



Above and Beyond

by

Parent who Wrote a College Essay about Head Start Program



This year my daughter, Korra, started school. She comes home excited to tell me all about what she did! She loves to show me the smiley face that she got in her folder for being good and the pictures she colored. Korra tells me about her best friend and what she ate for lunch. She loves both of her teachers and the games they put together for the kids.

Korra is in Head Start, which is a program for lower income families with kids ages three and four. Last summer we had to fill out an application and return it for review along with check stubs to determine eligibility. I feel privileged that Korra was accepted into the program. It is a great way for little kids to learn to love school and for parents to get even more involved in their lives. The program was founded in 1965 and provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families, this information and more can be found at txhsa.org.

Head Start offers free breakfast, lunch and, an afternoon snack for all of the kids. I think that is incredible since some families may not be able to feed their children as much as they would like. When these kids go to school their parents know they are going to be able to eat and that what they are eating is good for them. The teachers teach good hygiene such as hand washing, brushing teeth, and using the restroom correctly. As a parent myself I try to teach my daughter these things, but sometimes it takes someone else teaching for them to understand. Before Head Start, Korra wouldn't care to wash her hands before eating...but now when she gets dirty she knows she needs to clean herself. They also help the kids to learn their ABC's, numbers, colors, and shapes. Some parents may not know how to teach these to where their kids understand and comprehend. All of these things are just a portion of what is taught every day. My daughter has also started using complete sentences, using correct grammar, and has more confidence now than I have ever seen.

Since Korra was six months old she stayed with my aunt and wasn't around many kids her age so she didn't know how to interact with them. She would act shy and hide when she was introduced to another kid her age. Now Korra is thriving in socialization, if she sees another child she will wave, say hello, and sometimes even ask their name. Along with being more outgoing Korra has learned to use her manners. She has always been taught to say please and thank you but now she has started saying it without being told.

The thing I love most about Head Start is that they want parents to be involved every step of the way. There are so many ways a parent can volunteer and help out with the functioning of the program. The Head Start Association can only thrive with the volunteering of parents. Since they only have a certain number of teachers they need the parents to help fill the gaps. Parents do anything from making sure all of the children are safe with the Watch D.O.G.S (Dads Of Great Students) program to helping set up class rooms, reading to all the children, planning and helping with events and every day learning. We, the parents, are also the best way to spread the word about how much of a success this program truly is; I know when I am passionate about something I tell everyone.

I can see my daughter thriving and she has developed an eagerness to learn I had never seen before starting school. Head Start has been a blessing to my daughter, and to myself. It is teaching her things I don't know how to teach and giving her more independence. The values and mission this program delivers are amazing, and truly shine through the hearts of each student. I cannot wait to see how far my child goes in life with fundamentals she has started to learn at such a young age. She is learning to be proud of herself and to me, that is the most important thing she could ever learn.

