



Stacey James Menlo Park, California

Biography

I became a teacher at midlife because I was unsatisfied with a corporate career that didn't seem to have lasting meaning for me. I began working at GeoKids, a non-profit parent cooperative on the campus of the US Geological Survey in Menlo Park, CA and have been there in the thirteen years since. Our program is play-based and committed to the notion that children are competent individuals and that teachers are their partners in the processes of exploration and learning. We have been inspired by the educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy, where I had the opportunity to participate in a week-long study tour. I serve as a California Mentor Teacher, supervising student teachers from local junior colleges as they complete their teaching practice. I have a BA in Child Development from Mills College and am pursuing a Master's Degree at Pacific Oaks College. I find that working with young children and their families is frequently challenging and always fascinating, and that it carries with it the lasting meaning I was looking for.

Project - "Chicken Coop Project"

GeoKids is fortunate to have a large outdoor space including a maze of raised garden beds. I developed a framework for a school-wide gardening curriculum, and together with my colleagues Nicholas Kleeman-Keller and Linnea Hilton, we have made gardening an integral part of our classroom curriculum. There is no end to the experiences and learning from the garden, through digging, planting, nurturing, observing, comparing, tasting, harvesting, cooking and sharing. Although I bring my personal interests in gardening and cooking to the endeavor, I find that I learn as much as the children as we explore the garden together through the seasons. In addition to teaching us something every day, the garden has been a great source of pleasure and a wonderful community builder for all the families at GeoKids.



With the Terri Lynne Lokoff Award, we plan to expand our experience with sustainable living, food and where it comes from by adding chickens! We will build a small chicken coop to house several young chicks. The children will be involved in all aspects of observing and caring for the chicks as they grow and eventually provide eggs. It is exciting to think about the discoveries, questions and learning that will emerge from the children's involvement with the chickens, as their understanding of the world and their role in it continues to expand.