

# The Early Childhood Bulletin

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Please read on for this week's updates:

- Message from Deputy Chancellor Dr. Kara Ahmed
- Past Bulletins

## Message from Deputy Chancellor Dr. Kara Ahmed

Dear Early Childhood Community,

This week I had the honor of visiting **Bloomingtondale Family Program** in Manhattan, led by Executive Director **José Velilla**. The visit was extra special for me as I had the privilege of serving as a teacher at **Bloomingtondale** many years ago under the leadership of **José**!

My memories of being an educator at **Bloomingtondale** are filled with nothing but goodness. What is most present in my mind was the family-centered culture **Bloomingtondale** fostered. At that time, my classroom team member was a parent of a child enrolled, and his wife was also a teacher in the program. They were just one of many families who were part of the **Bloomingtondale** team of educators. When we conducted home visits, I recall **José** explaining to me the purpose was to build a relationship with families by taking time to genuinely get to know them and their child. While I already had other classroom teaching experiences prior to being at **Bloomingtondale**, and always embraced family partnerships, my experience at **Bloomingtondale** was the first time I had felt and observed family-centered practices integrated into the fabric of the program and intentionally part of the program's culture. These experiences shaped my leadership, especially as principal of LYFE in which I prioritized a family-centered culture.

It was an absolute joy to see and feel that same culture still exists today at **Bloomingtondale**. This week's visit was confirmation! Thank you to **José** for his years of leadership and dedication to countless children and their families. And a special thank you to **José's** team **Marilyn Barnwell** and **Wendy Feinstein** who are a vital part of the Bloomingtondale family!

They say you may not remember what someone said, but you will remember how they made you feel. This could not be any truer about my time with **Bloomingtondale** - then and now. It is a clear reminder of the significance of the impact we each have on creating a culture of inclusiveness, empowerment, and respect for the families we are in service to and the staff who provide continuous care and learning.

Thank you for your leadership, always. Enjoy today and enjoy the work.

In Partnership,  
Kara



Children engaged in learning experiences at Bloomingtondale Family Program