INVITATIONS FOR LEARNING

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Keeping the "Heart" and "Soul" in your program

A Measuring Tool for Keeping the "Heart" and "Soul" in your program:

- **"goosebumps" all over your body**
- **"gasping"**
- **"smiling" at children playing**
- **the "urge" to get messy**
- **thinking," I wish I was young again"**
- **saying, "Wow" a lot**
- **"tears"**
- **not wanting to leave**

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Jason, a preschooler in a program that I was volunteering in, asked, "Can I stay at the school?" His mother was there to pick him up at the end of the program. I responded, "I will be waiting for you to return the next time you come." He started to put his coat on and turned to me and said, "I like it here, it makes my heart beat faster."

Many early childhood programs are looking at enhancing their quality through the accreditation process or meeting core indicators or developing goals and objectives or by establishing competencies. All of these processes are important in caring for children and families. I worry though, that components in programs that "make the heart beat faster,"

are being ignored

Keeping the "Heart" and "Soul" in a program is often difficult, because the components are not always measurable.

I love to visit programs that cause me to have, "goosebumps" all over my body, programs that cause me to, "catch my breath" when I walk around the environment, or when I leave, "tears run down my face." You will not find any of these behaviors on current measuring devices....

As you work to update, enhance or maintain quality this new year, make sure that the process gives priority to keeping the "heart" and "soul". It is these qualities that a child will maintain for the rest of their life.

Indicators for the "Heart" and "Soul" in a Program:

- Children singing songs spontaneously
- Children taking things apart
- Children choosing not to come to "gathering time"
- Children eating when they are hungry
- Children choosing to play by themselves
- Children deciding when they are finished
- Children moving objects to different locations in the environment
- Children deciding when they are tired
- Children doing most of the talking
- Children laughing and crying
- Children running and climbing
- Children saying, "This is mine."