



A Parent's Early Education Journey

Marina Enslin is no stranger to managing family. She grew up the youngest of five siblings and now has three children of her own. Despite the chaotic lifestyle of her youth, having lived in Winston-Salem, NC and five years in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, her parents instilled the importance of education. Now she instills those same values in her own children.

A clinical researcher by day, Marina spends her free time involved in theater and singing in a choir for fun. However, her life wasn't so stable when she first moved to North Carolina. A transplant from New Jersey, she was raising an 11-month-old child at the time. She was going back to work and was very nervous about finding a high-quality center that offered more than just childcare.

She used the Internet searching for centers with four- or five-star rankings, asked questions about the curriculum, toured facilities, and paid particular attention to the attitude and demeanor of the preschool staff. Her goal was to find a preschool that offered a curriculum focused on ensuring kindergarten readiness academically as well as developmentally. She wanted preschool staff that truly cared about the development of her child.

After extensive research, Marina found the perfect preschool with a five-star ranking within her price range. After a couple of years, the school, having a talent for supporting children with special needs, noticed that her 3-year-old son was speech delayed. She was referred to Project Enlightenment, which assessed her son and found that he had sensory processing disorder. This disorder causes a disruption in receiving and responding to information received through the senses. The disorder can cause oversensitivity to sound and touch. With Project Enlightenment's help, the preschool instituted daily interventions for her son. Having started at an early age, he transitioned into kindergarten without significant issues.

With her second child, Marina chose to enroll him in a part-time preschool program. The preschool her first child attended experienced changes and no longer offered a part-time program. With more understanding of the preschool system, Marina approached the search with her child's particular needs in mind. He was 2 years old and had abundant energy, which she wanted to focus in a positive direction. He was also diagnosed with sensory processing disorder. Again, she found a good preschool that helped identify problem areas and worked with him on managing his behavior. He went on to kindergarten academically prepared, yet he doesn't have his disorder completely managed yet.

Her third child is presently in preschool part-time, but one that focuses on play and employing an approach to learning that allows the child to direct their own depth, speed, and modality of learning. Her daughter enjoys school and is slated to move to full-time preschool to ensure she is ready for kindergarten.

When asked about the benefits of attending preschool, Marina responded, "I think one of the most important benefits to attending preschool is that my children learned how to interact with others. They learned how to listen, communicate with, and consider the needs and feelings of their peers. They also learned conflict resolution."

Marina suggests parents do the research and find the right fit for your child. Not all preschools are the same and investigating offerings and personally meeting with potential schools will give you peace of mind in your final decision.