

Case Study: Early Years Professional Practice Scenario

Amira is an early years practitioner working in a nursery setting with children aged 3–5 years. One morning, Amira is supporting free play indoors when she notices a four-year-old child, Layla, sitting alone near the book area. Layla has been attending the setting for three months and usually enjoys imaginative play with peers, but today she appears quieter and less engaged in group activities.

Amira approaches Layla calmly, kneeling at her level and asking gentle, open-ended questions about what she would like to do. Layla shrugs and does not respond verbally, instead holding tightly onto a soft toy from home. Amira acknowledges Layla's feelings non-verbally by maintaining a calm tone, giving her time, and offering reassurance. After a short period, Layla quietly says that she does not want to join the other children because she 'feels tired'.

Drawing on her knowledge of Layla's usual behaviour, Amira recognises that this is a change and makes a mental note to observe further. She allows Layla some choice by inviting her to either sit in the quiet area or join a small group activity with fewer children. Layla chooses to sit and look at a book with Amira nearby. This interaction supports Layla's independence and emotional security.

Later in the morning, during outdoor play, Layla becomes upset when another child attempts to take the soft toy. Amira intervenes promptly, ensuring that both children are safe. She explains to the other child about sharing and respecting belongings while supporting Layla to express her needs. Amira ensures her response is fair and consistent with the setting's behaviour policy.

At lunchtime, Amira observes that Layla eats very little. She records this observation and discusses it briefly with a colleague, considering whether there may be any emerging concerns about Layla's wellbeing. Amira refers to the setting's policies and reflects on whether further monitoring or communication with parents may be required.

At the end of the day, Amira speaks with Layla's parent, sharing neutral observations about Layla's quieter behaviour, reduced appetite, and preference for being alone. She uses clear and respectful communication and invites the parent to share any relevant information from home. The parent explains that Layla has recently had disrupted sleep due to a change in routine.

Following the discussion, Amira reflects on how she supported Layla during the day. She considers whether her responses were appropriate and what she might do differently in future situations. She also plans to monitor Layla's wellbeing over the coming days and share updates with colleagues to ensure a consistent approach.