

## 50th Portal Video: Staff are the Heart of Head Start

[Music] [Opening Titles]

Sharon Yandian: From the very beginning, one of the smartest things the architects of Head Start did was to look to the community to employ the staff working with enrolled families and children. It was during these early days that Head Start administrators recognized the need to build the knowledge and skills of these newly employed, community-based staff members, by providing professional development opportunities.

Mary Ann Cornish: As new staff come into the career, it's important that they know it's hard work and it's serious. You have to take time and build in time for yourself and take care of yourself.

Maria Reyes: We enroll the children; there is a home visit done, before the children actually starts in our program. So, they go into their homes; they meet the children; they ask parents questions--helping us to know your child. That helps a lot to children; they see the teachers going to their houses, talking to their parents, interacting with them. And then, when they come to the center, they saw that familiar face.

Tracey Kneeland: We share information about their child's progress. We also have contact sheets that we write every day about what their child ate that day and what kind of things they are working on personally.

Steven White: We understand that our relationships and the success that we ultimately have here at the facility, heavily relies on the personal nature to which we interact with our families day to day.

Michelle Blowe: I tell myself, "You are not Superwoman who can save the world, but you are a super woman who can help families make positive changes by building positive, trusting relationships."

Sarah Sexton: The practices that we use are based on decades of research by individuals across, not only the country, but all over the world who have done work around supporting families.

Dan Bonior: Trusting yourself to take on these responsibilities is one tool that you can have in your toolbox, when things get a little difficult. But, it's also good to accept the idea that, as caring and as professional as you are, sometimes you might need some help. It's important to have a network of other professionals that you go to, when you need some information or advice. And, because you have good support, you know who to talk to and who to go to for resources and information.

Akua Femi Kouyate: The primary source and the primary teacher, actually, for children are the parents and their families, their communities. So, for caregivers, it's really important to connect with parents, families, communities in that way, by literally inviting them in, asking them to share their experiences and recognize, not only the differences, but some of the similarities--so that that can be addressed and then, everyone can be respected for what it is that they bring to that environment for the child.

[Music] [Closing Titles]

