

Small Wins = A Big Difference

Recently, we asked early childhood educators to tell us about a "small win." We were blown away, by both the sheer number of responses and the joyful, inspiring messages shared with us.

Here are 101 of them that make clear that "small wins" make a big difference!

Witnessing a child walk for the first time!

All my students can now successfully sort and make an AB pattern! Whew - been a tough start with Hurricane Ida but making up ground.

A child noticed today that all the boys looked like brothers because they were all wearing the same color. The boys are all different ethnicities, so happy that she could see how we are the same instead of how we are different.

One of my non-verbal students sang the alphabet to me yesterday morning - almost brought me to tears! love to hear the progress he is making

A boy in my class told me he wanted more at lunch by saying more & signing it instead of just pointing, and making noises. We've been working on this.

Watching a child start to understand a routine

When a child got hurt, all the children came to her aid telling her she was ok and they were there with her.

Children in my class who have learned to dip and flip to put their own jackets on! They are so proud of themselves!

2 of the 7 children that I had in pullups are now potty trained.

I have a child who is in my 3 1/2 hour afternoon class. He wasn't use to structure and he needs redirection all the time, doesn't talk in full sentences, words are not formed correctly. But last week we finally saw him follow our routine and tell us the letters in his name! That made me think, "wow! I can help this child! I can make a difference!"

One student said he loved school. That's immeasurable!

I recently got a new student who only speaks Spanish, and I was able to connect with him while he was playing with Playdoh!

I had one of my struggling learners use their words today and ask a friend to play!

Seeing a student spontaneously sing a song we had sung once in class before

The children learning their Spanish numbers

A child that began in September was having trouble engaging in conversations and making friends and just after a month and a half she is a social butterfly!

[A child] spelled his name with magnetic alphabet letters yesterday without help

One of my students that I have been working with started walking and learned how to get out of the chair by himself.

Our child with autism has learned her routine and is interacting with her peers.

Helping small children grow academically!

At our closing meeting, my students share what they are proud of that they did during the day. Many are proud to be writers.

A child who could not do a three-piece puzzle two weeks ago did a five-piece puzzle yesterday.

My students have grown so much from the beginning of the school year. Learning to take turns and working cooperatively is a big achievement.

We started pre-k 4 the first week of September 2021 and had one child who was never away from her parents. She cried the entire day for many school days, but for about the last two weeks she has been happy to come to school, has not cried, and walks in each day with a smile on her face!!!!!!

A student finally talked to her peers during center time!!!!

One of my preschool students recalling a personal experience of their own and myself when reading a story weeks later with a similar occurrence.

Setting a bedtime goal and sticking to it!!!

The children recalling what we are doing today. makes me happy

Moving into my own home. I still can't believe I bought a house.

My small win is that one of my students wrote the first two letters of his name for the first time!!!I had been working with him for a while trying everything to encourage him to write. I am so proud of that student and all my students.

My small win is, being able to get up in the morning and take my grand daughter to daycare now. seeing her little face brightens my day as well as my whole life!

My co-teacher and I have been successful in toilet training students this week!

Hearing a student say "Thank You" when he never said it before.

My students scissors skills!

My children have started talking to me more in the classroom

When one of my three year old's told me the first letter of his name.

I graduated with my BA, Magna Cum Laude

A student saying my name.

Letting go of the small stuff for the greater good.

A small win I'd like to celebrate is the growth I'm seeing in my toddler classroom. When I first entered the classroom about two weeks ago, there were a lot of disruptive behaviors and no routine. Today the children are using sign language to express needs, are learning our daily routine, and there are way less behavior issues.

A TA that I have been mentoring received her AA degree

My 2 students who uses their voice to sing songs and count, but not to communicate back and forth or on command are surprising me everyday. Today one of them said "shake shake shake" when washing hands which is what is say all the time such as, wash wash wash rinse rinse rinse shake shake shake. The other one is saying bye bye when we line up now, he said "wash the hands" and he is now tapping me on the arm and says "baby shark" when I ask him what he wants or needs.

Hearing a student with limited vocabulary speak in a clear, complete sentence, even if it was to tell us no he didn't want to do something

A little boy that has cried most mornings when brought to school was able to say goodbye to mom without tears!!

Being able to see growth through documentation submitted.

There has been a child in my class that has been struggling with separation anxiety every morning. His mother just sent me an email saying that he has been getting right up in the morning and begging her to bring him to school early! He's telling her that he loves school now!

Connecting with a new student who speaks 2 languages and non are English. She told her mother that I am her safe-keeper!

