



EveryChild California's Circle of Excellence
January 2021
Debbie Slobojan
FCC Education Coordinator
City of Gardena

EveryChild California is proud to recognize Debbie Slobojan, City of Gardena, as the January 2021 recipient of the Circle of Excellence award.

The Circle of Excellence is awarded to a member of EveryChild California who has supported the Associations' endeavors and has shown outstanding leadership within the ECE community

Debbie graduated from CSULB with a BA in Human Development and a MA in Education specializing in Early Childhood Education and has put these degrees to great use. For over 30 years, Debbie has worked in the Child Development field. She started her career as a preschool teacher and lead teacher for a before and after school daycare program operated by a private for-profit and quickly moved into management working for a large private non-profit agency offering subsidized childcare services to families. She has worked with all ages over the years and coordinated services by a multitude of program types offering support and guidance to teaching staff and managers as they developed quality preschool programs for families and managing budgets to assure programs maintained fiscal viability.

The most rewarding thing about her career has been seeing how committed people in the Child Development field are not only to the children and families they serve but to each other as well. When a family is in crisis, Child Development people cleave together and help that family out. When a child is in need of services, Child Development people strongly advocate for those needs to be assessed and met. When a colleague is in crisis, the Child Development community comes together to offer them the support they need to get through. When the Child Development field is facing danger, we as a community rise up and make our voices heard. Being a part of all that has been an experience that has touched her deeply and kept her moving forward in her career.

The accomplishment she is most proud of occurred in 2012 when she and our current EveryChild CA President, Sarah Soriano, helped organize a march in downtown Los Angeles to ward off budget cuts to our Child Development contracts. It was an amazing experience. Agencies from all over Los Angeles County jumped in to get the word out about the event, organize transportation, line up speakers and attain required permits.

The collaborative efforts of so many agencies resulted in over 3000 Child Development colleagues, parents, and children marching in downtown Los Angeles. Closing down streets and making sure our voices were heard. It was a powerful moment.

The best advice she would give to anyone new in an administrative role is do not be afraid to reach out to your colleagues for support. You don't know what you don't know and in our Child Development field there is A LOT to know! Be flexible but firm, be bold but tentative, be honest but cautious and always, always, always, make sure your voice is heard.

Congratulations Debbie! EveryChild California is honored that you are a member!