

Marisa's Moment: Embracing Her Strength

A story of resilience, growth, and finding her voice as a teacher

Marisa, a mother of four with a food service background, 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 says. "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 explains.



"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 recounts, "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 says. "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."

Since passing her CDA in June, Marisa continues to bring her whole self to her classroom every day. She's a team player, a leader, and a powerful example of what happens when you believe in your own potential.

