Spotlight on FLAEYC member - Flora Oynick, MS

Preschool Director
Forty Carrots Family Center, Sarasota, FL

My story:

My name is Flora Oynick and I was born and raised in Mexico City. My parents are first generation Jewish immigrants whose parents came to Mexico City in the mid 1920’s from Poland and Russia. Growing up in Mexico City was wonderful! My family embraced the beauty of the Mexican culture, history and food!

My 3 siblings and I were educated in a Jewish Day School where children of immigrant families came from a variety of countries in Europe, the Middle East and South America. We were lucky to be exposed to a diverse population and multiple languages that I continue speaking to this date (Hebrew, Yiddish, English and Spanish).

I finished my Bachelor’s Degree in Education at the National University in Mexico City (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico) and after working at the university for a couple of years while finishing my degree, I found a preschool job at the day school I attended from 2 years old through high school. This was supposed to be a part time job so I could continue working at the university, but I fell in love with Early Childhood Education where I discovered that working with children and their families was so interesting and challenging in a way that made me more curious about child development and relationships between school, children and families.

I moved to Sarasota, Fl. with my husband in 1988. Right away I found a job at a wonderful preschool. Susan Gellens was the director and she was also a great mentor and teacher. After I had my first child it was time for me to return to work. Luckily, I was able to bring my child to work, because I started collaborating with other educators running parenting education programs, baby play groups and family education programs. Once my second child was born, I went back to teaching preschool and soon after I became the director of the NAEYC’s accredited school where I was teaching and stayed there for 25 years.

I always wanted to go back to school and I committed to finish a master’s degree before my children finished elementary school. Of course, it took me longer than that, but I graduated from Hebrew College with a master’s degree in Jewish Education in 2013.

I have been working at the Forty Carrots Family Center for 5 years where, together with a team of amazing professionals, I have been able to continue learning, growing as an early childhood educator, mentor an coach teachers, teach adults through other non for profit organizations,
collaborate and partner with the All Faiths Food Bank, Ringling Museum, Selby Gardens, Embracing Our Differences, etc.

I strongly believe that relationships are at the core of our profession. We get to know our teachers, our families, children and communities; we learn what the needs are, and we find the resources to meet those needs.

I welcome you to send me a message if you want to discuss early childhood issues and concerns. I am active in the FLAEYC Director’s Chapter and the Statewide Advocacy Chapter. I can be reached at flora.oynick@fortycarrots.com