

## 36th Annual National Head Start Training Conference Parent Interview: Yessenia Roserio

(link for viewing at end of transcript)

Jarma Wrihten: Hi Yessenia, we're happy to have you here today. And welcome to the Parent's Place at the ECLKC...  
Yessenia Roserio: Hello.

Jarma: ...which is the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. We would love to hear from you your story about your experience as a parent and a teacher in the home. And then just talk about some of the successes that you're having. I see here from your nametag, attending the conference, that you have been assigned to attend the Cultural Diversity and Family Engagement, Effective Classroom Strategies, Positive Discipline, A Day in the Life of a Preschooler, Scaffolding for Academic Success, Parent, and Creating a Nourishing Environment. Wow. And so I'm sure you're going to get to all of those, right?

Yessenia: Yes. Jarma: Okay. Yessenia: I will try.

Jarma: You will try. So what we'd like to do is just have you tell us how you have been the most important role model to your child or first and most important teacher. And what kind of things did you do in the home to support your child's learning? Just share your story.

Yessenia: I consider myself kind of a unique parent because before I had my kids I was a classroom teacher. So as soon as I had my kids I created a classroom within my home. I had the days of the week, the color charts, the number charts, the weather charts. So I was trying to model what I saw in the classroom. But now with my second child, she is a Head Start child. And having her in the classroom and experiencing me being part of classroom instead of me running the classroom and Emily is only two years old. And for her to go to my house and then when I say, "Okay girls. It's time for dinner. Let's clean up."

And she starts singing the clean up song. And she's only two. And she pretends to be Miss Javida. And she tells me I'm Miss Jacenya and I like that because then we say, "Clean up..." I no longer say, "Let's just clean up." We have to sing the songs and it's great. We go out on nature walks and she starts collecting rocks and sticks and she tells me, "I'm going to take this to Miss Javida for the science area." And it's great to me because not all kids get to know what a science area is. Jarva: That's right.

Yessenia: And the fact that she knows that is because she's in a Head Start program. Because my other daughter is not and you can see the difference. And since Emily's only two, we belong to the Early Head Start program. So everything we do in the classroom, we get to take it home and try it – the activities, they give you the items to take home and one of them was creating a butterfly. So the teacher did it and when I went home and put the paint on the paper and before I can even get to the second part, Emily was already on part three because she remembered that.

And it's just putting paint in the middle of the paper, closing it and smashing it and then opening it. But she did something better. She did two papers. She put it, smashed it, made the butterfly. But then she put dots of paint and told me that was the caterpillar before the butterfly from the Hungry Caterpillar book.

Jarva: Wow, so she's... Yessenia: And that to me is great. Jarva: ...creative. Yessenia: Because that's what Head Start is. Being here is just amazing.

Jarva: Well Emily sounds like she is a wonderful little girl – very creative... Yessenia: Yes. Jarva: ...and loves the arts. Yessenia: Yes.

Jarva: So you spend a lot of together-time activities with each other and it sounds like it from what you just shared if you were the parent who had to share one thing or some tips or thoughts with other parents, what would you say about

being involved and how Head Start has helped you become more involved and to become that role model or that parent as teacher?

Yessenia: Well just the fact that they have an Early Head Start program that invites the parent to come into the classroom to sit with their child, to read a book to their child, to go to the arts and craft area and create a project with your child that's the best to do because you're there. You're helping your kids learn to be in a classroom so that when Emily turns three, Emily will be able to follow the classroom routine. She will know what it is to listen to a teacher and when is circle time or play time.

But I was there with her helping her cope with the transition from being in a home to being in a classroom. So just being a parent outside of my home but in a kind of a third person because the teacher's the one teaching her, but I'm just helping her learn the information that's being provided, and attending meetings and being there.

Being part of the policy council, having something to say during an education committee meeting about what should be taught in the classroom, how should the teachers present that, I think is the best thing that Head Start has. That they allow the parents to have a voice and to count for something. Not just come, drop off your kid, and pick him up at the end of the day. No. How about you stay a little bit longer and let's see how we can teach this curriculum for the day. That to me is the best thing you can do as a parent, be involved.

Jarva: Okay, I love that answer. So every time I think about being involved, because we talked about the involvement as such...the impact for Head Start – and it was really the foundation for Head Start – the parents are the foundation. And then in your role as the teacher at home, can you get...just share because I want to kind of glean some ideas for some examples of some things that you actually do, like when the children, when your child, when Emily brings the book home, what are you doing to teach her new concepts or new skills?

Yessenia: Okay, what I started to do with Emily is that if she likes a book in the classroom, we borrow it from the classroom. We go home. At bedtime I tell her, "Remember that book we got from the classroom? Do you want to read it to me or do you want me to read it to you?" So she chooses to read it to me but it is based on what she heard during the day and then I'll just go in and read it back to her exactly as it's in the book. But she'll then tell me, "No, Mommy. That's not what the dog does. The dog runs under the bed to look for Spot."

And it's just something that we do and we start creating our own stories based on the book. And it's great because it's something that you're not only teaching them about literacy but also to use their imagination. So we like to borrow books from the classrooms to bring back home and we pretend that we are in the classroom because we sit on the floor and we fold our legs. And it's a whole little classroom activity, but in my house. Jarva: So do you feel you've been a real major influence in her life?

Yessenia: Oh, yes. Yes. I was glad to be accepted into the early program because she was too attached to me, and me being able to leave her for like an hour because they were helping me help her transition from not being with mommy all the time. And walking out of that classroom and closing that door was hard, but now when I go back she doesn't even look my way. She's sitting with the teacher having a real good intera...and that was not Emily in September.

Jarva: Wow. Yessenia: Emily would cry for that whole hour that they took me out of that classroom. Jarva: So you've seen some real positive... Yessenia: Yes. Jarva: ...strides, some really good growth and...

Yessenia: Yes. Jarva: ...development and maturation. Yessenia: Everyone has seen it. Everyone comes to the classroom to see Emily because everyone got to hear Emily down the hall crying for her mommy. So that to me is just amazing. I'm here for a whole week. She's not with me.

Jarva: Wow, that's a beautiful milestone. Yessenia: Yes. Jarva: And you're seeing some developmental milestones. Yessenia: Yes.

Jarva: So in closing why don't...if you had to, let's say, tell us...what would you like to see Head Start become in the future? What do you think Head Start should be in the future?

Yessenia: Head Start needs to close the gap on their financial deficit. The only way we can do that is by letting our politicians know that we need more money. We need to be able to function within the means that we need to function. Programs need to get the financial help that they need. They need to bring in more programs, more hands-on activities for the kids and do more community outreach.

Let's bring in our libraries. Let's bring in our dentists and our WIC programs into our schools so that the parents can know what's available to them. But most importantly, let's bring in the education outside of the classroom. How can a parent get an education while their kids are going to school because that to me is very important. Get a higher education so when your kids get out of Head Start, you know exactly how to coach those children to continue to love education.

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-- Permalink for viewing (requires Flash and JavaScript)

<http://videos.sorensonmedia.com/HEAD+START/000344-Yessenia+Roserio+Parent+Interview-2009-SD360p/598e9f98A85fet486f9b8b1k0f759a85f356>