

(links for viewing and download at end of transcript)

Jarma WRIGHTEN: I'm happy when I see dads come out to be real instrumental in the lives of their children, and today, while we're here at the National Indian Head Start Association Director's Conference, we're interviewing parents to talk about their parents as teachers in the home stories. And so we'd like you just to highlight and spotlight, you know, some of the things that are significant to you in your role as a dad,...

...and how you support your child's learning, the fun things that you all do together to share together times, and then how Head Start might have been very valuable to you, and just some words of encouragement for other parents. So you told me that you had six children? Are they all in Head Start? Aldore Garcia: No. Jarma: Have they been through Head Start? Give us a little background.

Aldore: Well, four of my -- my youngest children -- you know, I have a two-year-old that's just graduating up to Head Start, she was in Early Head Start; I have a three-year-old that's going to the four-year-old group; and then I have a -- a five-year-old who just graduated Head Start; and then I have a boy that's in -- going to be a second-grader this year. So they all went through the Head Start Program, and, you know, in the beginning, I wasn't too aware of, you know, what the Head Start Program was all about.

Well, last year I got voted in as vice-chair of the Policy Council and wasn't too involved, you know, 'cause there is things that I wasn't involved in, so it was out of my hands. This year I was a chairman, and it was a whole different world about my involvement with my children, and just being aware of the different kind of things in the program. So, you know -- and Head Start's really helped me out with, you know, being involved 'cause I'm going on three years as T-ball coach. You know, I think I've got eight years with all my kids. [Laughter]

Yeah, so I'll be bumping in and out, you know, baseball and basketball and... So, you know, I'm pretty involved, and, you know, we do -- we do tons of events together. And it's just -- Head Start's really, you know -- it makes you aware of -- of -- of being a parent 'cause kids my -- parents my age are, you know -- they're -- they have no clue of, you know, what, you know, being involved is.

You know, they think just having a kid is, you know -- is being involved, a -- a parent, but it's not, you know -- there's -- there's a whole different realm to it on our ends. It's just, you know, really sad to see parents that -- that ain't involved, and you try to get them involved, but they just, you know, -- it's just sad that -- that -- they -- they're not involved.

Jarma: So you've started getting very emotional about involvement, or attached to the word involvement... Aldore: Yeah.

Jarma: ...because it's very important, and then you're -- as you do become more in tuned to Head Start -- the Head Start world, how has Head Start helped you to really realize that you had to be this teacher to your children? You're the parent, you're the teacher, you're the role model. What are some things you do to ensure that they are learning?

Aldore: You know, I -- I've -- well, traditionally, you know, our -- our Head Start teaches traditions, something that me and my wife were never, you know -- we were taught when we were young, but growing up we lost that -- you know, there was a -- a gap, you know, that we -- we -- we weren't involved.

And so learning, you know -- seeing our kids learn, you know, like -- like my -- my three-year-old that's going into the four-year-old class, he -- he really picked up that, you know -- our language. And so he sings songs, and we're like, "Hey that's -- you know, that's weird," you know. And we -- we -- we see him talk to the language teachers, and

they're like, "That's our -- that's our number one student." So it's just really, you know...

...it's -- it's really weird to see, you know, your kid getting involved without you, and you're like, "Wait, you know, my kids see -- believe in me. I better get, you know -- get on point and, you know, catch back up." So, it's just really, you know, the fact that, you know, you've got to just say, you know, "I gotta do it," you know. I -- I can't -- I can't be left behind, you know? I can't let my kid out -- outshine me, you know? I got to -- I got to step up, you know.

So, you know, just the whole fact of stepping up, doing the unknown, is really hard, you know. 'Cause me and my wife, we -- we've taught ourselves how to make outfits, we've, you know, taught them how to be gatherers, how to be fisherman, how to be hunters, and so, you know, the whole point of, you know -- our parents didn't teach us that, you know? They know that, but they -- they haven't shown us that, so the whole fact that we've learned at the same time our -- our kids are learning, you know. They -- they think, you know, we know it all, but we don't, you know? So it's just that.

Jarma: And -- and -- and, I mean, you said a whole lot because, while you didn't get the experiences, you know that the children are wanting to learn those things, and as a part of your tradition, you know, they're inheriting the things from you, which is -- which is really beneficial in the long run. And if you had to really think about how you would share these experiences with others, what kinds of things would you tell other parents? You're going -- you've gone through this now, so what kinds of words of advice would you give to other parents?

Aldore: Just stick with it, you know? I was at a powwow once, and I said -- they go, "Well, that's pretty good! You're getting your kids to learn how to -- how to dance and stuff." And they said, you know, "It's going to be hard. You're going to hit a lot of walls, and you're going to -- going to try to give up, but don't."

You know, just stick with it, and in the end, your kids will, you know -- they'll just snap like that and they'll know, and we've seen it. And it's just the whole fact of, you've hit that wall. Well, you have to keep pushing past that wall, you know. You're going to -- you're going to get there sooner or later, you know. You might not see the results right now, but further on down the line, you know, it'll -- you know your kids will make you proud. [Chuckles] So...

Jarma: Mm hmm, they sure will. So, now, you said there's one of -- one of the children transitioning to kindergarten. How do you feel that you and your wife have prepared him for that, as being the parent and the teacher in the home?

Aldore: It just -- you know, I -- I don't see no -- my kids ain't, you know -- they ain't shy in no way. They're really outgoing, you know -- more rowdy than outgoing, but they -- they, you know -- they're -- they're willing to take on anything, you know. They -- they're not those students that, you know, sit in the back, you know, that just stand in the shadows. They're -- they're -- they're students that are willing to take on anything. And they are proud to bring home work and stuff like that, so...

Jarma: So they're -- they're -- he's going to be pretty ready. I can see that he's outgoing. You're really outgoing...

Aldore: Mm hmm. Yeah.

Jarma: ...and that's a great spirit to have. So we want to say thank you today, because it takes a lot, and your involvement, it seems like it's the strength of really building that foundation for preparing your child for the next level, or the children for the next level. And the more you're involved, the more they're in tune to, you know, what's going for happen to them in the future.

Your attitudes, your beliefs, your knowledge, your support, your love, and your caring and kindness will transcend into everything, you know, that they need in order to be successful in life.

-- End of Video --

-- Premalink for viewing (requires Flash and javascript)

<http://videos.sorensonmedia.com/HEAD+START/000004-Aldore+Garcia+Parent+Interview-2009-Year-SD360p/c7f0e5det45d9X4c69Ja5a3g2c6d9e6fd707>