



CHILDCARE/PRESCHOOL



Teachers Under Contruction

by Melodee Simmons

Have you ever asked yourself this question: “Why do I want to work with young children?” Is it a job or a career? If it's a job, you do it for the money. If it's a career, you do it for the children.

You have the responsibility of helping to make children into the people they are going to be. Children spend more awake time with us than with their parents. Our job is to provide each child a secure, nurturing, educational child care experience that fosters self-discovery, a love of learning, and positive self-esteem.

Without security and nurturing, the educational part will not happen. In order to give the children what they need, you need to look at yourself first.

Are you taking care of yourself? Often we get so busy with work, family, friends, and other commitments that we tend to neglect our own needs. We wake up early and go to bed late. We eat on the run--and not always the healthiest foods. We forget how to relax, or we don't take the time to relax. We try to give to everyone else but we forget about ourselves. We need to take time to be sure we are at our best, so we can give our best to the children we teach.

“Do not neglect the gift you have ... practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1Timothy 4:14-16, ESV).

Take a minute to think about how you are doing.

Appearance – Do you try to look professional when you arrive at work? When you are dressed appropriately, you tend to feel different than when you are dressed too casually.

Job Performance – Do you take pride in doing the best job possible? When you are doing your best, you get a feeling of satisfaction that gives you motivation to keep on going.

Professional Development – Do you take the opportunity to attend training classes whenever possible? Do you discuss ideas or concerns with other teachers? Do you take continuing education courses? It is good to see other people who are doing the same job as yours. It lets you know you are not alone. Sharing ideas helps to keep you fresh and interested in what you are doing.

Self-reflection – Do you make time for yourself? Do you get enough sleep, eat right, take a walk, read a good book, visit with friends, etc.? Your health is important. If you are tired or not feeling well, you can't give the children your best. Remember the importance of daily personal devotions. This will help you recharge and keep in mind what is important.

Assessment –Do a self-evaluation of your performance. It is always good, but not always easy, to take an honest look at yourself. What are your strengths? Where are your weaknesses? What areas are you going to work on?

Develop Professional Goals – Develop long-term and short-term goals. (Where do you want to be in your profession in 1 year, in 5 years, in 10 years?) Write down the goals. Then think about what you need to do, step by step, to reach those goals. Occasionally look at your goals, and evaluate how you are progressing. Check off the steps you have completed. You will see your progress, and you can determine if you need to make any adjustments to your steps.

It is important to take care of yourself. You are an important part of the children's lives. They need you at your best in order for them to do their best.

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well” (3 John 1:2, NIV).

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