

(links for viewing and download at end of transcript)

Jarma Wrihten: Okay. Greetings, Antonette, and welcome to the ECLKC's Parents Place. We're happy to have you today and really excited about hearing your story about a Parent-as-Teacher in the home. So, to get you started, I'd like you to share with me a little bit about yourself and your child in Head Start, and then tell us how you support your child's learning in the home, like what kinds of fun things you do , where you go, you know -- all of the excitement about it, how long you've been involved.

Antonette Coleman: Okay. Well, I'm a mother of three, and actually none of my kids are in the Head Start, but they have attended Head Start before. My oldest is nineteen. I have a sixteen-year-old, and I have an eleven-year-old. I'm in the program this year for my four-year-old nephew. His name is Julio. His mother's in the service, and I'm kinda like helping her out. I'm also on the Policy Council for VCU Head Start/Early Head Start, so the Auntie replacing the mother, but not replacing the mother, but helping the mother out.

Jarma: Caregiver, guardian.

Antonette: Right. So, well, the program is great, just with him coming home, telling me what he's learned, or going over what he's learned. It's kinda funny, you can be riding in the car, or when he gets off the bus, they'll be singing songs, or he'll be going over some of the stuff he have, or he'll say, " Oh, Auntie, I got homework, I got homework, you going to help me do my homework?"

So, the counting, learning A-B-C's, or different things, it's kind of amazing to see how fast a kid will pick up on different things. So, even with just listening to you, or listening to other kids, it's kinda good. And then, he has a one-year-old brother that is following behind him, singing the songs and repeating different stuff so, it's kinda hard.

Jarma: So for together-time, because you mentioned he has the one-year-old brother, you spend a lot of time together? Do they spend a lot of time together? What do you do to help their development?

Antonette: Yes, if they're sitting down playing with different objects, the youngest one will end up counting to the brother that's in Head Start, and he'll sit and tell him "No, that's not right, that's not right." Well, I'm like, "Okay, don't tell him that, help him out," or either let's do it together and explain the colors, and when he gets dressed, helping him sort out his clothes.

And he's real independent, so he'll get out and pick out his things, and he picks them all and everything looks perfect. So, when we go to different activities, I let him pick the activities out, as far as -- we had a bowling for the fathers, and as I said, he's four -- he bowled by himself. He picked his ball up, when he knocked down the pins, he would strike a pose, and be like, "Yes, I got all of them," and sit and count them as they were falling. So...

Jarma: So, they're getting a lot of that physical activity in there, and learning how to use those large muscles, as well as building those cognitive skills while they're doing the bowling activity, which is all a lot of fun. Antonette: Yes.

Jarma: So, if you had to share with me, how do you feel -- what would you say is the one thing that Head Start has done to help you, promote your ability to become a better teacher-in-the-home as Auntie, the caregiver, as well as the parent of the former Head Start children?

Antonette: Well, they have a lot of involvement -- going into the class, reading, bringing activities home, taking them to the library, going to the library, just -- it's, it's helpful, it's real helpful. It's kinda hard to explain, but not hard to explain. It helps with transitioning, from the smallest to the oldest, and the youngest on down.

Jarma: Okay, and what advice would you give to other parents about being involved in Head Start and its importance as a parent? Antonette: Just get out and make sure they come and attend to see what their children are doing, to participate with the child, just to be there, and not push the child aside -- really pay attention to what they're telling them, and just help them out.

Jarma: And what kind of teaching tips would you share with other parents? Antonette: Humm... just... Jarma: Encourage reading, maybe?

Antonette: Yeah, just doing the reading, like if they have -- if you were doin' something at home, then get them to help you, instead of just having them sit out onto the sack... Telling them, "Let's work together, let's do this together," and count objects or helping them put things together, or let them put the things together, just put it out and say, "Okay, let's put this together, but let's put it together the right way." You can show them first, and then let them do their lil'... sad objects, so...

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<http://videos.sorensonmedia.com/HEAD+START/000015-Antonette+Coleman+Parent+Interview-2009-Year-SD360p/1e809f26Z0968n4b3esb7eak54f1e80212a4>