

The Impact of Quality

IN CELEBRATION OF the 25th anniversary of NAEYC Accreditation of Programs for Young Children, we asked families to submit stories about their children's experiences in NAEYC-Accredited programs.

A booklet containing all of the contributed stories, *The Impact of Quality: Stories from Programs and Families*, is online at www.naeyc.org/academy/anniversary. This article features selected stories.



The Impact of Quality Stories from Programs and Families

Celebrating 25 Years of
NAEYC Accreditation of Programs for Young Children
1985-2010

An imprint on our lives

We are the Crosby family, and the Meyer Center for Special Children, an NAEYC-Accredited program, has left a wonderful imprint on our lives. Our youngest child began attending the Meyer Center when he was 17 months old. He is now almost 6 years old.

We arrived at the Meyer Center confused, frustrated, and needing some direction for our son, who was developmentally delayed and nonverbal. Our three older children, who did not have special needs, attended church preschools and began kindergarten on time. Our youngest son was a mystery. We did not know how to communicate with him or where he could best fit in with his peers.

We found ourselves seeking the most knowledgeable therapists, and in our pursuits we drove all over Greater Greenville and Pickens Counties, four children in tow, with our car starting to feel like a home away from home.

Our son's special needs and schedule were dictating our lives. Our developmental pediatrician, sensing our frustration, recommended the Meyer Center. We drove straight there from the pediatrician's office and the following week enrolled our son. From the moment we arrived, we felt peace about where we were and hope in a time of difficulty. Our son enjoys the center and also receives therapy

services there, and we no longer lose precious family time running around town seeking services here and there.

Our sweet son has learned to communicate and ride a bike and practice his new skills in class among his peers, all the while receiving encouragement from his teachers. We have recommended the center more times than I can count and have spent many hours advocating for the school we so love. We are the Crosbys, and we are the Meyer Center!

—Tresh Crosby, Parent,
Meyer Center for Special Children,
Greenville, South Carolina

Stories from Families about NAEYC-Accredited Programs



A nurturing environment

On the recommendation of my sister-in-law, we enrolled our child in the NAEYC-Accredited St. Anne Early Childhood Development Center. She declared that the preschool was a nurturing environment that could help our son, through teachers who understood children and were loving, compassionate, patient, and dedicated. Their focus was on the whole child and on ensuring that children were learning *and* also growing as loving, compassionate individuals who cared about peoples and cultures around the world.

Our first year was difficult, but we saw results by the end of that year. At the beginning, our son would crawl under a table when he arrived and would not sit with the other children at story time. He had a hard time making friends because

of difficulties in communicating. With patience and guidance, the school director worked with his teacher, the counselors, and us to find ways to ease his stress in the new school environment. They kept showing him love and helped him build trust in other adults. When we asked if he wanted to go to pre-K, he said with a smile, "Yes, Mommy, yes!"

His kindergarten experience amazed us. Slowly our shy, timid boy gained confidence and became more curious and assertive. His speech improved with the help of his loving teacher. He made friends and participated in daily activities. While developing emotionally and spiritually, he also developed mentally. He was becoming a very intelligent and self-confident little boy.

Both of our children spent their early years in the St. Anne program. Words can't describe the emotions we feel about their success here. Both children are confident, smart, caring, and loving because of their early childhood experience. They like returning to walk through the halls where they are still embraced by their teachers, administrators, and other staff. We appreciate St. Anne school and highly recommend it to families looking for an environment where teachers love children, the whole child really matters, and parents are involved.

—Laura Burnes, Parent,
St. Anne Early Childhood
Development Center,
Laguna Niguel, California

Wonderful diversity!

My daughter has attended this NAEYC-Accredited center for the last two years. I never cease to be amazed at the amount of knowledge she has stored in her brain. The diversity of the program is wonderful. The children are always doing something new and exciting. I couldn't be happier with where she is and the work that her teachers do over there. I'm so glad she has gained the skills she needs to succeed when she enters kindergarten.

—Laila Felthauer, Parent,
Bright Horizons at Southcentral Foundation
Employee Family Center,
Anchorage, Alaska

how much your girls already know! Amazing!"

REM's directors like to say it's because we're good parents. I think REM's teachers know the truth: we support them in all the learning taking place at REM. REM takes pride in providing experiences that make learning fun and easy for all its children. I wish more children could experience such a high-quality learning environment. What REM provides is the basis for long-term academic success. As parents we feel fortunate to have been a part of the program.

—Laura Dinehart, Parent,
REM Learning Center, Miami, Florida

Our daughters flourished

Miami-Dade County has lots of early learning centers. But few are of as high quality as the NAEYC-Accredited REM Learning Center. When our twin daughters, Elena and Olivia, turned 1, I needed to go back to work. To find a place for child care, an acquaintance suggested that we look at REM, despite the 20-minute drive from our home. In a tour of the school, we were immediately impressed by the facility, the materials in the classrooms, and the wonderful teachers in the infant room. Every time the twins moved to the next classroom, I worried about the "new" teacher and the "new" classroom they would face. I never thought it possible that every teacher

was excellent, and our daughters flourished.

This year the girls started kindergarten in a Miami-Dade County public school. The classroom is an extremely structured environment with a tough curriculum and ongoing assessments. Kindergarten today is not cutting and pasting. It's reading, writing, adding, and subtracting. For many children, I am sure this transition is overwhelming, but not for our two daughters. REM is an early learning center and our children learned. After two weeks in kindergarten, their teacher wrote us a note saying, "I am so impressed with