

Dear Spring Meadow/Bethesda Parents,

Thank you so much for choosing Bethesda for your extended care needs. I'm very excited to spend my 41st year in education with them!

I am a UD graduate with a degree in instrumental music education. As I began having my children, I realized I couldn't give 100% to them and to a music program. Luckily for me, that was when second-income families were becoming more the norm, and along with that, the need for school-based childcare. I was able to stay in my first school for 27 years by making the switch to the extended care program. The opportunity to work part-time while my children were small was wonderful. Most of my time has been in private schools in northern Delaware.

This will be my 6th year here at Spring Meadow. I can say firsthand, you are getting a great group of teachers here. I will be with your children for morning and afternoon care. The middle of my day is spent volunteering at CompAnimals Pet Rescue in Landenberg, PA. Please save us all your old towels and sheets!

I work very hard to set up the room for an easy transition and a successful stay. The rules are very clear and age-appropriate, activities are varied and interesting, and there are plenty of ways to feel good about yourself. I base my methodology on a pyramid model developed at the University of Colorado and presented at The Delaware Inclusion Conference. It is from the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention, or TACSEI. The base of the pyramid is a qualified staff. On this you have my promise.

Working up, the next level is having the staff develop nurturing and supportive relationships with the children. They will always know they are loved and respected. Depending on what happens during our day, they may not be happy, but they will still feel loved and respected. Next up is our space. Play spaces are clear and activities are age-appropriate and varied.

The first three levels are mostly my responsibility. The fourth, however, is a group effort and we spend lots of time on it each day. The pyramid calls it Targeted Emotional Supports. Basically, this is practicing social skills with the children so they learn how to mediate problems with peers and handle their varied emotions. It's a daily effort giving them the tools they need to handle the good times and the not so good times. I love watching their progress with this. When they handle something without adult intervention for the first time, the smiles that come across their faces are priceless!

The tip of the pyramid is labeled Intensive Intervention. This would be a time when their tools aren't enough to solve the problem. It is only the tip because if I have levels 1-4 working, the need for adult intervention is minimal. I love being able to stand away from the group and watch the room buzz. It's a great feeling and it means I did something right.

I do not use external rewards like points, prizes, or stickers to mold behavior. I follow the 5 in before 1 out rule. I try to give each child 5 positives before asking them for a withdrawal. A positive could be "Thanks for coming in quietly" or "I like the way you put the markers away." A withdraw would be "Please, put this away" or "Please, sit while having snack." This system has worked for me for many years, so it must be valid. In combination with the pyramid, it's a winner!

Please feel free to text or call me anytime. I am looking forward to getting to know all of your children and families.

Sincerely,
Leanne Phillips
302-750-9213

