

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Lovebug Lane Learning Academy *A Lesson Plan in Resiliency*

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Early care and education programs continue to define resiliency in their efforts to serve young children by adapting to the evolving health and safety requirements to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Lovebug Lane Learning Academy is no exception. Located in Wilmington, this family child care program not only operated as an emergency child care site, it transitioned to a large family child care program (LFCC) to accommodate expanding families, all of whom are essential personnel.

"We are very committed to our clients and know that they are relying on me to be open during a very scary time in our lives," said Tressa Clemow, program owner.

Tressa was planning to expand her program when two of her families shared they were growing their families. Tressa had no idea COVID-19 would be a part of the plan. In addition to adapting to safety and health requirements, Tressa now had to hire an assistant to increase her capacity.



Image provided by Tressa Clemow

"Tressa really put thought into who to hire," said Amanda Mackey, Delaware Stars technical assistant (TA). "She wanted to make sure this person was going to complement the way she runs her business. Tressa also utilized insight from a fellow LFCC provider, Jewel Spears, to learn more about this new business type."

Relying on other early childhood professionals and her Stars TA are a few of the ways Tressa is getting support during these challenging times. Tressa participates in Stars Communities of Practice (COPs), an exchange facilitated by TAs, where early childhood professionals share ideas to support and learn from each other.



Image provided by Tressa Clemow

One idea that has worked well for the children attending her program is switching learning to the outside.

"They really get into their 'work' when we are outside," adds Tressa. "We spend most of our day outside, depending on the weather. Our outdoor play consists of water tables, at least 15 feet apart, dinosaur towers, fairy houses, fairy gardens, and several climbing structures. We paint with spray bottles, fly swatters, pipe cleaners, and then tape it (the art) to our fence to dry."

Operating with the safety and health requirements requires creativity and intention – two of Tressa's characteristics. Amanda concurs.

"Tressa runs her program on information and love," said Amanda. "She is dedicated to doing what is best for the children and families in her program. Tressa values both social/emotional and academic learning equally. It shows in her interactions, the materials she provides for children to interact with, her thoughtful planning, daily communication with families, and more."

In turn, Tressa can't say enough about her relationship with her Stars TA.

"Amanda had been a godsend," said Tressa. "She has been my cheerleader, helped guide me through hiring staff members, and tells me about the grant money offered during this time of financial stress."