



EveryChild California's Circle of Excellence  
June 2019  
Berta Harris  
CDC Administrator  
San Diego Community College District

Please join us in congratulating Berta Harris, CDC Administrator for San Diego Community College District as the June 2019 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.

Berta found her roots in San Diego after two years at San Francisco State University and a year in Germany. Graduating from San Diego State University, Berta ran a parent participation group for 6 families from the SDSU toddler lab and that led to teaching at a private preschool, where she soon became the director.

Berta worked at a CA state funded infant toddler program, where each teacher's assignment included an administrative task such as payroll, insurance or children's files. She was contacted by department chair at San Diego City College where they were looking for someone to teach their infant toddler course. That was before an infant toddler coursework was required and it ended up being cancelled due to low enrollment. Berta taught part-time for a semester and then started teaching full-time at San Diego City College. She was an administrator at the City College Child Development Center (CDC) and then, after a sabbatical started teaching a full load of lecture classes. When the CDC administrator retired, she returned to the administrator position in the Spring 2014 semester.

Berta has graciously taken a time out of her busy schedule to share a bit of advice with us:

1. *What has been most rewarding about your career in early education so far?*

The most rewarding part of my career in early childhood has been my effort to create college courses that build a sense of community among our diverse student populations. It has been the most important learning experience for me in understanding children, their families and communities. In my years as an administrator for our state funded lab school giving freedom to teachers to create their classroom environments,

relationships with parents and children and respecting their knowledge and expertise has been a priority that I find deeply satisfying.

2. *If you could give advice to someone who is new in the administrative role, what would it be?*

Hire excellent teachers and then respect their skills and creativity. Avoid handing them a canned curriculum. Great teachers thrive on the challenge of creating based on the observations and assessments of their children. Find ways for teachers in each classroom to have team meetings so they can actually engage in reflection and work as a team.

3. *What is your proudest accomplishment in your career?*

Besides serving as a tenured faculty member I was the President of the San Diego Association for the Education of Young Children from 2011-2013.

Congratulations Berta, for your support and efforts on behalf of the children of California and EveryChild California. If you would like to nominate an EveryChild California member for the Circle of Excellence, please email us at [info@everychildca.org](mailto:info@everychildca.org)