

## 36th Annual National Head Start Training Conference Parent Interview: Hilary Deans

(links for viewing and download at end of transcript)

Jarma Wrihten: Greetings, Ms. Hilary, we're glad you're here today. Hilary Deans: Thank you, Jarma.

Jarma: And welcome to the Parents Place at the ECLKC, which is the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. We're happy that you're offering your time to be a part of this opportunity to share your Parent-as-Teacher in the home stories. We want to hear about your successes, and experiences that you and your child have together, so we'd like to have you start off with giving us a little information about yourself, and tell us about your child and which Head Start Program, and then we'll get into a conversation.

Hilary: Okay. My name is Hilary, as I've said, I have a daughter. Her name is Havelin, she's four years old, and she goes to the Waring Head Start Program in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Jarma: Okay, so she's one of those real excited young ladies. Hilary: Always, yes. She loves her classroom, and her teacher is Miss Cory, and she can't -- she looks forward to going to school every day. Every day, Saturdays and Sundays, she asks me, does she have school today?

Jarma: Wow. That's really excitement. So, tell us then, how do you feel Head Start has supported your ability to have your child learn at home? Like, what kinds of things would they give you, so that you can help your child learn at home, and that way you're that real influence of his or her life?

Hilary: Her teachers are very supportive. They always are handing out materials that compliment whatever they were learning that week, for us to take home -- umm, little 'word cards' and things like that. All of the recipes, and activities that they may have done during the week, they send home with the children, so you're able to continue to use those materials and build on them.

Jarma: Okay. And then, how do you feel that you've been that support for your child? Like, you are the first, and most important teacher. As we know, research says that quite a bit, that the home is the learning environment and there's lots of fun things that you can do. What are some things -- together-time that you do at home, to share?

Hilary: Well, they recently had "A hundred book challenge" at our school. So, they will come home with books every day -- two books -- so we would sit down and read those. And it got to the point where my daughter would get the same books and bring them back home, so she could read them to us. Also, she -- her vocabulary has improved greatly. I picked her up from school one day and she said: "Mommy, I want to be a meteorologist." I said, "What's that?" She said, "That's the person that does the weather." And I said, "Well, where did you learn that?"

She said, "In school." She said, "I was the weather girl for the day." She said, "Well, that's what I want to do". And I was really surprised, because that's a big word for a little child, but that's how the teachers are -- they give them the big word and then they give them a word that they can relate to and use every day.

So, that what she wants to do -- she wants to be a weather girl, because that's the job that she picks every day. We get up, she watches the news, she watches the weather, and then she tells everybody at home what the weather's going to be for the day, whether we need an umbrella, or a jacket.

Jarma: I think I need her in my home. Hilary: So, that's something that, I can say that come straight from Head Start.

Jarma: Wow. So, that an impressive commentary from a little girl her age, to be a meteorologist. So, if you had to share with other parents, about Head Start and your involvement, what would be some kinds of the things that you would share with them? Because you are that teacher, and your involvement in Head Start has done what for you?

Hilary: Well, being part of the Policy Council -- the parent in my school elected me to be the representative on the

Policy Council, so just doing that has me build my leadership skills. I enjoy going to the meetings, going to the conferences, sending all that -- bringing all that information back to the parents. The Head Start program really supports personal growth for parents, a lot of programs, and other helpful information, job opportunities, educational opportunities that I wouldn't have known about if I wasn't involved in Head Start.

Jarma: So that -- what advice would you share -- or several thoughts or tips -- would you share with other parents about being the teacher-in-the-home, being the role-model for your child? What kinds of things would you share with them?

Hilary: I think it's really important to stay involved. You can get involved, but you have to stay involved with your child's education. You have to volunteer, it's very important to volunteer. Just volunteering will support to the teaching staff that are there with the children every day.

It doesn't take a lot to just show up, you may just come for lunch time -- with the joy that you see on the children's faces when there are other parents, not necessarily their parents, but just another parent in the room, is so rewarding just to see that. So I would encourage all parents to get involved, and stay involved in your child's education -- you have to.

Jarma: Okay, so then, I guess my final thought is, Head Start is such the foundation for, you know, so many children, and what would you like to see Head Start become in the future?

Hilary: I would just like to see the program grow. I would like to see more money put into Head Start, so we could have more programs for the children, more programs for the parents. I think the parents volunteering and showing up means more to Head Start than just using us for a babysitting service for the day. I think that that's important.

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<http://videos.sorensonmedia.com/HEAD+START/000134-Hilary+Deans+Parent+Interview-2009-SD360p/8b0f6841190f0741c92b2e2fef262d6bc22>