

Marisa's Moment: From Doubt to Lead Teacher



Marisa, is a mother of four with a background in food service. She loved working with children but doubted her ability to succeed as a teacher.

That changed when she enrolled in the Child Development Associate (CDA) certification program and began participating in Pyramid Model training.

“I loved it,” she said. “Once I sent my kids to school, I decided to go back too.”

One of the biggest takeaways from her Pyramid Model training? How to connect with kids on their level, literally and emotionally. “I learned better ways to communicate, to calm, to show respect,” Marisa explained. “Now, instead of reacting, I get down to their level and ask, ‘What’s going on?’”

She applied this method with a student struggling to express frustration. “He was hitting,” she recounted, “so I knelt, spoke with him, and redirected his attention to something else. That moment remained with me.”

The CDA program provided Marisa with structure and support, especially through her cohort members and her mentor, Roberta Royce. “I’m a hands-on learner,” she said.

“Roberta was always there when I needed help. I wouldn’t have made it through without that accountability.”

Marisa can now lead her own classroom, something she once never thought possible. “At first, I was nervous to talk to families. Now I love it. I share strategies, I listen. I know how to support growth.”

Her advice to others thinking about the CDA?

“Go for it. Children depend on us, not just to teach ABCs, but to help them grow and get ready for life. They watch everything we do.”