



REFLECTIONS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST:

Gratitude, Resilience, and Reset

Qianna Tidmore

Executive Director, Ohio AEYC

A New Year Message: Gratitude, Resilience, and Reset

January has rolled around again and the familiar chatter about resolutions and new beginnings have begun. As I reflect on my experiences working within an early childhood community in Ohio, I am reminded of something different: a community under siege.

There seems to be increasing levels of noise lately. I hear questions and doubts and attacks on the foundational aspects of what we do. I understand that can be extremely taxing. There are likely times when the weight of having to prove our worth — repeatedly — feels greater than the actual work we are doing. It is acceptable to experience that type of burnout. It is acceptable to admit that advocating on behalf of our children is emotionally draining.

However, we will not fail.

We cannot afford to. The importance of our work and the risk of the lives and futures of the children of Ohio are too great. When others raise questions about the "why" behind early childhood education, we look at the faces of the children we provide care for. We see the moments of discovery, the exploration and development that occur as a result of what we do. We see families relying on us to be their support system. That is our response. That is our "why".

Let them cause trouble.

It is a long-standing history that significant changes typically take place as a result of resistance. If the dedication to equity, quality and the well-being of every child creates a ruckus, then so be it. We are not here to play it safe; we are here to make decisions based on what is best for the next generation. Creating a commotion in pursuit of positive change is a legacy we should be proud to claim.

We are united.

When one Ohio AEYC member becomes exhausted from the "noise", the other members stand a little taller and collectively support each other. Together, we will prevail against whatever obstacles come our way. We are not simply a collection of professional educators; we are a movement.

As we continue throughout January and begin to establish our priorities and focus for the coming months, I invite you to silence the noise and connect with your purpose. Think back to the spark that led you to pursue this career. Your commitment is the beacon of light that guides our children, and that light will not be extinguished by doubt or discord.

Regardless of what your current moment is, I encourage you to hold onto it. Allow it to replenish your spirit. And remember that you are seen, appreciated and loved — not just this month, but every month.

Thank you for everything you do. Thank you for standing beside me and this wonderful organization we both love. And thank you for allowing me to be able to serve alongside you!

With Love and Empowerment,

 Qianna

P.S. I would love to hear from you and learn how I can personally support your journey - reach out qtidmore@oaeyc.org