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Jarma Wrihten: Well, welcome. Delvonía Murphy: Thank you. Jarma: And how are you today, Delvonía? I'm happy that you made it. We talked about it in the session and you all were so excited to be here with us.

Delvonía: Absolutely. Jarma: So welcome to the Parent's Place at the ECLKC,... Delvonía: Thank you.

Jarma: Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, and today we're going to talk a little bit about your role as parent is teacher in the home. So I would like you to share with us about some of the fun things that you all do together, talk about how you support his or her learning at home, and just go for it.

Delvonía: We have a calendar that is provided by the Head Start program, and it has on it a curriculum for each of the 30 days in the month and we follow that. Some of the activities in there include cooking, or we may be picking up leaves. So we have activities for both indoors and outdoors. I support my child's learning when we're on shopping trips. And one of her favorites is to cook with me, and I'll allow her to fill up measuring cups or measuring spoons, and she gets to stir ingredients. And that's how we have together time, as well.

Jarma: And I bet she enjoys it because, like all little girls, an Easy-Bake Oven was a favorite, as it was for me. Do you have those kinds of things at home? Or you just make it -- keep it really natural where she's engaging in the kitchen and she has her own ideas about her ingredients and -- and -- et cetera?

Delvonía: My daughter is a taster. She likes to taste all the seasonings in the cabinet, and I allow that to facilitate her learning, as well. I think through that she gets to learn what combinations work, although she may not understand it, you know, fully at this point. And we don't have an Easy-Bake Oven; we use our real oven and I supervise. I may allow her to place items onto the shelf in the oven, but I help her with taking them outside of the oven, and I also let her assist me in adjusting the temperature.

Jarma: Well that's a good way to learn how to cook first-hand with mom. Delvonía: Yes. Jarma: And that -- that has to be a lot of fun. So now you're in Head -- your child's in Head Start, and you said she's four, right? Delvonía: She's four.

Jarma: And so when she gets ready to transition, that's going to be a big step for you. And so what I'd like to know is, as a parent now, you have been involved in Head Start for how long? Delvonía: This is my first year involved in the Head Start program. Jarma: So first year. Are you in the role of Policy Council or...? Delvonía: I am the Policy Council representative for Lancaster.

Jarma: And how has that role been -- been for you? Are you comfortable? I mean, what makes it unique and fun? Delvonía: It's a role that I'm learning as I go and my experiences thus far have been tremendous, and they are fun. I get to interact with the parents and with children and even the site -- the site representatives and the teachers. So it's -- it's enriching.

Jarma: Okay, I bet. So now that you said you've been in Policy Council -- 'cause I had to find that out -- have you felt like your leadership role has increased some? Is it helping you take it to the next level in terms of developing your personal and professional goals?

Delvonía: I believe that it is. The -- being on the Policy Council affords me the opportunity not only to represent and work with the parents, it affords me the opportunity to learn more and to be more involved in the different areas of Head Start. And I've learned that it's more than just picking up an application and enrolling your child in school.

There are actually a lot of things that go on at the grantee offices and in different areas of the community. And we've had opportunities to attend conferences where parents can be trained -- such as this one -- and in that ways I'm -- I'm growing, and I'll be able to take that information back to parents and to our community.

Jarma: Excellent. And so you do the -- you -- you attended some of the sessions this week... Delvonía: Yes. Jarma: ...and what -- which ones helped you in terms of becoming effective in your role as a parent and a teacher?

Delvonía: The one that I think has been most effective is the governance training. That is -- that has allowed us to be able to understand better what our role is and what is expected. I enjoyed all of the seminars and so it may be difficult to pick just one favorite. Another one I really enjoyed and that I appreciated being available was by Tomi's Reyes. His involvement -- and it involves the fathers, because I think the fathers don't realize exactly how important their role is in their child's development, especially at the Head Start stage.

Jarma: Excellent. And so what advice would you give to other parents now, because we kind of bridged on parent as leader as well as parent is teacher in this conversation -- so what advice would you give to other parents in -- from both perspectives?

Delvonía: I strongly recommend that parents of every culture and any family makeup, whether it's single parent or you have two-parent families or even the extended families, that as many family members as possible become involved. Don't just pick up the application and enroll your child in school. Take the time to become involved; volunteer in the classroom. I recommend that when there's opportunities to attend PAC meetings and Policy Council to be on those committees and everything -- that people become as involved in their child's early education as possible.

Jarma: Okay, and you just said PAC meetings; what is -- what's PAC meetings? Delvonía: The PAC meetings are the -- the Parent Action Committee, and we have those once a month, at least at our site. They're held once a month and everybody is invited. Parents can come, teachers can come, and of course, there are Head -- Head Start staff there. And usually the Policy Council representatives are there, as well as the president, vice president, and those other positions.

Jarma: All right. Delvonía: And the parents have a chance on a open communication forum. If they have any concerns, they can voice their concerns there at the meeting. So they have an opportunity to be really involved.

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