



Their beginning. Our future.

## **Voices From the Field**

**Dione Garritson, MA, ECSE, Director of The Grove Early Learning Program**

My name is Dione Garritson and I am currently the Director of The Grove - BVSD's Early Learning Program. In addition to being the director, I also serve as the Early Childhood Special Educator and Child Find Coordinator. I have worked in the field of early childhood for over 20 years. I hold a Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education.

I came to the world of early childhood through more of a calling than a choice. Mistakes in my coursework schedule led me to classes in early childhood that I would not usually have taken. Once I began learning about child development and working with children I changed my career path to the field of early childhood. The most important part of my job is safeguarding childhood. So many times, children are expected to do things that are not appropriate for their age, or parents feel pressured to push their children to do the same. We often worry so much about what children will become, that we forget that who they are today is of equal importance. I will always push for children to be valued for who they are right now. I have worked in many school districts and private schools. The community in Chaffee county is much more supportive of each other than I have found anywhere else. The community-wide training opportunities and communication are extremely important in making it possible for me to continue my own education as well as offer initial training to my staff. I believe this county has the ability to create a high-quality workforce for early childhood education.

If you would like to learn more about how Chaffee County Early Childhood Council supports local early childhood professionals, visit [www.ccecc.org](http://www.ccecc.org).