

Transcript: Sharing STEAM Lived Experiences

Text on screen: Sharing STEAM Lived Experiences

Logo: Count, play, explore—for early education.

On screen: Aileen Rizo, speaks to a boardroom of professionals during a hybrid meeting. The word “Mathematics” is showing in large, colorful lettering on the screen behind her.

Aileen Rizo, Associate Director of the AIMS Center for Math and Science Education:

In this session, we're going to talk about math mindsets, which is really important. Because we all come with different math narratives, different math stories.

I'll share my really quick narrative. When I was in school, I remember conversations at parent-teacher conferences, being really young. And them saying, "Oh, Aileen's doing good at math. She finished her math book," all of these other things. But not really understanding in my mind, what that meant. I didn't feel like I was special, or anything like that.

Well, I was very, very quiet. And I have a little daughter who's very much like me, so I can empathize with her. But I was the kid who would never raise their hand, never. But I was also the really quiet kid that you could actually forget about. I was going to behave, sit quietly, do as I was told. So you could kind of forget that I was there. Maybe that's kind of good, but it also had some negativity.

And it wasn't until middle school, that I had a teacher who was asking me what I thought about the math problem we were trying to solve. And I didn't raise my hand to offer my opinion, she would just say, "Aileen, what do you think about this problem? What would you do first?" Or "What did you try out first in this problem?" And so I started sharing what I was thinking and what I thought would be a good strategy. And as I did that, my peers started hearing my responses. And then I started getting them coming to me, to ask them for math help.

And I remember sitting next to a friend that I was helping do the work, and they said, "Oh, I understand it now." And I remember the feeling of what it felt like to help someone else get something. And that's when I fell in love with being a teacher, with the idea that maybe I could help people understand math and that that wouldn't be something that they felt bad about or that they felt they couldn't do.

So as we think about how we support early childhood educators in their own math mindsets, we know that this could help build great positive narratives for these children, who we don't know later on what they will be or become. But how important that is to acknowledge it first for our educators, and then support them in their math mindsets, knowing that those have the ability to change. But then they have the ability to make those positive moments for their children.

Text on screen: A special thanks to the staff from the AIMS Center for Math and Science Education, without whose help these videos would not have been possible.

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