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Jarma Wrighten: Hi, Gil; I'm gonna to call you Gil for short. Guilbaldo Aguilar: No problem.

Jarma: Welcome to the Parent's Place at the ECLKC. I'm glad you made it today because, you know, I was really interested in getting my fathers here. And so we're going to get started right away with having you to share how you got interested in becoming a part of the father involvement community of Head Start, and a little bit about your role as policy council and that involvement.

Gil: Okay, the main reason that I am here is cause my two-year-old was referred, you know, to Early Head Start, and at that time I wasn't working 40 hours. So I was working three hours a week -- I mean, three days a week, and that was the reason, you know, that I have time to spend, you know, doing some volunteering time, you know, at the Head Start in Carlsbad. So I was doing this for about three months, and I was offered, you know, to -- to attend a conference up in Washington, D.C. back in June...

...and -- as a parent. And I did; and I bring a lot of information, you know. I actually got a lot of parent involvement information at that conference and I had a good report, and I did this to my center director and -- and the rest of the Head Start directors. So I was offered, you know, a position that they had open, which was a parenting -- I mean, a parent involvement coordinator, and that was the way that I got into it. I was enrolled in college.

I went back to college through CDI Head Start, and I'm still taking some classes at college. I'm -- I'm still going to -- I'm gonna get six credits more at college this coming -- end of December, and I'm still -- I'm still gonna go, you know, 'til I reach my Bachelor's degree or something.

Jarma: I am proud of you. That's a major milestone. So you have done all of those, and you said your child was in Early Head Start and that's what spurred your interest. So what are some of the things that you have done to really build the quality time with your child? You know, you've been -- you're a father and so you have to spend a little bit extra time to be involved. What are some things that you all do together to make those times really special?

Gil: Well, I have -- I've got -- I have a total of four kids. I have a 19-year-old who barely start her third semester in college; she went to a Head Start. And, you know, my 12-year-old -- my 12-year-old boy, he went to the same Head Start, both of them. And I finally -- after eight years, I went back to the same Head Start place, you know, and I feel like at home and -- and I see some of the teachers, you know, still working there, you know, with a different position and everything and I -- that makes me, you know, feel, you know, like -- like something that I have to do.

Plus, you know, I've got some experience, you know, with my four kids, working with kids. I got some experience working with fathers 'cause I'm involved in an -- in a organization that, you know, it's related to parent's recovery, so I know how to talk to parents. I attend some of the meetings -- the parenting meetings, every month meetings. So I talk to -- encourage them, you know, to spend more time with the kids.

How important, you know, it is for a father to -- to be there, how important it is, you know, for the children, you know, for the father to be there -- the male figure, how important it is, you know, in the lives grow up, you know, the development. Jarma: So what advice would you give to other fathers about being involved in their child's life and also being involved in Head Start -- how would you get them in?

Gil: Well, the -- one of the things that I like, you know, to say, it's the fathers usually were the providers and because we provide, you know, house, clothes, food, any -- any other stuff -- that's not -- that's not it. We need to spend time with our kids. We need to find out the right time, during the week or -- or the weekend, you know, to spend time with them. Then they can be, you know, more secure of their selves, you know, in the future.

It is prove, you know, through statistics that children that had any free time, you know, any amount of free time with the parents, you know, during their development time that, you know -- between two and six -- they do better, you know, in the future when they're teenagers.

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