



Maggie Mason Milwaukee, Oregon

Biography

My mother had an in home daycare with Sesame Street Characters painted on the walls of our family room. When I went into high school, I got my first taste of preschool by taking a class called "Child Services". I continued in that class for 3 years & worked with special needs children & adults. As I went into college, I decided to be a Special Education Teacher. I became impatient and in my senior year took a job teaching Kindergarten (third grade my second year) in a private school in Los Angeles area. I was not financially prepared for life in the big city & my education derailed for a while. After 8 years in Los Angeles and 1 in Texas, I finally made my way home to Oregon, moved in with my parents and enrolled back in school. I met & married my husband. I worked my way through school as a bartender and Kindergarten teacher for a child care chain. Then after 10 years, I got my degree in Education & Social Science with a baby on the way. When my son almost three I went back into teaching with him in tow. I worked for another child care chain center as a lead pre-k teacher for a couple of years & then a private Kindergarten teacher for a couple of years while also serving at their curriculum specialist & third management person all the while making a very meager salary & trying to convince myself that I should open my own preschool. Just as I had decided to return to school to pursue my masters & get my K-6 certificate, I got pregnant again. The daycare chain changed hands & would now charge me half of my salary to care for my baby. That is when I decided to go out on my own. While it seems that destiny has brought me into this career, I am so glad that it happened this way. I have been full ever since the first summer that I was open & making triple what I made working for others. I recently enrolled in an Inclusive Child Care Network our local ESD & this has inspired & encouraged me to pursue extra trainings & became more involved. I recently became a member of NAFCC. I am pursuing National Accreditation & joined my local Child Care union & PTA. I am also a cofounder of the Preschool Planning Network & idea exchanging group that meets monthly.



Project-"Indoor Play Yard"

Oregon deserves its reputation as the home of the Ducks and the Beavers! It rains a lot here! So, I am going to convert a large storage garage into a wonderful play place for the children I care for. At the edge of the playground, behind our house we have a large detached garage structure that is about 1200 square feet. This grant money will be used to pay for supplies to build and paint a divided wall, provide safe flooring for running, jumping and skipping on and to paint a road for bike riders. With an area this large, we could do tumbling, gymnastics, play basketball, indoor soccer, parachute games and more; all of which I do not have room for inside the house\school. We could even do some activities that we can't do in the yard because we don't have adequate surfaces, like rolling boards, tumbling and jump ropes. When I learned that I have been selected for this award, I couldn't sleep. My brain just started going crazy with ideas for this project; a water table with moveable pipes, tree forts made out of cardboard cylinder, a digging pit with shovels, buckets and flowers. I am so excited about this project and the difference it will make in the lives of the children that I care for and teach Thank you again for support and confidence in our project.