

Insights for New Directors: Debbie Amaral

[Title and Credits]

My name is Debbie Amaral, and I'm the Director of Early Childhood Services for Maui Economic Opportunity, which is located in Maui, Hawaii.

When I became a director, I was fortunate that my supervisor was the previous Head Start director, and what I realized was -- right off -- in the very beginning, I wanted to take on new experiences and training. She pretty much told me to wait, and I couldn't understand why. As a new director, I think that the benefit that I had was to have someone who advised me to wait and not rush into things like trainings and things. There's new director trainings that's very valuable, but also there's others that if you don't have experience to connect the training to, you're pretty much lost. So, that's one thing that I would advise a new director is to be patient.

What inspires me is my passion to work with young children and families. I worked as a preschool teacher prior to coming in to the Head Start world, and, at that time, I had a strong passion in teaching young children.

When I came in to Head Start, I found myself in a world of new things, exciting things, and what made me the most impressed is the ability of families to overcome obstacles. And so, what makes me want to come to work every day is the fact that I know I'm making a difference in someone's life.

And what keeps me renewed is also to take care of myself. You need to go work out; you need to go take a break; if it's time for a vacation, get away, even if it's to stay at home. But you have to pause and reflect in order to be refreshed for the next day.

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