



Lynn Westfall Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Biography

I have many years of experience working in child care settings. Throughout college, I worked with toddlers and then after college I went on to be a Director of a center for about a year and a half. I am currently one of the lead teachers in the infant room at Tender Care Learning Center. I have been enjoying my work here for about three years. I have worked with many age groups, but the infants are my desired group. I love the infant group, because they are learning so much, but they still want to be hugged and loved. When I am not at work, I am enjoying play dates with my 20 month old son, getting together with girlfriends and spending time with my husband by bowling in a league and watching sports together.

Project-“Discovery for Babies”

Infants learn about the world through their senses, all their senses. For my project, I chose colorful items, items with different textures, and some that make music and noises. I want my babies to have a good chance with using their senses, and start using them early.

When I was writing my proposal, I wanted to do something that could be used by all of my children. All of the items I chose could be used by many different age groups. I wanted items that could be used by children who need tummy time, those sitting in a bouncy chair, or children learning to sit up and play with friends. With all of these new objects, I know my babies will have the best chance of learning about the world around them. Using their senses is a major part of their development.





Sarah Westland **Bethel Park, Pennsylvania**

Biography

I have been in the early education field for nine years now. I received my elementary certification in 2001 from Nazareth College in Rochester, NY. My husband and I moved to Pittsburgh and I worked as a preschool teacher for three years with Crafton Children's Corner. I have been with Tender Care Learning Center now for five years and during my time I have had an opportunity to not only care for many different ages of children but to grow with them and their families. The children that I cared for as infants are now in the preschool room readying for kindergarten. I have had the pleasure to work in all three classrooms; Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers. Each age group had their challenges but always added fun and adventure to my day. I am now with the youngest toddler group. They learn and grow so quickly, it amazes me. I enjoy all of their sensory experiences from painting to puddles to eating pudding! I feel very lucky at this stage of my life to not only have cared for and taught the ages I have but to have worked alongside a variety of teachers. I have learned a lot and owe those teachers and my directors a great deal.

Project-"Bounding Into Books"

Since moving into the Toddler Room, the area I have struggled with the most is literacy. Reading books to the children is sometimes hard because of their ages and attention spans. I have tried different ways to have them participate and become excited about the books we are reading. I read to them individually but there are a couple of children who show no interest in the books being read to them. As I was looking through catalogs, the literacy section caught my eye. Here was a way that I could bring those Toddlers into story time in a new and exciting way. As I was thinking about the different ages and interests in the Toddler Room, I also thought about the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Early Childhood. I looked at all the standards that related to emerging literacy. The Pennsylvania Standards give goals that children repeat nursery rhymes, request favorite books, make noises from the books, point to pictures, and use finger puppets. The items which are part of my grant represent all of these things. There are puppets that come with books, nursery rhyme books that come with CD's and sets of books that are Toddler favorites. In order to assist teachers like myself to become more energetic and interactive teachers, I chose a story telling apron that comes with different characters from stories. There are also several story props that will help the Toddlers become a part of the story and encourage some of them to tell their own story using the characters. I believe these added items to our literacy program will grab the attention of all toddlers not just the story lovers.





Donna Willis

Boston, Massachusetts

Biography

I have been interested in working with children for as long as I can remember. My first job was with the A.B.C. D. Summer job program at a day care center. During this time my husband and I raised our three children. In 1998 I began working as an assistant teacher at the Denison House where I was promoted to teacher and later the Acting Program Director in 2002. I received my Associate Degree in early education in 2003. In 2004 I received my Bachelors of Science Degree in Human Services while working as Lead Teacher and Assistant Director for Little Angel's Children's Center which unfortunately closed. Inspired by my work there, in 2005 I started a family child care center in my home. Working out of my home gave me the opportunity to work one on one with the children and the parents, giving them more of my time and attention. Through the love of God, I earned my Deaconess Missionary Certificate in 2006. I began weekly prayer meetings in my home which I still continue to host. My passion and love is to serve my community, family and friends.

Program-"Jump Around Play Gym"

To enhance my current program, I will be expanding my open activities area. I will accomplish this by purchasing a Play Tunnel, a Walk the Wave Balance Beam, Rainbow Parachute, Sensory Ball Sets, Tic-Tac-Toe Set, Roll and Score Game and Alphabet & Number Activity Mats. These items will add to the children's understanding of letters, numbers and colors as well as developing their hand-eye coordination and vital skills such as taking turns, sharing and working together. Many of the proposed enhancements will help the children increase their language skills, fine and gross motor skills and promote imaginative play. The Walk the Wave Balance Beam and Sensory Ball sets will help the toddlers explore their body movements such as crawling, walking and giving them a sense of personal space awareness. They will also get to learn about their environment through touch and texture. With my guidance, these activities will also promote discussion and language development for the children as they learn to work together to use the equipment.

