



Lois Martin

ELAC Representation: Child Care Centers

Occupation: Director of the Community Day Center for Children and Organizing Committee Member, Washington Educators in Early Learning, a chapter of the American Federation of Teachers.

City/Region: Seattle, WA

(Lois with her son, Lloyd, at his high school graduation in 2009)

Getting to know YOU:

What drew you to early learning?

My mother's family home child care morphed into one of the first licensed centers in Seattle's Central District. As a teenager, I saw how my mother struggled to keep the center afloat—low subsidy rates and rising costs were constant challenges to the quality educational environment she desired to give her students. Her daily struggle pushed me in the opposite direction of the field. I worked for IBM in New York after graduating from Oakwood College in 1984. I was employed in the software arena as a Systems Engineer for a number of years before marrying and returning to Seattle. When my son was born in 1991, I extended my maternity leave and enjoyed the privilege of being a stay at home mother. My mother began to reel me in by having me assist her with the center accounting. Engaging with the families turned from a hobby to a passion for early learning. I have never regretted my decision 21 years ago not to return to corporate America.

How do you hope to influence a stronger early learning system for Washington?

One of the keys to providing quality care in our state is by supporting the educators who are in the classrooms guiding and influencing our next generation of leaders. The teachers are the troops on the ground and need the backing of policy-makers and parents in order to provide an environment where children are able to thrive. Dedicated teachers receiving a livable wage + professional development = quality early learning. There is no way to have the desired end results without the other two components. I use my voice as the AFT/WEEL representative on the ELAC board to remind everyone that quality outcomes are unattainable unless owners, directors, teachers and other early learning staff are fully engaged in supporting new courses of action and their implementation processes.

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What was your first job?

My first unofficial job started in the early learning field as soon as I was old enough to gather diapers for my mother in what was then a family home child care. I landed my first official job the summer after I turned 16. I worked as a secretary in downtown Seattle for Lloyd Building Business Services.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I flip-flopped between two career paths.....veterinarian medicine and Egyptology... 😊

What is your favorite childhood memory?

I had a mini zoo that consisted of rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, cats, goldfish, tropical fish, German Shepherds, lizards, frogs, turtles, parakeets, and a garter snake (until it slithered out of its cage and scared my mother half to death—he had to go).

