



EveryChild California's Circle of Excellence  
September 2019  
Samantha Evans  
Assistant Director  
Crystal Stairs, Inc.

Please join us in congratulating Samantha Evans, Crystal Stairs, Inc. as the September 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.

Samantha's story begins at the Orange Coast College Children's Center where she began working shortly after graduating from high school. It was there she was introduced to the CDE funded programs and all they do for families and children. Working with infants and toddlers helped her learn parenting skills and she then realized that those programs are such an important component of strengthening families. She was able to see the benefits of the programs first hand by assisting in the classroom and working with parents as they navigated self-sufficiency. Samantha also learned that every parent has a story and one way we can support positive outcomes is by understanding what our parents need and appreciating their strengths. Working at the campus childcare center through college, the experience led to the discovery that she wanted to work with families as her career. She moved to Los Angeles and joined Crystal Stairs, Inc. in 1998 as part of the CalWORKs Program. She has been at Crystal Stairs for 20 years and has worked on many projects including software implementations, annual self-evaluation processes, and started the Quality Assurance Unit. In this role for the past 10 years, she has had the opportunity to learn about requirements for many programs and work with her team and programs staff to build strong monitoring programs which in turn supports the staff that do this important work.

Samantha's passion for early childhood education can be seen in her answers below. Congratulations Samantha for joining EveryChild California's Circle of Excellence

1. What has been most rewarding about your career in early education so far?  
Knowing that the work I do supports and strengthens families in our community. Supporting parents leads to improved outcomes for children and the work we do in our programs can be that support. I always enjoy connecting with parents and helping them to navigate the childcare system. When parents join with their child's caregiver and trust that

relationship; parents feel confident being their child's first teacher and advocate. Helping parents to be their best is the most rewarding.

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

Read and know your program requirements and regulations and find someone with experience and ask lots of questions. It is important to understand all the requirements so you can build or strengthen systems that support our work. It is important to keep your eye on your program goals and work toward them. The year goes by fast and planning is key, attend conferences and meetings so that you can hear from others that are doing what you do and get ideas for your challenges. Take advantage of technical assistance offerings because it is a great way to hear about successes and new practices that can support our work. Encourage your team to lead from where they are, and you will feel the support that is necessary for success.

3. What is your proudest accomplishment in your career?

I am proudest of supporting staff with our work. I love to see staff implement ideas that they have developed to keep us moving in the right direction. I don't always get an opportunity to work directly with parents and children in my current role, but I know that I am helping staff by providing data and information that is used to strengthen our programs and support a culture of continuous improvement.

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)