

PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

VIVIANA OYOLA



Family Child Care, Lifelong Community

Written by Stephanie Thompson/DIEEC
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Twenty years ago, when Viviana Oyola left her job at Citibank and opened her family child care (FCC) program, she had one main goal: to raise her youngest daughter and be present for the milestones and moments of her childhood. What she created was even broader and more enduring: a program that is deeply woven into the lives of the families she serves. It acts as a second home, a constant source of community, and a lifelong connection point for children and families.

More Than a Program: It's a Family

For Viviana, the philosophy of her program is built around inclusion and belonging. "From the first interview, I tell them we're not a school. **We are a family.** When you enter my daycare, you are part of my family," she explains. This emphasis on family is most apparent in her ability to maintain those connections long after children transition to elementary school. Viviana stays in touch through texts and birthday invitations, and many former students continue to seek her out. Viviana's own daughter recently celebrated the 21st birthday of a lifelong friend- a friendship her daughter formed when she herself was an infant in her mother's program. In addition, there's a more regular connection with recent graduates of her program: "The bus stop is nearby, so I still see them!" Viviana says with a laugh.

Community-Building Through Creative Events

Viviana’s commitment to community extends beyond her front door. She leverages her role to bring together current, graduated, and prospective families through highly anticipated events.

The largest of these is her annual December celebration, which families begin asking about as early as mid-summer. It’s not a small party; it’s a full-scale event. Families pitch in to rent a hall and collaborate for weeks in advance to prepare performances and plan a delicious potluck dinner for all participants. Even Santa makes an appearance. “This year, we’re doing a 1920s theme!” Viviana shares.



*Children at play in Viviana Oyola’s program
(Photo by Stephanie Thompson/DIEEC)*

She is equally creative with her community-focused outreach throughout the year, citing her fun events like the “Turkey Race” for Thanksgiving and “Fun Water Day” in the summer. Her recent Hispanic Heritage celebration demonstrates her skill at integrating culture into her program experience. “I have families from Colombia, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and I am Puerto Rican—each family brought a different dish. We wore clothing from our cultures,” she explains. Holding the events after hours ensures maximum parent participation and fosters engagement with the program.

Securing Local Partnerships

Viviana’s ability to host these successful events stems, in part, from her proactive approach to community networking. Her secret to securing donations from supportive businesses like restaurants and grocery stores is direct engagement. “I became a member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce,” she explains. By making personal connections and joining local business groups, she found neighbors who were eager to support her mission, demonstrating that **simply taking a chance and asking** can pay off in meaningful ways.

Intentional Steps for School Readiness

While her program feels like a family, Viviana is also intensely focused on school readiness. She has maintained a partnership with a nearby school, Academia Antonia Alonso, for several years, prioritizing a seamless transition for her preschoolers.

“Right now, I have four kids going to kindergarten next year, and one of the boys already said, ‘I don’t want to leave!’” she says. To ease those inevitable anxieties, she organizes a transition day where a school bus picks up the children right at her program. The children, accompanied by their parents and Viviana herself, ride the bus to the school, where they receive a tour of the classrooms and cafeteria, getting a glimpse of “what the big kids do.” This intentional experience helps demystify the school environment and build excitement.

Passion and Professional Growth

Viviana’s professional curiosity drives her to embrace broader opportunities. She actively participates in regular Spanish-language Community of Practice meetings through DIEEC, and regularly joins statewide provider calls, sharing what she learns with others. She also attends DIEEC’s 1st State Family Child Care Conference, an annual opportunity to network with and learn from her fellow family child care educators.

“It comes from my heart. Parents feel you—they know if you’re passionate about what you do. If you don’t have that energy, they’ll know,” she advises other providers looking to grow their programs and network. For Viviana, that passion is the central force.

When asked what single moment reminds her why she is an FCC provider, her answer is simple and genuine: “I love children.” This love has fueled her program for two decades, transforming her family child care program into a vibrant, supportive, and enduring community hub.



Viviana Oyola’s older students thrive, balancing play with school-readiness. (photos by Stephanie Thompson/DIEEC)