



The Early Childhood Education *Bulletin*

SPOTLIGHT

From Director to Business Owner – Former Director Reflects on Journey to Fulfilling Her Dream

By Janell Carroll



Bridget Booth,
Small Business Owner

Bridget Booth has more than one reason to celebrate. Last month, she graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Early Care and Education from Florida Atlantic University. Twelve days later, she accomplished her second major goal: she became a business owner.

Her journey to business ownership began in 2010, when Jan Schmitt, her mentor and owner of the early childhood education centers that Booth managed, passed away unexpectedly. To honor Schmitt's legacy, Booth felt empowered to make a difference in the underserved communities where the centers are located. Booth purchased the Youthland Academies of Boynton Beach and Delray Beach, the two centers that she has directed for the past 20 years.

She renamed the centers "Youthland Christian Academy." Why the name change? Booth said she observed a tremendous need for the implementation of fundamental moral and ethical principles. She incorporated a faith-based curriculum to supplement character building and development, in hopes that children leave the program as responsible, productive members of society. She wants the children enrolled in the centers to have a foundation that will support future success.

Booth's next goal is to become an early childhood education professor. "I want to inspire teachers to be quality teachers," she says. She plans to continue to access SEEK Scholarship funds to enroll in FAU's Early Childhood Education Master's Degree program.