



Susan Barbeau

ELAC Representation: Regional Advisor - First 5 FUNdamentals of Pierce County

Occupation: Executive Director of First 5 FUNdamentals

City/Region: Pierce County

Getting to know YOU:

What drew you to early learning?

I've always been interested in education. What drew me to early learning in particular was that children who have nurturing, healthy, and supportive experiences in the early years are better prepared for school and life. If we want to improve our education system, then it makes the most sense to start as early as possible.

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

As the Executive Director for First 5 FUNdamentals of Pierce County, my hope is to bring community partners and organizations together, in order to support our young children and their families. Making sure our youngest members of society have what they need to succeed is not something that can be completed by one organization alone. It's a collective challenge that can only be solved by collective action. I'm honored to be part of the coordination efforts in Pierce County.

What was your first job?

Technically, my first job was babysitting for some family friends when I was in middle school. There were two kids, a boy age 3 and a girl age 6. I loved playing games with them and reading bedtime stories. My first real job was as a store assistant for a local pharmacy at the age of 16. I stocked shelves, made deliveries, and helped customers.

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

As a very young child I dreamt of being a Dolphin Trainer. I was determined to have a prosperous career working at SeaWorld.

What is your favorite childhood memory?

My favorite childhood memory is of hot summer days, swimming in the bay, and floating on inner tubes with friends. I was lucky enough to grow up living near the water in a neighborhood where all the kids were close to my age. Together we would walk down a very steep path, trudge through the muddy beach, and spend hours swimming in the cool salty water. To this day the smell of salt water reminds me of my childhood.