Training in Action: Rose’s Story

When she was 61, Rose Ebner decided to return to child care after a 20-year break. She opened Akron’s Once Upon a Daycare in late 2016. She’s now in the process of changing its name to Once Upon a Childcare, after learning about the early childhood concept that we care for children, not days.

When Rose started her latest journey, she was skeptical about just how different early childhood practices are now, and especially about Step Up To Quality requirements. But she’s since embraced the changes. She’s enthusiastically in favor of developmentally appropriate practices, and she values learning about the conditions young children need in order to thrive.

In the past year, Once Upon a Daycare earned its first Step Up To Quality star, thanks to Rose’s hard work and guidance from Early Childhood Specialist Tina Lemon. Rose is a huge advocate for her staff as well; she’s taking Child Development Associate (CDA) classes right alongside three of her staff members. When her first staff member began the classes, she started improving her lesson plans and classroom environment accordingly. Rose was astonished to see that classroom become a model for others.

The children eagerly seek out the quiet reading nooks and designated science area. A toy and puzzle rotation system reduces overstimulation and enhances play and learning. Dramatic play areas with dress-up vests spur imaginative play. The children have responded positively and naturally to the improvements. The staff members are excited and motivated to continue the work.

Rose is encouraging all her teachers to earn their CDAs, and she’s making sure the center as a whole continues to improve. She’s even installed a SMART Board that keeps parents updated on the center’s progress toward earning three stars, which is her most ambitious goal yet.

Tina sees Rose’s story as a true testament to the Early Childhood Resource Center’s power to enhance the lives of providers, and in turn, the families they serve.

What is the CDA?
The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a nationally recognized early childhood credential. For many early educators, the CDA is the foundation of a lifelong career. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), “obtaining a CDA is an important accomplishment and one that develops well informed practitioners, knowledgeable in child development and best practices for teaching young children.” In Ohio, a child care center can only enter the state’s Step Up To Quality rating system if at least half of the staff members have a CDA.

Since 2000, the ECRC has provided CDA classes, mentoring, coaching, and support to hundreds of students. For more information about CDA classes, visit ecresourcecenter.org