

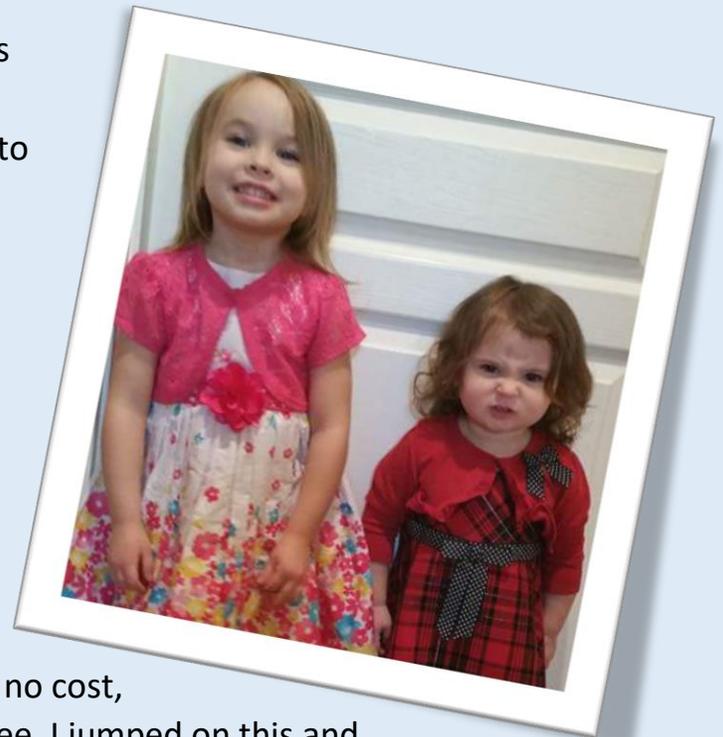
Clackamas County Children's Commission:

Kayla's Story



My name is Kayla, and I am a current Clackamas County Children's Commission (CCCC) parent, as well as an employee for CCCC. I have two children, a five-year old named Jayda, and an almost four-year old named Maycie. Jayda is currently in kindergarten, but completed five full years at CCCC, including 3 years in Early Head Start (EHS) at Clackamas Community College, and 2 in Head Start. Maycie is now in her first year of Head Start, but she completed 3 full years at Early Head Start as well.

My journey with CCCC began six years ago, when I was a single, first-time parent, without a job or a college degree. I wanted to finish my degree, which I had started years prior, but could not afford it, and had no childcare at the time. I had signed up for Healthy Families, which is a separate organization under Clackamas County Children's Commission, when I was at the hospital having my first child. A few months after I had started my home visits with my Healthy Families Home Visitor, she let me know that there was a spot open with EHS and that they would watch my daughter, at no cost, while I went to school to complete my degree. I jumped on this and had my paperwork for EHS turned in that next day. I was working hard on my college courses, and my daughter was so happy to be at school. Then came Maycie, my very busy girl. I was very lucky that there was a spot to start her in



EHS when she was about 5 months old. Not only was it giving me the opportunity to continue with school, but they were working with her, with the extra support she needed, and teaching me the skills to work with a busier child than I was used to.

I was offered multiple parenting classes, including two rounds of Circle of Security, while I had my children enrolled in EHS. As part of the program, I was given a Family Advocate, who has helped me through many challenges I have faced as a parent, and as an adult. She has given me access to community resources, supported me in finding a dentist for my children, connected me with counseling, and much more. Both of my children have dietary restrictions, due to minor medical needs, and the Health and Food Teams have worked hard each year, with their doctors, to make sure they have had what they needed at school. When my oldest daughter continued into preschool-aged Head Start, I began getting more involved in the program. I began attending Policy Council meetings once a month, and was voted in as a representative for my center. I gained a lot of experience through doing this that has helped me grow as a parent, and life experience for my future career.



I have always appreciated the help and support I was given by my kids' teachers, and my Advocate Susan. Last year, I decided to apply for a substitute position, with Clackamas County Children's Commission. After getting that position, I worked hard, and have now received a permanent position with CCCC. I feel lucky that my kids and I have been welcomed into Head Start, and I am sure I would not have a degree, or a career, if my kids hadn't started attending Early Head Start six-years ago.

