

CASE SCENARIO

Meet Elias

Elias (4yrs) and Zoe (2yrs) live with their mother, Alexis (27yrs) and father, Christian (30yrs) in a regional town.

The children have been attending the same early learning centre for the past 15 months, but the family has little ongoing contact with staff beyond brief interactions at drop-off and pick-up.

In the past month, ELC staff have noticed a shift in Elias's behaviour – he has been displaying more big emotional responses and refusing to follow staff members' requests. He has been getting into disagreements with the other children and is more easily distressed and agitated, sometimes reacting physically when situations do not go his way. He has also been arriving late most mornings, and Alexis often seems flustered when dropping both kids off.

Staff are aware that Elias has been seeing a speech pathologist in town for approx. five months to address some communication delays. An initial report regarding his speech assessment is on file, but not everyone is aware of the report, and no one has had a chance to read it. The centre has not had any further contact with the speech pathologist.

The community experienced a flood 10 months ago, which damaged many homes and businesses in the area. The ELC was closed for two weeks to repair damages to the building, and some areas of the grounds are still off-limits while they wait to be repaired. Some staff have relocated since the flood which has left the Centre under pressure to cover necessary staffing ratios. These continuing disruptions mean the effects of the flood remain visible in Elias's everyday learning environment.

You ask to meet with Alexis about Elias's behavioural difficulties. After hearing your concerns, she sighs and apologises for his behaviour and says she 'doesn't know what's gotten into him lately'. You notice she seems tired and anxious to get the meeting over and done with.

