

## Jessica Shields Flowers ~ the force behind a Ripple Effect in education reform



Spurred by the nation's dissatisfaction with the state of education today, Jessica Shields Flowers, an expert in early childhood education and development, founded Ripple in 2008 to jump-start the ability of early education programs to equip children for success. Ripple is an early childhood education and development company that supports and advises preschool and daycare administration, faculty and parents on best practices in early childhood education. The name Ripple reflects the outward rippling effects of positive change, a key tenet of Flowers' work in education.

With over three decades of experience, Flowers works hand-in-hand with preschool and daycare management to examine internal operations, identify areas for improvement and provide solutions that will foster growth and opportunity. For families, Ripple also provides tailored parenting workshops and child development courses.

Flowers holds a Master of Education degree in early childhood education from George Mason University, and is celebrated for her unique ability to motivate, inspire, and create positive change within an organization to achieve optimal results for its students. Her work at Vienna Baptist Children's Center in Virginia is nationally recognized, cited in books including *Faith in Children* and the forthcoming *Faith in Children: Stories of Leadership* by Roberta R. Owens.

She has also consistently contributed her expertise to improve public awareness of early childhood education. A well-known leader, mentor and facilitator dedicated to her community, she served as co-president of the Northern Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children and vice president of affiliate support for the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education's 2,000 members. During her years in Virginia she advised 16 childcare centers in the Richmond area, working with each center to provide the highest level of care and learning and contributing to the Ecumenical Child Care Network's report *Taking the Lead: Investing in Early Childhood Leadership for the 21st Century*. The report was part of a national initiative examining the role of mentoring at designated sites over three years in order to advance the aptitude and program quality of early care and education organizations.

Flowers embarked on a career in early childhood education in 1980 as a preschool teacher at the nationally acclaimed Vienna Baptist Children's Center. After recognizing a need for early childhood education in the community, she co-founded Sunbow Preschool in 1982. She later returned to the Vienna Baptist Children's Center, where she served as director for 19 years, leading 22 faculty and three staff members and taking responsibility for the education of 200 children from three months to four years old. She also spearheaded aggressive fundraising efforts, successfully obtaining state-of-the-art equipment and resources for the school as well as securing and maintaining accreditation with the National Association of Young Children.



strengthening your early  
childhood program