

# LEADERS' *Cagniappe*



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## TEACHER APPRECIATION IS YEAR-ROUND AT CAROUSEL PRESCHOOL.



Those in the early childhood profession, or who have had children in centers know firsthand: high-quality early childhood teachers are a treasure. Arielle Hughes has some strategies to ensure that those who support the 135 children in her center know their value.

**Create a positive climate.** Arielle is proud of the retention rate of her lead teachers, and she knows that paying them a competitive salary is only one part of what's working. Little things that build community, like pizza parties and holiday gatherings, make her center a fun place to work. When a teacher has a highly ranked CLASS™ observation, congratulatory notes are hidden around the center, and the teacher receives a bonus. When a manager completes her Associates degree, there is a staff celebration. Arielle makes sure to budget for the materials needed for curriculum so her teachers aren't paying for them. And for Teacher Appreciation, she hosts a Carousel Fest for families to celebrate her staff and thank them for their commitment. "Our school leaders radiate positivity, which supports high teacher morale, encouraging them to provide positive classroom climates."



*Arielle Hughes*  
**DIRECTOR & OWNER,  
CAROUSEL PRESCHOOL**

**This positive workplace translates into a team of ambassadors for the program.** The center is a place where teachers can bring their talents and interests. For example, when Arielle purchased the center, where she had previously worked as the director, one of the teachers made special uniforms with the new name for the staff. Her teachers are also "the admissions department," recruiting families with young children into the center when they see them around town with a great deal of enthusiasm. Another teacher provides free photography services for special events at the center. They are invested in the success of the center and go "the extra mile." A culture of teamwork means that Arielle has partners in the success of the program.

## TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK IS **MAY 6 THROUGH MAY 10, 2019.**



**Invest in teachers through coaching.** Arielle has invested in two full-time classroom coaches who she says are critical to teacher satisfaction. As former teachers, the coaches were unsure about their new roles. Arielle saw "the spark" in them, and made sure she mentored them and that they had the right training. Now as CLASS™ reliable observers, one focuses on infants and toddlers, the other on Pre-K. The coaches use the My Teaching Partner (MTP) model, focusing on one dimension at a time. They observe, give teachers training based on what they see, conduct a mock observation, give feedback, then model what they would like to see. When teachers are struggling, they may ask a coach to devote a week in the classroom to provide job-embedded coaching. **"Teachers want to improve, but sometimes struggle. Our coaches ensure that they aren't working on issues in isolation."**

Arielle shares the story of one of her Pre-K teachers who grew from coaching, and enrolled in Making the Most of Classroom Interactions (MMCI) training. She began to mentor other teachers in the center, focusing on those teaching children with special needs. She helped them develop visual schedules and implement communication tools. Because of this individualized support, a child who really needed a different approach is growing leaps and bounds, and relationships in the classroom have improved. This is only possible because teachers trust each other and are open to feedback from the team.

**"At the end of the day the teachers are the keys to success with children. It's my job as director to give them everything I can."**