

Documentation Examples > Examples of documentation to aid teachers' own reflections**Toddlers Helping Toddlers to Stand on Their Own**

School: Cambridge Even Start Program

[project home](#)[see related projects](#)[back to documentation examples](#)**1. Harold's Story**[» View larger version of photo](#)

For the first two months of his participation in Even Start, 16-month-old Harold cried almost constantly during the time when he was in the Infant-Toddler classroom. This was Harold's first experience separating from his mother and he was having difficulty. During these first months, the teachers worked hard to comfort Harold. We picked him up and held him, tried to engage him in play and to develop an interest in toys and the other children, with little success. The only time Harold would stop crying briefly, was when he was pushed in the stroller outside. In mid-November, the teachers stopped putting Harold in the stroller and he began walking outside with the other children.

Harold started to pay more attention to what the other children were doing but did not get involved with them yet. He watched them climb, run, jump, and slide. Perhaps it was being outside, and the added vigilance this required of all the teachers to focus on the group rather than primarily Harold that helped to turn his focus from the adults to the other children in the group.

[» View larger version of photo](#)[» View larger version of photo](#)

Harold noticed that the other children were interested in birds and planes that flew by. As they pointed up and yelled, "*Bird!*" and "*Airplane!*" Harold joined in their enthusiastic responses to the objects in the sky. "*Oh, oh!*" he exclaimed while pointing up and toddling behind his classmates who were following the flight of the birds and planes.

As a way of supporting Harold's separation from mom, the teachers moved these interests from the outside into the classroom when it was time for his mother to leave. As mama said goodbye, the teachers lifted Harold to the window to look outside. He noticed the birds, the blowing leaves, the cars and dogs by pointing and exclaiming, "Oh, oh!" Harold's interest in the outdoors drew the other children to the window. Gradually, as the other children's interest shifted to indoor activities, Harold's did too. He continued to cry off and on, but less forcefully than before.



[» View larger version of photo](#)



[» View larger version of photo](#)

Around this time, the teachers stopped directing so much attention to Harold's crying. Rather than hold him and make continued efforts to engage him, the teachers put him down and allowed him to cry. It was at this point that the other children started to pay more attention to Harold and make efforts to engage him in their play.

For example, a child would bring him a ball, hand him some play dough or bring him a slice of the pretend pizza they were making in the kitchen. They were trying to include him in their play.



[» View larger version of photo](#)



[» View larger version of photo](#)

Within a week, Harold only cried briefly when mama left and within two weeks he stopped crying altogether. It seems as though his interest in the other children and their efforts at including him in their play, gave him the strength to stand on his own two feet away from mama.

Perhaps his need to cry lessened as he recognized that he was okay on his own and had the group to help take care of him.



» [View larger version of photo](#)

2. Kafia's Story



» [View larger version of photo](#)

12/16/05 - This is 9-month-old Kafia's first day with us. In the classroom, she crawls around the room, seemingly comfortable exploring the space and materials. The children play around her, sporadically handing her a toy. On a few occasions, Routh covers her eyes to play "peek-a-boo," and Kafia smiles. Outside, the children are in the field, running and throwing balls. Kafia is in the stroller. Routh runs up to her off and on and repeats the "peek-a-boo" game. Like earlier, Kafia smiles.

Harold, who has been throwing balls and running with Fadja, notices a ball close to Kafia's stroller. He drops the ball in his hands, picks up the other ball and places it on Kafia's stroller in front of her. Kafia looks at it, but doesn't attempt to move. Harold picks up his ball and continues playing with Fadja.

Shortly after, I push Kafia's stroller and jog behind Harold and Fadja. Harold and Fadja run and laugh. "*We're gonna get you,*" I say. Kafia laughs, kicks her feet, and moves her arms up and down.



» [View larger version of photo](#)



» [View larger version of photo](#)

1/11/05 - This is Kafia's 4th day in class. On her 3rd day, she was recovering from an ear infection and clearly not feeling well. She cried frequently and gestured to be picked up by teachers. The children paid little attention to her.

Today, the teachers have been carrying Kafia or sitting with her on the floor and playing. When I put her down by herself on the floor to attend to another child, Matthew immediately moves toward her. He has been playing the piano on the other side of the room, and he brings the piano with him. He sits next to Kafia and begins playing.



[» View larger version of photo](#)



[» View larger version of photo](#)

Harold, who has been playing with his father in the kitchen area brings over a pizza. He breaks off a few slices and hands them to Kafia and Matthew.

Harold moves back to the kitchen area where his father is calling him to come and play. Mathew continues to sing and play the piano while Kafia watches on.



[» View larger version of photo](#)



[» View larger version of photo](#)

1/13/05 - Fadja walks up the stairs and Kafia crawls to the steps following him. Fadja notices Kafia behind him, smiles and turns around.

Smiling, Fadja bends down and touches her hair.



[» View larger version of photo](#)



[» View larger version of photo](#)

For the rest of the morning, Fadja periodically moves to where Kafia is playing and touches her hair, pats her on the back or studies her face.