

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Sandy Maldonado

Director of Early Learning, Child Care Aware® of Washington



Q: Was there a moment or event that inspired you to enter the early childhood education profession?

A: I was moved by my son's infant care-teacher at Ft. Hood, TX. We were a young military family away from our families for the first time. It was quite the transition from being raised in a multi-generational home. I aspired to continue my college education and located a child care solution for my son. However, after a dangerous child care situation left me frightened for my baby's well-being, I decided to pause my education and stay at home with my son. Eventually, I found the Ft. Hood Child Development Center and decided to enroll him there. Like many other families, drop-off was extremely heart-wrenching. My son's new teacher would offer words of encouragement, reassure me that he was fine, and invited me to volunteer. When I began to volunteer and engage in parent observations, I realized that there was lots of learning happening while a warm relationship was being built with the babies and their families. I soon felt the trust in the care-teachers and the program. It had a strong impact, so much so that I changed my major from TV & Radio Broadcasting to Early Childhood Education!

Q: When did you first learn about / become involved with CCAoA?

A: I first heard of CCAoA in 2011 when I began working for a child care resource and referral agency outside of Ft. Knox, KY. The following year there were changes and our organization became a partner of Child Care Aware of Kentucky. I began to learn about the breadth of CCR&R supports. My heart was touched by the attention and support to military families. On our next duty station to Joint Base Lewis-McChord in WA I began to search for work with the Child Care Aware of Washington system as it closely aligned with my own values for supporting families and children.

Q: What aspect(s) of early care and education are you most passionate about?

A: Brain research has revealed the importance of quality early childhood and learning experiences. This drives my dedication to supporting children, families, and the early learning workforce. My focus is on access to quality early learning experiences and family supports. This is rooted in my passion to advance anti-racist policy and practice that will in turn help communities feel supported.

Q: From your perspective, what is the single most important step we can take to build a better child care system?

A: We need to revisit policies that continue to perpetuate inequalities to young children and their families.

Welcome to the CCAoA Board, Sandy!

To learn more about CCAoA's Leadership, visit childcareaware.org/leadership.

