

Jessica Lussier

Years at Our School: 5 years

Title: Toddler Teacher

Education: Currently pursuing AS in ECE from Granite State College

Experience: 2005 – Present – The World Schools – Toddler Teacher
2001–2005 – Kids World Childcare –Toddler Teacher

Committees: Yearbook

Professional Involvement: NAEYC Member

Personal: Jessica resides in Nashua with her daughter, Zoe. In her free time, she enjoys taking walks with Zoe and has a passion for photography.

Educational Philosophy: I believe that each child is a unique individual, who needs a secure, caring and stimulating atmosphere in which to grow and mature emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially. It is my desire as an educator to help students meet their fullest potential in these areas by providing an environment that is safe, supports risk-taking, and invites a sharing of ideas. There are three elements that I believe are conducive to establishing such an environment, (1) the teacher acting as a guide, (2) allowing the child's natural curiosity to direct his/her learning, and (3) promoting respect for all things and all people.

When the teacher's role is to guide, providing access to information rather than acting as the primary source of information, the students' search for knowledge is met as they learn to find answers to their questions. For students to construct knowledge, they need the opportunity to discover for themselves and practice skills in authentic situations. Providing students access to hands-on activities and allowing adequate time and space to use materials that reinforce the lesson being studied creates an opportunity for individual discovery and construction of knowledge to occur.

Equally important to self-discovery is having the opportunity to study things that are meaningful and relevant to one's life and interests. Developing a curriculum around student interests fosters intrinsic motivation and stimulates the passion to learn. One way to take learning in a direction relevant to student interest is to invite student dialogue about the lessons and units of study. Given the opportunity for input, students generate ideas and set goals that make for much richer activities than I could have created or imagined myself. When students have ownership in the curriculum, they are motivated to work hard and master the skills necessary to reach their goals.

Helping students to develop a deep love and respect for themselves, others, and their environment occurs through an open sharing of ideas and a judicious approach to discipline. When the voice of each student is heard, and environment evolves where students feel free to express themselves. Class meetings are one way to encourage such dialogue. I believe children have greater respect for their teachers, their peers, and the lessons presented when they feel safe and sure of what is expected of them. In setting fair and consistent rules initially and stating the importance of every activity, students are shown respect for their presence and time. In turn they learn to respect themselves, others, and their environment.

For myself, teaching provides an opportunity for continual learning and growth. One of my hopes as an educator is to instill a love of learning in my students, as I share my own passion for learning with them. I feel there is a need for compassionate, strong, and dedicated individuals who are excited about working with children. In our competitive society it is important for students to not only receive a solid education, but to work with someone who is aware of and sensitive to their individual needs. I am such a person and will always strive to be the best educator that I can be.

**Excerpted from www.oregonstate.edu/instruct/ed416/sample.html*