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ADV 350: Writing for PR  
Spring 2015  
Assignment 8: Crisis Response  
May 10, 2015

**Publics:**

E-mail: Parents and guardians of all students enrolled at Next Level Preschool.

Press Release: Community members from the Champaign-Urbana community, local TV station news viewers, and other media outlets.

**Strategic Objective(s)**

E-mail: To inform parents of the exact events that occurred at Next Level Preschool, ensuring that their children are safe and under proper staff guidance at all times.

Press Release: To inform media and concerned community members about the miscommunication that occurred at Next Level Preschool.

**Key Message(s):**

Next Level Preschool prides itself in offering superior educational opportunities to young scholars. Superior health, safety and wellbeing remain their top concern for nearly 30 years.

**E-mail:**

Dear parents and guardians of Next Level Preschool children,

We take pride in our dedication to our students and families in the Champaign-Urbana communities for nearly three decades. We diligently train our staff to ensure a safe environment for children. Although our protocol has served us well for the past three decades, an instance occurred today that we were unable to control.

This afternoon on April 17, 2015, we learned that the wrong parent guardian picked up their child against the couple's legal joint custody agreement. As a school, our staff was unaware of the parents' separation, custody agreement or impending divorce. The child's father often picked his daughter up from school; he came to pick up the child at approximately 2:00pm during our regular dismissal. The father took the child to see his parents in Indianapolis, without the mother's awareness. We are choosing to disclose all details. We would like to inform all parents and guardians that the child was not harmed.

At Next Level Preschool, we have very strict safety policies in place and closely monitor our staff. In the beginning of the school year, we meet with all parents and guardians and go through our extensive guidelines and sign dismissal agreements. Every afternoon, we have a staff member dismiss children only to those parents and/or guardians on our lists. With specific circumstances such as extended family or child caretakers picking children up, we are always sure to call both parents to verify. We strive to go above and beyond to ensure that your children are safe at all times.

We are working to ensure that nothing like this happens again. At Next Level Preschool, we are looking for ways to better dismiss our children and a way to stay updated with parent's marital status. We certainly value special requests from parents and guardians. Please reach me, Kathy Ruda, at [kathyruda@gmail.com](mailto:kathyruda@gmail.com) with any questions or concerns. We sincerely apologize and hope that we can work together to ensure and even safer grounds here at Next Level.

Sincerely,

Kathy Ruda

Public Relations Director  
Next Level Preschool





**News Release:**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For more information, contact:**

Kathy Ruda  
Public Relations Director  
Next Level Preschool  
Ruda2@illinois.edu, 708-527-4672

## **Next Level Preschool Crisis Clarification**

Next Level Preschool Explains Afterschool "Abduction" Mishap

**Champaign, April 17, 2015** — For nearly three decades, Next Level Preschool has taken pride in their dedication to students and families in the Champaign-Urbana communities. They train their staff to ensure a safe environment for children and foster relationships within the community. Although their protocol has served them well for the past three decades, an instance occurred today that was out of their control.

"Next Level Preschool in south Champaign has offered superior educational opportunities in a loving, nurturing environment for students for years," says preschool founder and president, Gina Young. "Our holistic approach to education enables our students to realize their fullest potential and become life-long learners who can successfully navigate the world. Our campus also include an after school program for students. Working in partnership with our families is a vital component to helping children achieve their fullest potential."

This afternoon, Next Level learned that the wrong parent guardian picked up their child against a couple's legal joint custody agreement. The staff at the school was unaware of the parents' separation, custody agreement or impending divorce.

Each afternoon, the teachers release students to parents or guardians that have been registered and approved by the Board of Directors early on in the school year. They were saddened to learn that one of their students was released with a registered guardian, but not the right one for that day. The child's father often picked his daughter up from school; he of the child came to pick up the child at approximately 2:00pm, during our afternoon dismissal. The father took the child to see his parents in Indianapolis, without the mother's awareness.

"We would like to inform all parents and guardians that the child was in no way in any harm or danger," said Ms. Young.

In the case that an assigned parent cannot pickup a child during a specific time, Next Level offers after school care in a variety of forms for both our students and those at other community schools. Their STEAM Studio invites area students for an after school enrichment program that encourages students to explore their curiosities. They also offer an in-house program called ACE (After Care Enrichment), where students expand their learning beyond school hours.

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Since learning about this incident, Next Level is doing everything they can to guarantee that this never happens again. In addition to assisting the affected family with their needs, they are implementing new guidelines internally. Beginning next week, all Next Level staff will undergo a new training program and assessment of school guidelines. If they do not pass, they risk termination from the school. They are also working on ways to keep track of and stay up-to-date with parent relationship status.

Next Level Preschool regrets this incident and thanks the community for their continued loyalty throughout the past 30 years.

"We honor the relationships we've made with our students and families and recognize that we would not exist without your support," stated Young. "That is why we are doing everything in our power to ensure that our student's health, safety and wellbeing remain our first priority for years to come."

For more information on this occurrence or Next Level Preschool, contact Kathy Ruda by phone at 708-527-4672 or by email at ruda2@illinos.edu.

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### **About Next Level Preschool**

Next Level Preschool is an independent, private school offering superior educational opportunities in a loving, nurturing environment for student's ages six weeks through first grade. The campus is located in south Champaign and includes includes three playgrounds, a large play field, a STEAM Studio, and an afterschool program for students from the area. Their holistic approach to education enables our students to realize their fullest potential and become life-long learners who can successfully navigate the world. For more information on Next Level Preschool, visit: [www.nextlevelpreschool.com](http://www.nextlevelpreschool.com)