

JANUARY 2022

# VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Little Hearts Child Care



## Navigating the World of Early Childhood - A Leader's Perspective



DELAWARE INSTITUTE FOR  
Excellence in  
Early Childhood

*Written by Lin Nordmeyer*

---

**“All of us have a sphere of influence. We have to be accountable for our influence. I am intentional about using my influence, and it all starts with the children.”**

*Lori Reed, program administrator*

---

Lori Reed has been working in early childhood education for her 30 - year career. Like many in the field, her passion is educating and caring for young children. What started as a summer camp position when she was 15-years-old, has evolved into a journey of discovery and learning about "what young children can absorb."

Although Lori is currently an administrator at Little Hearts Child Care, located in Wilmington, Del., she has a set of leadership principles that has guided her work throughout her career.



*Little Hearts serves children ages infant to school age.*

---

**“At Little Hearts Child Care, we value learning, but we are aware of the power of our words.**

**Children will remember what they learn, but they will also not forget how they feel.”**

*Lori Reed*

---

“All of us have a sphere of influence,” said Lori. “We have to be accountable for our influence. I am intentional about using my influence, and it all starts with the children.”

“At Little Hearts Child Care, we value learning, but we are aware of the power of our words. Children will remember what they learn, but they will also not forget how they feel.”

Her approach with her staff is similar. “People don’t care about how much you know until they know how much you care,” adds Lori. “You have to earn trust and not demand it.”

Little Hearts Child Care program has embedded itself with the community using the same care and concern. Every year, the program does a spring neighborhood cleanup day, where three- and four-year-old students take a small trip outside to help clean up their neighborhood. During the holidays, Little Hearts partners with the non-profit Here2Help Association to provide toys to at-risk families in the community.

"I believe that our staff and their connection to the community we serve make our program unique. We don't just serve our community between 7:00 am to 5:30 pm. Our staff personally invest its time and energy well past business hours. They treat our families as if they were their own," said Lori.

Although there's a lot of heart at this program, this compassion doesn't overshadow adhering to policies and implementing best practices for children.

DIEEC Technical Assistant Nancy Hoffman supports this program and has been impressed by its pursuit of providing high-quality care to its children.

"Lori realizes that high-quality care is of the utmost importance," said Nancy. "For example, she recently worked hard to find a communication platform that was more effective in communicating with parents. She tried out several before finding the one that increased parents' responsiveness."

This change was just one of the many things on Lori's to-do list.

"I have learned that the strength of our program relies on paying attention to the details," concludes Lori. "Details show people that we care. It means something to people when you call their home when their child is out sick, it matters to families when we take the time to explain how much their presence in our program matters to us, it matters that we show families that it's not just about numbers, rules, and policies, but that it is about loving on their precious children."



*"All our staff members are leaders. I make an effort to point out their different leadership qualities."*

*Lori Reed*

