

## Interview questions

Interviewee: Mary Robinson: Hastings Community Child Care program director

Interviewed by: Jacquelynn Dufour: student at Humboldt State University

**Jacquelynn** : How long have you worked with grade school children?

**Mary**: I have been working with kids for 17 years. I started as a peer professional at a middle school, and then worked at an elementary school which is where I decided that I liked working with that age of children best. In 1996 I went to daycare and have been here since.

**Jacquelynn**: How long have you been in the position of program director?

**Mary**: I have been the director now for 3 years. The first two were as acting director and the last year has been as full director.

**Jacquelynn**: When creating a lesson plan or activity what building blocks (models) do you find necessary to incorporate; ie. are there specific questions/steps that should be asked/taken and answered to ensure positive feedbacks?

**Mary**: I believe that the most important thing to think about is to make sure that what you are doing engages. Ask what they are interested in and go from there. If you go in with a theme that kids don't like they become disengaged because they have no interest, then you know that you fail because you are not teaching anything. You need to know their interest first.

**Jacquelynn**: What have you found to be the best method for ensuring that grade school children are retaining the message/lesson being delivered?

**Mary**: I believe that the best method is to make sure that your lesson plan is fun. You need to make learning fun because that is when they listen best and are most engaged.

**Jacquelynn**: Do you find hands on activities beneficial to the learning process when dealing with large groups of children or does that cause chaotic tendencies and short attention spans?

**Mary**: I believe that hands-on learning is the best way to teach. When kids are engaged they are more apt to learning. You will get chaos no matter what with learning but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

**Jacquelynn**: How do you establish behaviors or actions that will be followed through or carried out at home as well?

**Mary**: I don't really care what happens at home because at home, as a society, moms and dads are very busy so a lot of the time the kids are here with us most of day. Chaotic tendencies at home make it hard to expect parents to instill those actions. You learn to adapt with that. What's important to me is what

they learn here. I have experienced it where if you send a backpack home with a book for a month the book comes back and it doesn't get read, so you don't do that anymore.

**Jacquelynn:** What do you find to be the best method for breaking up the monotony of "lecture" time; ie. how do you keep things interesting and keep their attention spans?

**Mary:** The only time I really try to do lecture time is when I need to. I want them to be engaged in other things while I am talking

**Jacquelynn:** When creating a lesson plan should you stick to one aspect of a topic or try to cover the bigger picture? More specifically, in my case, we are talking about minimizing waste and recycling. Should we also go broader and address things like what the environment provides for society, global warming, and the effect people have on the environment?

**Mary:** I would zone in on what is relevant at the time. They don't really care about the later effects at this time. Technology has made kids lose interest in things far down the road. Kids understand the topic more when you are presenting in concrete examples. Keeping it important to keep it to what they know is the best method.