

Episode 5:

Show Notes - Domenica Maria Marquez

- [Domenica Maria Marquez](#), Director of Provider Services at the [California Childcare Resource & Referral Network](#), shares her journey in leading programs that support home-based childcare providers.
- A deeply personal reflection on how **love and community drive her commitment** to children, families, and education.
- [The history of FFN \(Family, Friend, and Neighbor\) care](#) — caregiving as a timeless practice, with licensing as the more recent innovation.
- The story of the [Growing Learning Caring Project](#) and later adoption of the [Kaleidoscope Play and Learn model](#), supported by the [Packard Foundation](#), to strengthen informal caregiver networks.
- [Insights on how licensed-exempt providers are often first cut](#) in funding decisions — and why their role is essential in California's childcare ecosystem.
- Domenica's personal experiences as a mother navigating childcare — from FFN care within her East Oakland community to blending family, friends, and licensed care.
- A call to [respect and dignify FFN caregivers](#), acknowledging their critical role in providing continuity of care and cultural connection for families.
- Reflections on [bias in the childcare system](#) and the importance of centering equity, peer support, and love in building responsive and sustainable support structures.

Show notes - Zonia Sanchez

- **Zonia Sánchez**, an [unlicensed Family, Friend, and Neighbor \(FFN\) childcare provider](#), shares her story of 15 years caring for children in California.

- A look at her [daily routine](#), from welcoming children at 6:30 a.m. to guiding preschool readiness through Spanish language, reading, and comprehension activities.
- The joy and pride in celebrating milestones: first words, first steps, learning to eat independently, and toilet training successes.
- How Zonia builds [trust and strong bonds with families](#), keeping parents informed and supporting their goals of education and work.
- A candid discussion of [challenges in FFN caregiving: long hours, no personal time, low pay \(\\$3.65/hour\), and lack of benefits despite being essential](#).
- A reflection on the **true value of childcare work**, comparing the wages of caregivers to fast-food jobs and asking why society undervalues those shaping future leaders.
- The [pandemic spotlight: caregivers were called “essential,” yet quickly forgotten when the crisis passed](#).
- Zonia’s call for [union organizing and recognition](#), emphasizing that [California’s 60,000 FFN providers](#) are vital to the state’s economy and deserve dignity, fair wages, and respect.