

# Love in times of Transition

By: Margarita A. Teacher Team Leader



Hello ABCLatino friends, I am glad to be able to share some more thoughts about Agri-Business Child Development (ABCD) and the impact of this amazing agency dedicated to high quality, comprehensive early childhood education and social services for the migrant agricultural workforce in New York State.

As for a great number of individuals, the holiday season is for the migrant agricultural workforce a bitter sweet reality. For a number of agricultural ABCD families and their children, the month of December is not only a time of gratitude and reflection. The month represents as well a time of farewells and separation. Many families are in the middle of planning their trips across the US in search of agricultural work. They are planning their goodbyes to friends, family and the fields of New York State. They might be apprehensive and sad as well as sometimes happy to return to crops and relatives left behind in southern US States like Florida and California.

Today, after a great deal of learning, I recognize this time as a time of transition. I think of the earth, the falling leaves, the changing colors, the dips in temperature and how nature emulates the human heart and its emotions.

I used to think of this time of change as just a sad time. I used to call it moving. It used to be the equivalent of leaving it all behind and re-starting with not much or sometimes even with nothing.

Now, because of my past experiences as a migrant child and a migrating farm worker and because of my work at ABCD, I recognize moving as just one more transition in the lives of children and adults.

ABCD is full of transitions. Transitions are individual and special moments. Moments that might bring a bit of chaos but also a sense of accomplishment.

Transitions start as we are born. We transition from a mother's protective womb to an amazing and noisy planet. Thankfully, for many of these new little beings, ABCD is there to make melody of the noise, to offer support and love.

**As infants** experience a transition from a mother's breast to a bottle, ABCD is there to support this transition with sensibility, care and understanding.

**As toddlers** transition from crawling to walking, ABCD is there to support their first steps with compassion, and encouragement for everyone, at their own time.

**As pre-schoolers and families** transition from ABCD to Kindergarten, ABCD is there to guide, encourage and promote!

Teachers, parents and the community are always there to form that bridge that will transform something a bit scary and uncertain into something full of adventure and promise.

No transition goes unnoticed or uncelebrated at ABCD. We individualize transitions big and small. We are specialists in transitions:

- from dad's arms into a bus,
- from a bus into a classroom,
- from group activity to group activity,

- from lunch to tooth brushing,
- from bathroom to nap.... and on and on.

ABCD staff recognizes the individual challenges of all transitions. We empathize with children and parents as we experience transition ourselves. Our transitions come at work in a great number of ways. They are imminent in:

- the setting of educational goals,
- in adapting to knowledge acquired from trainings in early childhood education,
- in learning to prepare our children and families, and most importantly,
- in letting those children and families go and fly into their own futures.

When I personally see children at the ABCD at Kingston center getting ready to migrate back to Florida, my heart hurts a bit. The atmosphere is bitter sweet. And then, I get it; they are growing! These 4 year olds are “elastic”. They are full of reverie and goals. They will go back to their old camps. They will be reunited with old friends. They will attend their old Head Start and be reunited with their old teachers. They will triumph over uncertainty and revel in change!

Thanks to Head Start and ABCD, these children and their families are ready for this transition. The adults in their lives have worked hard to make them feel safe. We have achieved success in that respect.

So, I am sad but happy as well. I am happy as the Kingston staff celebrates their departure with a little party. I am happy as I know they will spend the holidays in sunny Florida as their parents pursue agricultural work. I am happy I will see snow here and yet continue to be connected miles and miles away to the accomplishments our ABCD children and their families have in other parts of the world.