

Patty Malone

Patty Malone is an Early Care and Education professional for the Northwest Arkansas Family Child Care Association in Fayetteville. She holds a BSHE from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. She is also an affiliate with the National Association of Family Child Care. Patty has served in the early childhood field for over 27 years as a teacher, director, home based educator, trainer, and child care food program monitor. Patty has helped improve the quality of care by educating providers on nutrition. Debbie Jo Wright says, "She brings sunshine and laughter wherever she goes and maintains quality standards in training and programs." Marietta Baltz adds, "Over the years she has built solid relationships with the homes she serves as well as with the professional community." During the 1990's, Patty helped develop a mentoring program to help family child care homes become Nationally Accredited in Northwest Arkansas. Lisa Wood says, "Patty has been an inspiration to me in my child care career, and I know that because of her, I will always strive to be the best child care provider I can be." Patty has also worked with the Division of Child Care on curriculum. Patty comments that her vision for the early childhood field in Arkansas is that "All children have access to quality care." Tammy Rowland exclaims, "Patty feels more like family than my food sponsor."

Natasha Crosby

Natasha Crosby is an Early Care and Education professional at the Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center in Bentonville. She holds a Bachelor's of Science in Human Development and Family Studies. She is currently completing a Master's Degree in Child Development at the University of Arkansas. Some of Natasha's early childhood professional involvement include: Historian, Vice President, and President for the NWAECA. She started her journey in the classroom and has moved her way up to become the Program Coordinator for the Early Initiative Center. Once she completes her Master's Degree, she will assume the role as Master Trainer and Communication Manager. Natasha has a desire to impact the lives of children by educating and challenging individuals through training. Danielle May exclaims, "Natasha provided 167 hours of training to over 1,800 early childhood professionals in 2011." Michelle Stephens says that "Natasha quickly moved up the ranks due to her desire to learn, synthesize information, and implement skills gained in the classroom." Mindy Thompson exclaims, "Natasha shows enthusiasm is all that she does and through that enthusiasm is able to encourage professionals in the field to raise the bar to impact children." Natasha has the desire to educate and empower professionals through training. She hopes that the caregivers can go back into the classroom and facilitate learning to allow the children to develop at their own pace. Natasha states that her personal philosophy of early childhood care and education is that "She believes that the care and education of young children must include opportunities to succeed, and to fail; to try new thing, and to feel comforts of home; to learn how people are different, and how we are all distinctive creations; and to understand and be held to appropriate limits, while knowing they have the acceptance of a loving adult."

Carol Chase

Carol Chase is a toddler teacher at the Infant Development Center, a licensed Better Beginnings 3 star center, in Springdale. In addition to being a toddler teacher at the center for over 25 years, she has been a mentor to the students at the University as well. She holds a B.S. in Early Childhood and a M.S. in Home Economics-Human Development. Mardi Crandall says, "Carol truly understands the power of mentoring; she has been an inspiration to hundreds of students, some of them changing their life's career after witnessing the difference Carol Chase has made to the children in her class." Carol loves to work with children and is delighted to be connected to the children's families. She dedicates her time and puts forth a tremendous effort to meet her goal with the child's best interest at heart. She works very closely with the parents, and the parents value her commitment. Carol has said, "I don't plan to retire. I love my job and plan to rock a baby one day and die the next." Vernoice Baldwin adds, "Carol is a very giving person and looks for the best in all." Students are amazed by her demeanor to manage her classroom in developmentally appropriate ways. She is a member of AECA/SECA and also gives presentations at various early childhood conferences in the state to share her expertise. Mardi Crandall states "Her sessions at the AECA meeting are always standing room-only." Jennifer Henk adds, "Carol's single-minded focus of acting on behalf of children is infectious-she sets the high standard for colleagues and students."

Bernita Glass

Bernita Glass is the Director for the Mid Delta Community Service Inc. in West Helena. She oversees eight child care centers. All are Head Start programs that have a 2 star status with Better Beginnings. She has her Associates of Arts from Phillips Community College. She is currently working on her Bachelors of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education through Arkansas Technical University in Russellville. She began her career as a home visitor for the Mid Delta Community Service Inc. Bernita has made many contributions to parent involvement and awareness of Head Start since the 1980's. She places a high value on the importance of proper education. She made arrangements for her staff to take online classes to further their education. In 2010, she worked toward achieving Quality Approval and was successful. Robyn Doyle says, "Ms. Glass is a naturally caring person with a strong, caring foundation who consistently demonstrates a solid service commitment towards children, parents, staff and community." Bernita has a noticeable impact on her community through her contributions of service. She encourages parents to go back to school and helps assist families with housing needs. She is an advocate and truly wants to see others succeed. Bernita's personal philosophy of early childhood care and education is that "Helping families and children become self-sufficient is the key to helping them be ready to face tomorrow's uncertainties."