

Documentation with Videography and Photography

Aaron Coleman, Even Start videographer

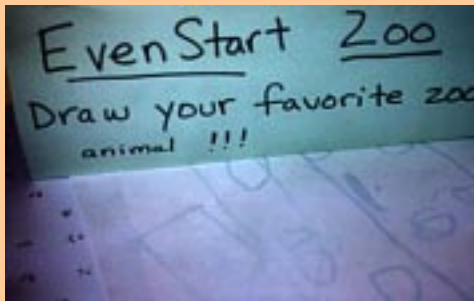
I started off as a parent at Even Start. I went from parent to a part time job videoing at the Even Start program, participating and helping the kids out, taking pictures.

When I come in the evenings, I put the tables out for the kids to have their snacks. I help the ladies. As the kids are having their snacks, before they go into the library to read, I would be videoing them. But really they do not know that I am taking pictures. I am just going along as things are happening. They do not know that their pictures are being taken, and it seems like they are very photogenic. Because it is nothing that I am setting up. As they go along I am just taking pictures of them and video them.



What kinds of things do you look for?

I have documented a lot of trips we went on. I have tapes of them at the zoo, at the Lincoln Park Zoo, that was during the summer time. I have a lot of tapes when we were at the Country Club at the lake front. The kids are in the water and have on their swimming suits, and when they are having lunch. And we went to the cheese factory. I have a tape of that, all the equipment and when the kids are sitting down and eating their cheese cake. I have plenty of videos from Navy Pier. Of the different statues, of the kids walking around, on different rides.



Even Start Zoo.

Heather dreamed of this project. They went on a field trip to the zoo, and when they returned they drew their favorite zoo animals in a mural. They had feathers and glue and collage materials to decorate the animals.

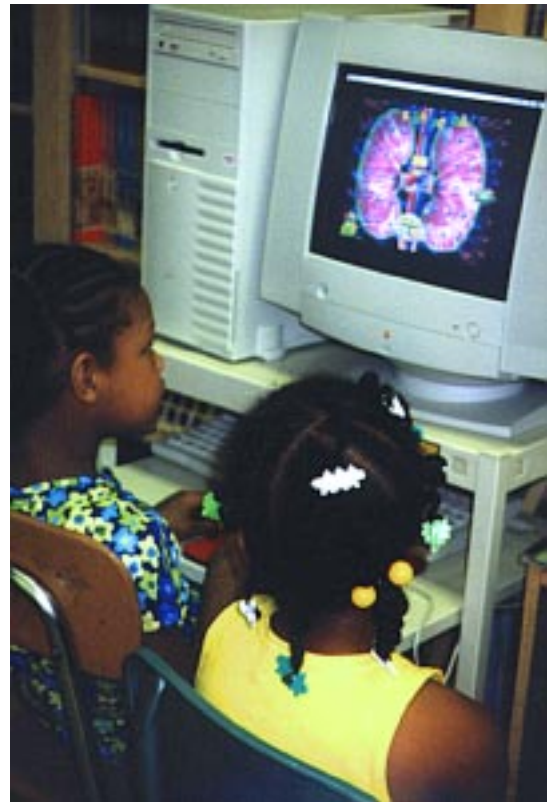
Dr. Elizabeth Landerholm, Project Director / photographer



And they used popsicle sticks to make the cages.

Dr. Elizabeth Landerholm, continued

We have many new CD-Roms with new software, in new multimedia computers and printing. A variety of ages are using the computers. The girls (right) are using a body atlas where there is a virtual tour through the body.



Aaron Coleman, continued

I look for things like when the kids are working the computers. If they are not working the computers, they are reading books. And I am catching moments to where ... all the things are really natural. And so they come out to be pretty good.

More parents are getting involved in working on the computer, and writing and printing their things.



Aaron Coleman, continued

I have videos of the kids doing different activities in the After School Program. And of the summer program when the kids brought their bicycles and decorated them. And they were riding their bikes around in the parking lot in the back of the school and they were having fun. And I have videos of when I was interviewing parents and kids when they were reading books or doing arts and crafts in the After School Program.

When do you do with these images, these videos, when you get them?

I put them to the side and keep them so that we can see them later. I have a lot of them stacked up at the school, at the Even Start program. They come in handy because sometimes when the kids go through the arts and crafts pretty fast in the next room, they might be left standing around, without much to do. So I will go and get a video and put it in the TV. The kids will come around and when they see themselves on TV, there's no problem, they sit real nice and they like to watch themselves. This is pictures they did not know that I had of them. And they just love it. That's one way to capture their attention.

What do they like about it?

They like seeing themselves. They just like to see themselves. They just love being on video, they like seeing themselves on TV.

What would you like to see done with these images you have been collecting?

I would maybe like to see us edit as many of them together as we could and put them together on one tape. Five or six projects that we have done could be on one tape. We could put most of the most important actions off of each tape and put it into one if it is possible. Each time now runs a good half hour or hour or more. We could take the main ingredients out of each tape and put it into one tape. I am sure they would love that.

