

Precious Time Child Development Center Celebrates 25 Years of Inclusive, Supportive Early Education

From a childhood in war-torn Iran to a career serving children, Peymaneh Rothstein's journey continues to inspire her work today.

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Every morning at Precious Time Child Development Center in North Chesterfield, VA, the day begins with a familiar rhythm. Children arrive clutching backpacks, artwork, and half finished stories from home. Some burst through the doors eager to greet friends. Others linger in the doorway, gripping a parent's hand for just a few more seconds before stepping into the classroom.



Peymaneh shares a moment with an infant.

“

I can't change where my story started — but I can help ensure every child's story begins with safety, support, and belonging.”

Peymaneh Rothstein

For founder and CEO Peymaneh Rothstein, these small, everyday moments are never routine. They are reminders of a truth she learned long before she opened her first childcare center: children thrive when they feel safe, supported, and surrounded by people who believe in them.

It is a lesson shaped not by professional training alone, but by a childhood lived during one of the most turbulent

periods in modern Iranian history.

A CHILDROOM MARKED BY CONFLICT

Rothstein grew up in Iran during the Iran Iraq War, a conflict that stretched through the 1980s and reshaped daily life for millions. Air raid sirens, uncertainty, and sudden disruptions were woven into the fabric of childhood. Families learned to adapt to a world where normal routines

could be upended without warning.

One memory from that era has stayed with Rothstein for more than forty years.

During a period of unrest, she became unexpectedly separated from her parents and brothers. With no way to reunite immediately, she spent the night with her grandparents, unsure when she would see her family again.

To adults, it was a brief separation. To a child, it felt like an eternity.

“There is no way to fully describe what that feels like as a child,” she said. “When you don’t know where your family is, every moment feels much longer than it really is.”

The experience left a deep imprint. It taught her how profoundly children depend on stability — and how frightening its absence can be.



Peymaneh with children at Precious Time



Peymaneh Rothstein, founder and CEO of Precious Time Child Development Center

TRANSFORMING HARDSHIP INTO PURPOSE

Years later, after immigrating to the United States, Rothstein found herself drawn to work centered on children and families. Many people who experience early hardship try to distance themselves from it. Rothstein chose a different path. She looked for ways to transform her experiences into something meaningful.

“When you’ve lived through uncertainty at a young age, you gain a deep appreciation for the opportunities children need to thrive,” she said.

Her vision took shape in 2001 when [she founded Precious Time Child Development Center](#). What began as a single childcare center has grown into a respected early childhood education organization serving families across the Richmond region.

This year, Precious Time celebrates 25 years of providing early childhood education, family

support, and inclusive learning environments — a milestone that reflects both growth and unwavering mission.

But Rothstein insists the expansion was never the goal.

The mission was.

A PHILOSOPHY ROOTED IN BELONGING

From the beginning, Rothstein set out to create more than a childcare center. She wanted a place where children felt valued, where families felt supported, and where learning extended far beyond academics.

Her approach emphasizes emotional well being, confidence, and a sense of belonging — elements she believes are just as essential as early literacy or math skills.

“Children thrive when they feel loved, supported, and encouraged to be themselves,” she said.

This philosophy shapes everything from classroom design to teacher family communication. It also influences how the center approaches challenges, celebrates milestones, and supports children with diverse needs.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

One of the clearest expressions of Rothstein’s philosophy is the center’s [Autism Inclusion Program](#). The initiative allows children with autism to learn alongside their peers while receiving individualized support tailored to their developmental needs.

For Rothstein, inclusion is not a strategy — it is a belief.

“Every child has unique strengths and gifts,” she said. “Our responsibility is to help them discover those strengths and provide opportunities for them to succeed.”

The program has become a model for inclusive early childhood education in the region, offering families a place where differences are embraced rather than accommodated.

A RESPONSIBILITY SHE NEVER TAKES LIGHTLY

As a mother of two, Rothstein understands the trust parents place in childcare providers. Each day, families hand over what matters most to them. She considers that responsibility sacred.

[“Parents want to know their children are safe,”](#) she says. “They want to know they are cared for. They want to know they are being encouraged to grow into confident, capable individuals.”

Rothstein has built her organization around honoring that trust.

Over the years, thousands of children have passed through Precious Time's doors — some taking their first steps toward independence, others seeking friendship, confidence, or a place to belong. Many of those children are now adults building careers, raising families, and shaping their own communities.

Rothstein rarely dwells on the numbers, but she acknowledges the significance of that impact.

Few people influence so many lives during the earliest, most formative years.

THE MOMENTS THAT MATTER THE MOST

Despite the organization's growth, Rothstein remains focused on the individual child standing in front of her — the nervous preschooler entering a classroom for the first time, the child struggling to make friends, the one discovering a new talent.

She sees them clearly because she remembers what it felt like to be a child searching for certainty in an uncertain world.

More than four decades after she spent a frightening night separated from her family, Rothstein now dedicates her life to ensuring other children feel the security she once longed for.

The circumstances are different. The lesson is unchanged.

Children flourish when they know someone believes in them.

For Rothstein, that belief has become both her calling and her legacy — one that continues to shape children and families across the Richmond region every day.

And as she reflects on 25 years of Precious Time, she offers a simple truth that ties her story together.

"I can't change where my story started — but I can help ensure every child's story begins with safety, support, and belonging. That is the legacy I choose."

Harvey Cosby

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