

Transcript of Maria Swaim

Interviewer

Talk about your visit to Laura and Elizeo's home and what you were doing there.

Maria Swaim

Well, today, we did the visit to the Paz family. They have two young children, Yoav that is three-year-old and Marluna that is barely 14, 15 months. So I brought activities here to the house for them to get interacted with the children in their age. And I brought materials for Laura to play with Yoav. The activity was hammering with golf tees in three different mediums -- cardboard, foam, and then one is a small pumpkin, a compact pumpkin. Then, they can do it in their own backyard in the dirt outside like an extension. And what was the goal? The goal was not only the interaction between parent and children, but also eye-hand coordination, motor development, communication because they put words, they label "What is a golf tee? From where comes the name of golf tee?" And in Spanish, they mean differently, but it's the expression of communication, vocabulary. I'm supporting learning. Supporting learning.

Interviewer

Tell me about Elizeo and Laura. Tell me who they are and how they came to you.

Maria Swaim

Elizeo and Laura Paz are a young couple, they have four children. The two older ones I meet them years ago at Lincoln Elementary when I was working in preschool for four year olds. The two older girls came to preschool when they were four, Rosie that is now 11 year old, Annalisa now is nine, both they came to preschool. But then she got pregnant with the third boy, the third child, and she knew that I was working in Parents as Teachers and she knew about the program because she join us in Parent Group Connections in the night when the girls were in preschool. But she knew that this program, we do visits since prenatal until five-year-old. So she came with the baby that it was at the time three or four months and asked me if I could do the visit for them because they were interested in about learning how to play with the boy that it was a baby. And how to know more about age development for the baby. And it's how I start doing the visit when Yoav was seven, eight months old until now that he turn three. And I'm gonna continue so far until he was five.

Interviewer

Tell me about the Paz family in terms of their awareness and how hard they work.

Maria Swaim

They are a very hard-working family. And now their family increase to four

children because they have baby Marluna. So they live together in a house that they support like a group of family now. Manuel's brother is Elizeo, and Laura is (inaudible) Elizeo's wife, they support taking care of the children. One of them stay at a home while the other three are at work in the restaurant. The four of them, they had their children, their older children that they went to Lincoln Elementary, that is why that happen our contact, no? And... when Elizeo and Laura came three years ago for me to do the visiting PAT they said they would like to support the children in their process of education because the goal was to send them to go to college and graduate with a -- a title in not only you know, working but actually with studies to improve in their future for something better. And it's how they support each other so much. And those are the kind of parent that I present, they are present for the parent teacher conference, for parent and children activities, for nights activities in the school, they are the ones that they are usually active and there. They are there.

Interviewer

Tell us what the Parent as Teacher program through the Salt Lake School District is.

Maria Swaim

The Parents as Teacher program at the Salt Lake City School District is support program parenting, support program for parents. It's since prenatal, zero to five. And the idea is support parents in their task of parenting. And you know, nobody comes with specific -- I mean rules when they are born -- do these, do that -- they learn along the way. The vision of Parents as Teacher is that all the children will grow, were born to grow and reach their full potential. But to do that is supporting parents to be the first and most important teacher in the children's life. So here we go to the house to do parenting visits about parenting. And well, it depends when the child is start growing up, many things appear in their growing. Parents as Teacher you're supported by very well research in neuroscience, and it have age development activities since prenatal for each month of development until they're five, they turn five. So we're supported with a curriculum and the parents also, when we bring activities, they can bring their own toys and they can bring to the visit the children's favorite toys. And we set goals with the parent. The goals not only for them to reach with the children in their development, but for them. Their goal like some of our parents are with very limited English. One of the goals is that they go to ESL classes. So we bring community support -- ideas in which schools they have like in here, in the CLC Glendale/Mountain View, we have ESL classes for parents. So the four days a week, Monday through Thursday in the morning. So our parents come to those classes. Also we have in the CLC driving classes for parents that they want to learn driving and how to obtain their driver license. And many other classes that PAT bring them this information to them, to their house. So they feel that they have a support. They learn what it's going on in their own community and close to them, not far away, but close. So the goals are not only for them to reach with their children development, but for their own development as parents.

Interviewer

You told me once that some families don't even know. They can live right in this community and not know that these services are here. Can you mention how they can connect to this?

