

February 12, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

Tammy Collins taught my son, Phillip, at Colonial Trail Elementary School in Richmond, Virginia, for the 2007-2008 school year. Mrs. Collins is a creative, effective and well-organized teacher and I would highly recommend her.

As the Room Parent for the class, I visited the classroom often as a Mystery Reader, Volunteer for educational classroom events, and field trip Chaperone. Spending time in the classroom allowed me to observe her creative approach as she taught different concepts using age appropriate methods.

Everything that she did always seemed to have a "teaching" purpose, yet it was enjoyable for the kids. Even the simple things, such as lining up to go to the cafeteria, she took advantage of a teaching opportunity! At the beginning of the year, each child was assigned a number, 1-18. This number was used throughout the year as a classroom identifier on hooks, cubbies, supplies and various other things. When they were learning about even and odd numbers, Mrs. Collins called the "even numbers" to line up, and then call "the odd numbers" to follow behind them. Such a simple idea! The children enjoyed "figuring it out" and didn't even realize that they were reinforcing their lesson for the week!

Mrs. Collins also incorporated first grade academic concepts into building confidence and encouraging camaraderie in the classroom! Utilizing her fun Jungle themed room, she coordinated a weekly "King" or "Queen" of the Jungle activity.

When it was your week to be King or Queen, there were different activities focusing on you as an individual person. My favorite activity that she had the children do was on Thursday, every child had to write a note sharing something special about the "King or Queen." She took these notes and bound them in a booklet for the King or Queen to take home on Friday! Not only did the kids fulfill their writing requirements, the King or Queen went home that Friday feeling great about themselves! Again, she effectively used the Jungle theme to tie her lessons together throughout the year! Using many creative activities throughout the classroom, Mrs. Collins' successfully taught Phillip and his classmates the concepts the children were expected to learn in First Grade and respect for other people.

Mrs. Collins also understands the importance of a child's temperament and how it affects their style of learning and the classroom dynamics. For example, she recognized Phillip's strengths, definitely math, and his weaknesses, reading and writing! To develop his writing skills, she used his love of drawing! By focusing on his drawing ability and not his lack of desire to write, his writing improved significantly! Although he was not an early reader, he could do addition and subtraction in his head, often without using any fingers for counting! She reinforced his mathematical abilities while patiently working with him on his reading speed and inflection. Because of her perseverance and encouragement without pressure, he is now reading at a 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level! When he reads to me, I am truly amazed what he can read now, in comparison to where he started in first grade. I feel that because of her creative approach and patience, Phillip has grown to love reading!

Mrs. Collins has so many outstanding qualities as a teacher and person; this letter could be several pages long! Phillip had a terrific year as a student and I thoroughly appreciated her efforts as a parent! We worked together on several occasions and she, as well as her classroom, was well organized and always in control. She communicated well with the parents by keeping us informed of upcoming events and questions regarding homework or classroom activities. She effectively worked through discipline issues and handled difficult situations with professionalism.

As a parent, I would strongly recommend her as a teacher to other parents and, if she were not leaving, I would have requested her as my daughter's teacher! She will be an incredible asset to any future school.

Sincerely,

Lorrie Andrews