

## Interview with Reino Magico Day Care Director: Erika Liriano



### **Q1: Can you share your experience about using the Program Administration Scale (PAS) for your program since it was introduced to you as part of the Grow NJ Kids program?**

Using the PAS in my program has been very helpful in placing things into perspective. Since we are a smaller program, I didn't view our "small center" comparable to a Franchise or a Head Start. But using the PAS I realized that not only can the business side of my company run as a franchise, but our center can also provide quality care for our children, its families, and the community it serves. The quality of care given at the center is attainable by embracing family involvement and improving the way we teach our children, becoming more developmentally appropriate.

Also using the PAS, I can structure the program to encourage the staff in continuous professional development and guide incoming employees. This overall will help our program continue in achieving quality care for our children and their families.

### **Q2: Are there any specific subscale and items that really stand out for you? How did they help you to make changes in your program management? Can you elaborate on that?**

In the PAS subscale Program Planning and Evaluation, item 14 Program Evaluation really stood out. We understand how valuable family feedback can be to the program, but did not realize that staff feedback could also improve the quality of care.

Before PAS, our program ran a yearly survey asking parents to give us feedback. This year using the PAS, we have introduced two family surveys; one given in the beginning of the year asking parents on their expectations of the program and encouraging them to become involved. At the end of the year, we ask parents to detail their personal experience with our curriculum, our staff, the activities we do throughout the year, our forms of communication, and the center's environment.

We have also introduced 2 new staff surveys; one given in the beginning of the year to discuss expectations, goals, and classroom environment. And another at the end of the year to discuss meeting expectations, reaching goals, and what we can improve in classroom environment. During the year, we are meeting with the staff to discuss the progress of goals stated and how we can help them accomplish these goals.

Also, the PAS subscale Human Resource, item 1 Staff Orientation guided us in organizing how we manage staff recruitment, hiring, training, and staff professional development. On a recent hire, we

followed the guidelines it has stated regarding probationary period, monthly meetings, orientation of written policies in program, and receiving feedback regarding policies. Many of these steps were already taking place at the program, but there wasn't a clear policy written down. Based on the PAS, we were able to define these policies.

**Q3: How do you manage the budget for your program? Can you provide some tips that may help other programs?**

The program's budget is managed monthly. Before using PAS, encountering needs for the program was accomplished as a day to day expense. Now using the subscale Fiscal Management, item 12 Budget Planning, we have seen how important it is to plan and budget for the programs and assess each individual classroom needs.

In our program, using PAS we have created individual budgets for the Infant Classroom, Toddler Classroom, Preschool Classroom, and Afterschool Program. In the monthly budget, each sub-program has a line-item breakdown for expenses and resources. This helps manage the needs for each classroom and help create a projected operating budget for the next fiscal year.

**Q4: What suggestions do you have for the programs that may be willing to adapt to new business practice?**

The childcare business keeps you on your toes at all time. It not only entails taking care of children, but also their families, their extended families, your staff, and the community you serve in. It is daunting at times, yet very gratifying. It becomes hard staying open to change, when you feel that your day to day keeps you going a mile a minute. But I recommend every Director to keep an open mind when it comes to changes and especially new business practices that can not only improve your day to day challenges but increase the quality of your program.

I can only suggest for your program to become more flexible to properly reach the goals you have set, to accept changes in the market, and any challenges faced by the business. Being able to accomplish this flexibility means having access to the right tools to address each area. The PAS can be used to guide you in reaching your goal of providing quality care for children and running a healthy profitable business.

**Q5: Do you involve families in program planning and evaluation process? Can you provide some examples or steps you use to involve families?**

Our program believes family feedback is the stepping stone to becoming a quality center. We have a family survey that we hand out in the beginning of the year and towards the end. This year using the PAS, we have introduced two family surveys; one given in the beginning of the year asking parents on their expectations of the program and encouraging them to become involved. At the end of the year, we ask parents to detail their personal experience with our curriculum, our staff, the activities we do throughout the year, our forms of communication, and the center's environment.

The program takes this information and uses it to develop new programs or new procedures. In general meetings with our families, we address the overall concern that may come up and explain how we are going to tackle the problem. And we are always informing families, that if they have any questions, concerns, comments or suggestions throughout the year, to feel free to speak to the Director at any time.