



Lena's Leap: Leading With Confidence

A story of growth, confidence, and connection in the classroom

“Do it. It gives you confidence you didn't know you were missing.”

For years, Lena dreamed of becoming a lead teacher. She had the heart, the experience, and a deep love for her students. But without the required certification, she felt the role was out of reach. That changed when she decided to pursue her Child Development Associate (CDA) certification and participate in Pyramid Model training.

At first, she was nervous. Juggling work, life, and coursework felt overwhelming. With encouragement from her lead teacher, Steffanie Conlan, and her CDA mentor, Roberta Royce, she gradually found her rhythm. Online tools like ProSolutions made the portfolio process manageable—and, to her surprise, enjoyable.

One of Lena's biggest takeaways came through the Pyramid Model. She began to see children's behavior in a new light:

“Kids aren't naughty. They just need tools to regulate.”

This shift transformed her approach. She became more patient, more present, and more attuned to small moments of growth. “Before, I might've stepped in and done it for them,” she reflects. “Now, I guide. I encourage. I celebrate.”

One memory stands out vividly. A quiet child, usually watching from the sidelines, wanted to join a game but didn't know how. Lena offered a simple suggestion and watched with pride as the child bravely stepped forward.

“That moment of bravery meant everything,” she says.

But Lena's journey isn't only about what changed in her classroom. It's about what changed in her. “I'm 44, and for the first time, I feel confident,” she says. “I know how to support kids. I use the right language. I offer ideas. My co-teacher and I work as a team.”

Her personal story makes her professional growth even more inspiring. Lena is five-and-a-half years sober, a milestone she proudly claims. Addiction once took everything, but through strength and support, she rebuilt her life. Today, she is working full-time, married, and thriving in a career that fills her with purpose.

Her advice to others considering the CDA or Pyramid Model training is simple:

“Do it. It gives you confidence you didn't know you were missing. Being a lead teacher feels amazing.”

Lena's journey shows that the best educators are shaped not only by training, but by resilience, lived experience, and heart. For Lena, this isn't just a new chapter—it's a new beginning.

