive high-quality care and education. This approach is guided by various legislative frameworks, including the UK's Special Education Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015), the Equality Act (2010), the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and Children's rights.

This policy document provides guidance for services working with children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities, emphasising the importance of inclusive practices in early years settings that is designed to meet the requirements of UK legislation. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DoE, 2015) highlights the need for early identification of SEND, the importance of working collaboratively with families, and offering personalised support. The Equality Act (2010) protects individuals from discrimination based on a range of protected characteristics, including disability, and requires that early year's providers make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children with SEND have equal access to opportunities (Gov. UK, 2013). It supports the nursery's approach by ensuring children with disabilities are not discriminated against and receive the necessary adjustments to fully participate in the learning process. The EYFS framework (Department for Education, 2024) is the primary guide for all early years providers in England. It emphasises the importance of providing opportunities for all children, regardless of their background or abilities, to develop their skills across the following areas: Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design. The EYFS promotes the inclusion of children with SEND by requiring settings to provide differentiated learning experiences to meet individual needs. The UK is signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which asserts that every child has the right to education and to participate fully in society, regardless of their background or abilities (UNICEF, 2019). This legal framework underpins the nursery's policy on inclusion.

Inclusive leadership within the context of early years education refers to the ability of staff, management and leaders to create an environment where all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND), feel valued, supported and capable of reaching their full potential. This approach fosters a culture of mutual respect, cooperation, and

understanding across the entire community. According to the Council of Chief State School Officers (n.d.), inclusive principals establish high expectations and provide appropriate support for children with disabilities, playing an essential role in improving educational outcomes. Furthermore, a brief by Childhood Education international (n.d.) highlights that inclusive leaders are committed to providing equitable and high-quality learning experiences, ensuring that every child feels seen, heard, and supported. In practice, inclusive leadership involves recognising and embracing diversity among learners, which is essential for fostering an environment that nurtures the growth and development of every child. An article by Parenta (2023) underscores that in early year education, laying the foundation for inclusivity is crucial, setting the stage for a lifetime of learning and social interaction.

Inclusion leadership focuses on creating a shared vision of equality, fairness and opportunity for all children. At Aston University Nursery and Pre-School, the policy of SEND which emphasises recognising that early years is a critical stage for child development, the nursery actively identifies children who may have additional needs and provides appropriate support, ensuring no child is left behind. Aston University Nursery and Pre-School approach to enrolling children with identified special needs exemplifies inclusive leadership in early year education that showcases the nursery's responsiveness to diversity. The nursery adopts a graduated approach to identification and assessment following the 4 stages of assess, plan, do and review base on EYFS framework and 4 broad areas of need and support for the SEND child such included communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health, sensory and play needs. This SEND policy ensures that children with additional needs are provided with tailored support to help them meet their development goals. This includes differentiated activities, use of specialist resources, and flexible teaching methods by SENDCO support. Effective inclusion leadership involves working closely with parents and carers, ensuring they are fully involved in the decision-making process. The effectiveness of the support and its impact on the child's progress should be reviewed in line with the agreed date for review and reflection. Evaluated by the practitioner and the SENCO working with the child's parents and taking into account the child's view. The policy encourages ongoing dialogue with families to understand their child's needs and provide consistent support. The nursery has always welcomed parents or carers guidance and knowledge to discuss any concerns they might have and strongly recommend that parents in the settling attend scheduled appointments with other professionals, including Health Visitors, particularly the 2years old development check, regular dental and optometry appointments.

Implementing this policy yields several positive outcomes, like ensuring that children with special needs or disabilities receive tailored support, fostering an inclusive learning environment.

This approach enables children to achieve their full potential by addressing individual challenges. By adopting a graduated approach: assess, plan, do and review. The nursery provides tailored support that addresses each child's unique needs. This method has been shown to promote significant improvements in children's learning and development ((Lloyd, 2022). It also emphasising partnership with parents and external agencies, the policy promotes a holistic support system. Such collaboration facilitates comprehensive understanding and addressing of children's needs, leading to improved educational outcomes, engaging families in the decision-making process enhances the effectiveness of support strategies and promotes consistency between home and nursery settings. The policy advocates for prompt recognition of special educational needs, allowing for early interventions that can significantly enhance a child's academic journey and personal development.

There are some barriers from this policy. Resource limitations that implementing personalised support requires substantial resources, including specialised staff and training. Resource constraints can hinder the effective execution of the policy's provisions. Dobson et.al., (2024) highlights that the ability of academic staff in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is perceived as limited due to insufficient knowledge of teaching practices tailored for children with disabilities. This underscores the necessity for ongoing professional development to equip educators with the requisite skills and knowledge. Furthermore, research by Stefanic (2024) indicates that without sufficient funding, schools may struggle to provide the necessary resources to implement personalised learning effectively. This includes the financial means to support infrastructure, technology tools, and ongoing professional development for educators. Insufficient awareness and training among faculty and staff regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can lead to inconsistent application of policies, adversely affecting the quality of support provided to children. Hakel *et.al.*, (2024) research indicates that educators often report a lack of training and a feeling of unpreparedness as significant barriers to implementing inclusive education effectively. Furthermore, inadequate training can result in poor job performance and increased levels of work-related stress among staff, which may compromise the support offered to children with SEND (Hendy, 2023). Addressing these training gaps through comprehensive professional development is essential to ensure consistent and effective support for children with SEND. Implementing structured professional learning that enhances teacher knowledge and practices has been shown to improve children learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond *et.al.*, 2017).

Strategy these barriers such as allocating adequate resources, providing comprehensive training with necessary skills and knowledge for staff to support SEND children in setting that can leading to improved children learning outcomes (Watts, 2021). Organise workshops focusing on inclusive teaching strategies and the use of assistive technologies to support diverse learning

needs (Halal *et.al.*, 2024). Ensure that sufficient financial resources are allocated specifically for SEND provisions, including specialised staff, training, and assistive technologies (Stefanic, 2024). Collaborate with external organisations and technology companies to access additional resources and support for SEND initiatives. Partnerships can provide access to necessary resources and support for successful personalised learning implementation (Blanchard, 2024). Facilitate collaboration among educators, parents and external agencies to create a comprehensive support system for SEND students. Engaging with families and communities can enhance the support system for children and foster a sense of belonging (Halal *et.al.*, 2024). Regularly assess and adapt institutional structures and processes to ensure they are responsive to the diverse needs of SEND children like assessment methods or classroom layouts to accommodate various learning styles and develop individualized education plans (IEPs) for SEND children to address their specific needs, ensuring personalised support and accommodations. IEPs are essential for providing targeted support and accommodations for children with disabilities (Stefanic, 2024). By implementing these strategies where SEND children receive the personalised support they need to succeed.

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