I have a child who came into my class last year, that did not talk. Now she knows her ABC's and knows animals names, and can recognize them by there sounds they make, and how they look.

I want to celebrate the resilience of my young students and their families during the Covid19 pandemic.

I've fixed my laptop without having to call Tech Support.

Another child gave a book to a child who was crying and it was his favorite book. He stopped crying and a teacher read it to him.

I am grateful for my new career. It has been a journey but no where but up from here!! Bigger and Better!!

I am a new lead teacher feeling like I was failing in doing my job. Recently I have had a lot of positive feedback from my parents making me remember why I started this career to begin with.

That i can make a child smile

This beautiful opportunity to have this new job working with children is like a bright door opened up to me. Of course there will be challenges ahead of me but these challenges are part of that growth that I am more than excited to partake in.

To see a child's eyes light up when they understand what your teaching them.

A student sequenced a three-card picture story!!!

Doing a schedule change to assist a student who is still having challenges with transitions from home to school

Became a lead and loving my classroom.

Survived a stressful week!

When a parent at drop-off addressed and greeted me asking who taught their child certain vocabulary. I let them know what I focused on yesterday, and how I spoke with the children about the difference between deciduous and evergreen. She was very pleased and thankful and stated how she learned something from her child. She commended me about how I am with the children and my teaching skills thus far.

We created a tree in our classroom for our tree study and it's motivated the students to learn more about trees!

My mom is out of the hospital.

I created a treadmill using pool noodles and poster board for the exercise study and now when the student who wants to run around or out of the room and down the hall to get out energy has been hopping on the pretend treadmill instead!

That Im healthy and my family too

Creating a campsite in dramatic play to go along with our trees unit. This is something I always wanted to do but never was able to make it come to fruition until this year.

A parent thanked me for my contributions during her son's IEP meeting. She told me that she appreciated the time and energy I had taken to describe her child and all that he is capable of doing despite his diagnosis.

I received my Masters Degree.

Be able to make a difference in children's life is extremely rewarding to me.

My class was so happy to carve the pumpkin and see what was inside of it.

A child told mom that she loves coming to school, she loves her teacher!

Implementing all my interest areas and learning environment with integrity to the curriculum is indeed a small win. To see the scholars excited with their classroom and learning and moving to each area is so good to experience and see. It is a small win with great rewards!!

Despite being understaffed, even though the pay is horrible for childcare workers, and regardless of the pandemic hurdles we must jump through...our team made sure they were intentional in their teaching to help children progress in their learning.

Turning 51

For a parent from previous years to acknowledge the difference I made in their child's life. That was motivating and encouraging to me.

Huge win. I have a co-teacher I adore. She works hard and compliments my weak areas with her strengths.

I finished my checkpoint 3 days before the deadline and all my documentations are in.

Winning a grant to purchase stem resources for my classroom and children!

I totally ran a half marathon in 1:58!

I became a lead teacher at my place of employment.

I got extra sleep last night. (I'm sweeter when I sleep more.)

My grandparents got to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. My husband and I just celebrated our 1 year anniversary, and I hope we can each our 50th anniversary as well!

I am almost half-through this semester and still holding a 4.0

One I celebrated 27 years on my job. Two I celebrated 12 years of marriage. Three I celebrate my way of collecting data on my students, especially being by myself.

After a while of not being able to make time for my friends we met up and talked a lot. I never realized just how much I missed them. We even planned a slumber party :)

Took my CDA test!

Showing up to work each day and attempting to do my best even though I am grieving right now.

Having more confidence in myself

My soccer team made it to the playoffs for the first time in over 6 years.

I received an award from my school for the month. It was for being positive and for being there and being loved by my kiddos, past and present.

Switching to monthly lesson planning for infants. It has given more time to play and explore with the children and by the end of the month they have mastered the new activities because they have had consistently been able to use the same materials.

One of my greatest victories was overcoming COVID-19, and then going back to work with my children full of joy and a lot of motivation.

Just by doing my best as a teacher and not letting the overload of work get me stressed out.

I made it through another day!

Making a difference in children and families lives.

[A chid] said pumpkin!

Playing with playdough without eating it.

I bring it every day

I got married to my best friend!

One of my students was able to identify his feeling and let me help him through it, instead of becoming aggressive. Small (or big) win!

At the end of the day, I ask the children what their favorite part of the day was. For the past week, all of them have been saying “The whole day!” or “Everything”. It makes me realize that it may be a rough day in my mind, but these children are still happy and learning in my classroom.