

My name is Madelin; I often go by my nickname, Maddie. I was born and raised in the Dominican Republic. My religious identification stems from early indoctrination throughout my formative years. Growing up, it was customary for us to attend religious services at a church weekly. From an early age, I have actively participated in Bible study courses and engaged in various church activities, such as joining the choir and other groups. Additionally, I self-identify as being of Hispanic, Latina, and Dominican descent. I speak both Spanish and English, with Spanish being my primary linguistic background. I come from a middle-class family, and most of my education was in private catholic schools.

I identify as a visual learner. In addition, I find it beneficial to engage in recitation as a learning strategy since it facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the material at hand. One of my cognitive abilities contributing to my learning process is rapidly acquiring information via memorization. I also strive to establish connections. When encountering a challenging topic, one strategy I use to enhance comprehension is relating the content to personal experiences or familiar observations. The implementation of well-defined norms, a structured environment, and consistent routines within the classroom contribute to the facilitation of my learning process. I prefer structured routines to establish predictability in my daily activities. The absence of a framework tends to disrupt my equilibrium. I get satisfaction from having a clear understanding of anticipated outcomes. I chose to enroll at BMCC due to limited options when I arrived from the Dominican Republic, and I had little knowledge about enrollment processes or what would be the best choice for me. Initially, I pursued a major in theater because I had been acting since a very young age. However, I soon realized that acting was more of a hobby, and I wanted to keep it that way. My decision to transition away from theater was driven by my experience working at a preschool prior to enrolling at BMCC. While not initially part of my

career plans, this work environment prompted my shift toward a major in early childhood education. Additionally, my aunts, who were educators, greatly inspired me with their dedication and passion for teaching.

To continue, I decided to interview my mom and wish my grandma and aunt were still around because they raised me until I was seven. The influence of my family and cultural group facilitated the development of my religious ideals. Even as an infant, I used to pray before going to bed. During the first months after my birth, I was hospitalized as a result of being born prematurely. I entered the world at a gestational age of around 27 weeks—my family highly esteemed nutrition, particularly in light of my early birth. From infancy, my family has always shown an aptitude for verbal expression. Those around me would question my well-being and what I wanted to wear and give me food choices. Consequently, I developed into a child with strong verbal expression, autonomy, and self-confidence. I used to cry frequently growing up. My grandmother, aunts, and mother often showed emotional support during moments of distress. Still, the male members of my family had a lesser inclination to engage in such comforting behaviors. Looking back at this I can see why I have a deeper attachment with female figures in my family.

In addition, growing up, reading was a prominent activity, not only children's books but also the Bible. Music was another integral part of our daily life, with my dad being a musician, engaging my sister and I in various songs. Through their dedication to my needs, regular reading, and engaging in discussion, my family had a significant role in fostering my growth and development. I adhered to established patterns during my childhood and often had difficulty initiating sleep. My mom exhibited sensitivity towards the matter and was highly aware of it. During the first years of my childhood until the age of seven, I was mainly cared by my maternal

grandmother and aunts, who had careers as early childhood educators. I used to go to the park and have playdates at my house with children from my neighborhood. They promoted learning by maintaining open lines of communication and respecting my personal space. This nurturing environment created a foundation for my personal growth and development.

Moreover, according to Chesire (2007), every teacher needs three basic skills: respect for children, responsiveness to them, and the ability to support relationships. Teachers show respect when approaching an infant or toddler by moving in front, speaking, and telling the child what will happen. This is different from what my family did. Although I had two aunts in the early childhood field, they didn't know about letting the baby know what you're doing. However, all of my family members were responsive to my needs. I was born at only six months, which required numerous critical specialized care. This was met because I grew and developed as a healthy baby. Infants deserve unhurried time to develop at their own pace for learning and exploration (Christie, 2018). According to my mom, we did have an unhurried time. In my early years, I was fortunate to experience this nurturing environment, living in a home with not only my parents but also my grandparents, aunts, and uncles. This extended family provided an abundance of helping hands. And my mother was a stay-at-home mom. My aunts played a pivotal role as my initial educators, shaping my early learning experiences. "When children are treated with respect, they are treated as human beings, not objects" (Cheshire, 2007, p. 36). Putting value into practice is the best way to advocate for it. In our household, we believed in practicing the values we held dear. It was through this example that I learned the importance of respecting others. My family made sure I felt heard and included in decision-making. They instilled in me the understanding of how wonderful it is to have one's opinions valued.

In conclusion, I have a strong passion for working with infants and toddlers, as I find the experience of nurturing and guiding young minds incredibly rewarding. Being a caregiver for children allows me to actively contribute to shaping future generations. This role not only brings joy and fulfillment but also offers an opportunity for continuous personal growth and learning. I deeply value human interaction and thrive on collaborating with others, making teaching and leadership natural fits for me. My inspiration to pursue this profession stems from a familial connection. I come from a family where education is highly esteemed, with two of my aunts being dedicated teachers, and three of my eldest sisters working as educators as well. Growing up, they served as my initial caregivers, and it was through their care and guidance I developed a profound love for this field later on in life. As I pursue my college education, I am committed to expanding my knowledge and skills, driven by a strong desire to continue growing and learning as I embark on this rewarding journey.

References

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