Maria Swaim

Yes, they connect through the school and we just here, the educators, by the way the educator where, when we go to a house, we're not the teachers, we are facilitators. We bring activities for the parents to use with their children and to -- when we leave, they continue their support and extension. And in the same way, when we are here in this school and we see the parents we invite them to parent group connections, and we let them know what is Parents as Teachers -- that's one of the main visions of the CLC is here is just support the parents. And support especially those parents in the school years where the children are related to school (inaudible) from three-year-old until they finish high school. And that's how they come to know about what is PAT. And we try to advertise in all our community and with the parents what's going on in preschool. Many of them they don't know until they see us that we approach them, inviting them to parent group meetings or just giving them flier of what is going on about our toddler's classes, our (inaudible) education class for three year olds, our baby massage classes, our tummy time for babies. So they start knowing and it's kind of a -- they spread the word around. And slowly, slowly, we see them coming.

Interviewer

The activity when we filmed you here, tell us briefly what Laura and Yoav were doing and other mothers were doing with their children.

Maria Swaim

Yeah, this is our Parent and Child education class. Also it's a parenting class. And it's support for parents to play with their children, to motivate them to be the teachers in the classroom. So when they enter, we have a very structured schedule. They enter, the greetings, they wash their hands and they go in discovering around the classroom. We putting the tables, manipulatives related to three year olds and so they work with the fine motor development and then they explore the classroom. Here we have the house, or the (inaudible) play like we call it. And we have babies, we have clothes, we have the kitchen with utensils. So they go in fixing food, preparing food, and dressing the babies, undressing the babies. And then we have the block area. The block area, we have different kinds of blocks -- wood blocks, cardboard blocks, small blocks, level blocks. So they play with different props that could be with cars, with trains, with people. And they create their play supervised by mom or dad. The parents and children, they play together. I mean those moment they play, the parents have the opportunity to put in action parenting behavior. What are those like designing, asking the child because they follow their child lead. In which part would you like to play? Which toy would you like to use? And they label like big

ball, small ball, blue ball, red ball. So we are suggesting to put words and label words so the children develop vocabulary. The same in the library, they have the opportunity to read books in English or Spanish. And we have a little section for the toddlers so they can freely crawl around in a secure way. And then when they finish their discovery we meet here in the large group to read a book, to sing, to dance, and to tell them about what is the schedule of the day? What are we going to do in the day? Then we break and the parents do parent group activities -- parent and child activities in the tables that they are age developed for the children. When they finish, we clean up and we go outside to play in the jungle gym with balls, with chalk, different things. Then we go back, we wash hands and everybody, we set the tables for the snack. The snack is a powerful time for them to develop vocabulary, communication, good manners.

Interviewer

All these things that you're providing for parents and children, why is this important? Why is it important in our community? Why should people care that parents and children have this opportunity? Why does this matter?

Maria Swaim

Is many reasons. One is the positive attachment.

Maria Swaim

This is so important to the community and to the parents because with Parents as Teacher we support parents in their role of parenting. Developing good attachment, the positive discipline, and just for them designing -- designing their children safe and positive things like education, coming to a classroom, having in the classroom activities for their age and the parents involved with them. And then at the same time, the parents, they learn from their children because of their play with them, they discover how well their process, their brain process. It goes for them to keep discovering more, asking more, using a positive vocabulary and the interaction is quite dynamic. And day by day, when we finish the classroom, the children, they don't want to leave the classroom. The parents sometimes they have a hard time because they have a schedule with the clock. But the children want to stay a little more.

Interviewer

But it's important for people outside of this education program because why? These programs exist in the community because we need to safeguard our children and give them the best education they have. Why?

Maria Swaim

Because they are the future, the present and the future. And the children, they need to be connected the school in this positive way and enjoy the school. Enjoy the school. See a school like a safe place. A safe place. And also here the bottom line is for a child, the success in the school is the social/emotional positive development. That they interact very positive with their -- other students

(with difference?). With children that they don't know but they start interacting or in class. Creating positive language, positive vocabulary and just getting in communication -- communicating what is going on in the school when they arrive home. When parents ask, they create that fluently positive interaction. And for parents also, be always welcome to school in all the activities that school provide for them. Being in contact with the teachers about what is going on in the classroom when you have the children, they are not able to stay in the class since they go to the four-year-old classroom and then kindergarten and so on. The children, when they arrive home, be able to communicate with the parents what is going on in the school.