

## Voices from the Field: Veda Crandall



**Q1: As a child care owner, how does your center identify children for more in-depth assessment to determine if they qualify for specialized services? Please describe what a typical process looks like and who is involved in the process.**

Every child is unique in their own way and they have their own strengths and weaknesses. It's not wise to compare children to their peers because children learn on different levels. But after you've worked with children for so many years, you can tell in the back of your mind if there are some possible delays after observing and assessing. If children show some problems or difficulties in some developmental areas, we then refer them for professional assessment. Our first step is to have a conference with the family to see if they have noticed or have any concerns about their child. If so, they are able to voice their concerns and we can share what we have observed also. During this meeting, we share and get permission to have an outside agency come in and do their own screening. Currently we are working closely with CDSA of Wake County. After the screening the agency will return and share their findings. If they see there are any delays, another conference is set up with the agency, the teacher and the child's family. Goals are written with the teacher and family members and a therapist is scheduled to come in and work with the child one on one or during center time depending on the goals written. In some cases, children are placed in half or full day programs that can better serve them.

**Q2: As a mother who navigated early intervention and specialized services with your own child, what do you think the service providers did well in terms of involving you in the assessment process from screening to planning? What do you wish they had done differently? What was the most effective way they tracked or helped you track your child's progress over time?**

When my daughter was almost three I noticed a delay in her speech, fine motor and social skills. I would observe her playing by herself and when she would interact with her peers they did not understand her language. I noticed a lot of them laughing at her and saying she didn't know how to talk. We all want what's best for our children and my concern was I did not want her to be delayed, I wanted her to be equal to her peers. I had a conversation with her pediatrician who advised me to contact CDSA and inquire about early intervention. Deep down I was hurt but I wanted her to receive the help she needed so I contacted Wake County CDSA to schedule a screening. This wonderful, energetic young lady name Ms. Kris came out several times a week and worked with my daughter and eventually placed her in a full day program that could better serve her. I was a part of all the decisions made for my daughter and I absolutely loved the program she was sent to. I think they made her transition to kindergarten easy for me and her. I could track her progress with great communication with her teachers and her IEP meetings which allowed me to voice my opinion and help write her goals. I received copies of everything to put in her portfolio. In the middle of my daughter's 1<sup>st</sup> grade year she was able to exit out of special services. She is currently in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and doing above average in reading and math. I am very thankful for the early intervention my child received. I think this made her equal to her peers and above her grade level which was what I wanted for her in the beginning.