Also, I plan on interviewing each kid separately. Last week I interviewed each kid on video and asked them, what did they want for Christmas, how was their grades in school, did they mind their parents, and did they like the Even Start program? Each kid stood in line. I drew a nice red line on the floor so they could stay perfectly centered in front of the camera. Because the kids they would move here, they would move there as I was recording. So I drew the line on the floor. And it was perfect. Each kid stayed in line faithfully and quietly and once their turn came, they would stand on the line and I would ask them questions: What do you want for Christmas, and so on. It was fun and the kids love it.



Snack time photos, scanned by Aaron Coleman



Dr. Elizabeth Landerholm, continued

We have been really struggling with the evaluation. We wanted to be able to show the actual results that happen, which the national evaluation does not always do. It doesn't fit right. It is hard to keep data. Teachers do not want to do data. We figure that other projects are probably having some of the same problems with evaluation.

Also, everybody got so excited about our final reports with all the pictures in them. Through the photos you could really see what had happened. And even administrators who have no idea what you are doing with the program, could get excited about it. So that whole area of having a photo report has been really exciting for the parents and the teachers, for me and for the staff. To see it in pictures has been really great. And it gives my students in teaching at the university a real feel that these methods and ideas could work.



They went on a field trip to the beach and collected rocks and shells at the beach and brought them back and set up a table so they could look at them, draw pictures and write about them. Kids who have been making play dough, stop by the rock table. (right)

Aaron Coleman, continued

I look for things like when the kids are working the computers. If they are not working the computers, they are reading books. And I am catching moments to where ... all the things are really natural. And so they come out to be pretty good.

What is it like for you to use the camera? How did this get started?

First I was just a parent coming to Even Start with my child. As I was coming, I noticed I saw Cynthia, who is videoing me now. She was there, and she just pulled me to the side and asked me would I like to learn. So I said, "Sure, I would like to." And I was committed. Once again, I was committed. And I have been there ever since then.

She said, "Take the camera home. Read the directions. Find out how to use it." I took the camera home on a Tuesday, came back on a Thursday. I was ready. I went on and did videos for a half a year. Or if not a little bit more. I did exactly as I was asked to do -- video the kids, take pictures. I was offered a part time job, just from being a parent and from volunteering. My job is to video the kids, take pictures and help out with the kids. It has been working fine, and I have been learning a lot. And I have been to other programs to either speak at the programs or to film what our other staff is doing. So I always am there to do my filming.



Conference Participation and Staff Development

Aaron Coleman, continued

Dr. Elizabeth Landerholm, continued

We took the parents to an early childhood conference on the South Side of Chicago called Parent Institute Day. Going to a professional conference, and having it paid for, and having your lunch, it was special.

The parents that were working on the project, they got to go to the Teachers' Center for the staff meetings, so that was staff development for them too. They also became advisory members on another grant that we got at the Teachers' Center. Two of them went down to Oregon, Illinois for one of those advisory board meetings. Expanding their contacts with other people, expanding their knowledge of what else is going on in the early childhood field, and family literacy field, helped them feel like they are part of the profession. Also they went to the CAEYC conference which is the early childhood conference in Chicago. So as part of the staff development of Even Start, we expect every staff member to go to at least one conference. They can choose where they want to go and what kind of things they want to learn about. It is a more personalized kind of staff development. Also, three staff members went to Springfield for a literacy conference. Dr. Karr went for the evaluation and the parents went for the home visiting and the parent-child activities. And my graduate assistant went with me to Texas to an evaluation conference.



rice snacks

Tell me about the conference you attended. What was it called?

It was called the Adult Literacy. What our job was, me and Dr. Landerholm and Lynn and Edna, was to go and explain the different jobs that we do at the After School program. We had to explain to a lot of people who were either going to school to study adult literacy or going to school to start an After School program. We helped them out a whole lot by telling them how we were running out after school program. Because of the different questions that they asked and the different things that we told them, they let us know it was very helpful to them because they did not think about it. As far as when the program starts, the reading tasks the kids do as they come in. You know the kids would read a book and after they read a book they would write down the name of the book, the author's name and what the book was about. And draw their favorite thing. And as they read so many books, after so many months, they will get a prize for it. So that was one idea that they liked.

And then another idea that they liked was that we give them snacks and then they read and then do the arts and crafts and they go from one room to the other for these activities. And they like that. And they liked when we spoke to them about taking pictures, videoing them and then playing back the videos and letting them see themselves on TV, and videoing all the different trips that we would go on.

Lynn said she goes on the Home Visits. A lot of times parents can't make it to the After School program. She would go to their home and ask why they could not make it. And they would say that either the kids were sick, or the kids did not have any clothes to wear, or something like that. That is one thing I notice about Even Start. If the parents need anything, then the staff will make sure they have it. Because they want more people to come out. There's a lot of people coming out, and we make sure that their kids have snacks. And we are always giving them gifts like pencils and paper. At Halloween time the kids painted pumpkins, and they took home a lot of pumpkins. They even had a cake for Halloween. And they was enjoying that.

I didn't realize that our program was on the move until we went to this Adult Literacy Conference. They were asking us questions and we were giving them ideas. There were people who wanted to come to our program and look around to get more input. They want their program to be as successful as our program.