



# Kali and Jackquelyn

## It's for the Kids!



EARLY CHILDHOOD  
RESOURCE CENTER

### When asked about their jobs, both Kali and Jackquelyn have the same answer: we love what we do—it's for the kids!

Kali is a young mother who started working this past year with Jackquelyn, who has worked at Abacus Child Care Center for over 17 years. Both women work with toddlers; they believe their own experience as moms helps them support and encourage the parents they serve.

Abacus is one of 24 Akron child care centers participating in the GAR Foundation's STARS (Supporting Teachers and Ready Students) program. STARS staff members are encouraged to work with the Early Childhood Resource Center to earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. They're also supported by an Early Childhood Specialist from the Early Childhood Resource Center, who visits regularly to help with lesson planning and encourage intentional learning.

Through the STARS program, five Abacus staff members are taking CDA classes. Kali and Jackquelyn just completed their CDA classes, portfolios, and observations. After passing the final test, both women will have earned the CDA credential. During the children's nap time, they brainstorm about ways to incorporate what they're learning in the classroom into their work with the children.

CDA classes have given the women more patience, both at work and at home. Kali learned in class that each child learns at a different pace. This gave her perspective with her own child, who was born prematurely and is developing more slowly than some of her peers.

Jackquelyn's son is 39 and has special needs. She's helped him by using a technique she learned in class. When he was struggling to accomplish a task, she told him to stop, take a deep breath, then start again with her help. Both mom and son ended up much less frustrated as a result.

Both women admit that early childhood is not an easy profession, but it's highly rewarding. It helps to have the support of co-workers who can remind each other to take a step back and breathe once in a while.

### What is the CDA?

The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a nationally recognized early childhood credential. For many early educators, the CDA is the foundation of a lifelong career.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "obtaining a CDA is an important accomplishment and one that develops well informed practitioners, knowledgeable in child development and best practices for teaching young children."

In Ohio, a child care center can only enter the state's Step Up To Quality rating system if at least half of the staff members have a CDA.

Since 2000, the ECRC has provided CDA classes, mentoring, coaching, and support to hundreds of students. For more information about CDA classes, visit [ecresourcecenter.org](http://ecresourcecenter.org)