



PlayTime = Learning Time

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Education Builds a Brighter Future
for Children and Their Families

November 2024

Dear Friend,

Twenty years ago, Teresa was a young mother who had recently moved to the United States from Mexico. With limited English skills, she felt uncertain about how to support her children's early development. Today, she has come full circle, working for Family ACCESS as a dedicated home visitor in the very same *ParentChild+* program that once supported her own family, helping others navigate similar challenges she once faced.

“Before receiving home visits, I didn’t understand the importance of playing with my children or reading to them,” Teresa shared. “In Mexico, we believed learning started when you go to school. But **through *ParentChild+*, I discovered that every moment with my young children could be a learning opportunity.**”

Teresa’s journey with Family ACCESS began in 2005 when she enrolled in *ParentChild+* with her oldest son Christopher. **The program sent bilingual home visitors who brought educational toys and books, teaching Teresa how to turn playtime into learning experiences.** When her second son Johnny started the program at age two, Teresa saw dramatic differences in his social-emotional development compared to Christopher, who had started later.

Teresa wanted to learn more for herself and her children. Family ACCESS referred Teresa to one of our community partners, an English language program for immigrant families. The program prepares children for kindergarten and provides English lessons to their parents, and Teresa attended the program with both her sons. Through this



“I feel so proud and grateful to do what I like to do.”

—Teresa

partnership, Family ACCESS also provides the *Raising A Reader* literacy program to this community partner, which helps parents develop, practice, and maintain home-based literacy routines essential for their children's success in school.

When Teresa graduated from the program, our Director of *Early Literacy Services* immediately recognized her potential as a home visitor. "I never imagined I could do this work since I don't have a degree," Teresa says. **"But what I learned is that you don't need a degree to make a difference in children's lives — you need passion, understanding, and the right support."**



These brothers thrive today thanks to the power of early childhood education.

Today, Teresa's dedication to education has borne fruit in her own family: she received her GED, both her sons have graduated high school, Christopher is attending a certificate program in massage therapy, and Johnny recently joined the Navy. Her young daughter is attending elementary school.

Debbie Brush, the Director of *Early Literacy Services* at Family ACCESS, shared: *"I felt so lucky to meet Teresa as a young mother and to watch her transformation into a confident, supportive super mom. I wanted Teresa on our Early Literacy Services staff because I saw her passion and compassion to help other parents learn how to give their children a chance for school success. Families receiving home visits with Teresa are very lucky to have her as a mentor and guide!"*

Now, Teresa uses her own experience to connect with immigrant families who remind her of herself. "As an immigrant, I understand how hard it is to be in a new country, learning a new culture and language," she explains. **"When families see that I was once in their position, they open their doors — and their hearts."**

One of Teresa's proudest moments was working with a boy with Down syndrome whose mother was hesitant to accept visitors. Because the mother knew Teresa from the English language program, she agreed to participate.

Through patience and dedication, Teresa helped the nearly nonverbal child learn to follow routines and communicate his choices, showing that

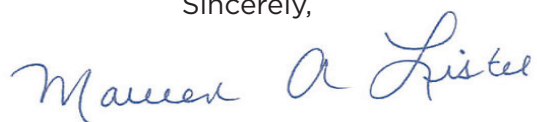
ParentChild+ can transform lives for all children.

When you support Family ACCESS, you make all the difference, ensuring that we are ready and capable of changing lives, two generations at a time. Every dollar you give helps Family ACCESS reach more families like Teresa's, creating ripples of change that extend across generations. With your help, we can continue breaking down barriers and building bridges to opportunities for immigrants and all families in our community.

Will you make a gift today to help write the next chapter in stories like Teresa's?

On behalf of the 7,800 individuals we served last year, thank you for being an integral part of the Family ACCESS mission.

Sincerely,



Maureen A. Lister

Executive Director, Family ACCESS of Newton

PS. **Gifts of all sizes make a difference.** Your donation will help ensure that more children have access to the resources they need to thrive. Please make a gift today at bit.ly/familyaccessofnewton

PPS. Teresa's full-circle journey reflects our commitment to inclusivity and diversity. **Will you help us bridge language barriers and ensure everyone receives the care and support they need?**

PPPS. **Donating through a Donor Advised Fund (DAF)** Please refer to our legal name, "Newton Community Service Centers," and EIN number, 04-2232418, when recommending a grant to our organization. Together, let's empower parents to become their children's strongest advocates!



Scan me to
make a gift
online

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

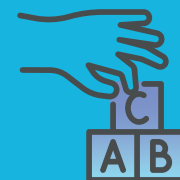
LAST YEAR, FAMILY ACCESS REACHED 7,800 INDIVIDUALS IN 25 COMMUNITIES:



488
Playgroups
held by
Early Literacy
Services



19
Average age of
a parent served by
Counseling &
Consultation Services



148
Children
enrolled in the
Early Learning
Center