

Men in Early Childhood Education: My Interview With ABA Therapist Matthew Lister

by Mike Prochaska

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Fellow 30Seconds contributor [Matthew Lister](#) is a caring, involved man who wants what is best for all children. [Matthew](#) works at [Butterfly Effects ABA Therapy Center](#) in the New Orleans metro area of Louisiana, and also works in the private homes of families who hire him as their nanny or sitter. I am proud to call him a “brother” and an advocate in the field of Early Childhood Education.



Q. How did you get into this field?

"I became a nanny by accident, actually. At age 23, I was at a party and I saw someone being irresponsible with two young children, so I stopped my partying to sit with them until the parents were once again able to take over with their care. Soon I became the 'designated child care provider' and enjoyed the work so much that I decided to do it all the time. At the age of 31, after many years of experience, I began to get a university education in psychology, with a focus in child psychology. I now am an ABA therapist (providing therapy and teaching children who are on the spectrum) as well as taking on nanny jobs, mostly working with children on the spectrum."

Q. What do you see as the advantages of having a male teacher?

"An advantage I see in having a male teacher is that in many homes, the father is missing, and having good male role models in a child's life is an important factor for their emotional and mental growth."

Q. Anything else you want to tell us about working with young children?

"I feel that working with young children has given me the opportunity to learn and grow as a human being myself. As I teach, I also learn. As I learn, I also grow. It is vital that all children have opportunities to have both male and female teachers, therapists, sitters, nannies and role models. It is an honor to be able to be a part of those career fields, where we can make such a positive impact on their lives."

Q. What's your favorite memory working with kids?

"Every memory I have working with kids is my favorite memory. The first steps, their first words, being the tooth fairy or being Santa Claus and seeing the awe and wonder in their eyes. I am grateful to still be friends with several of the children I took care of when they were infants – 20 plus years later."

Q. Anything else you want to share?

"What began as me helping others turned into a career. It didn't turn into a career out of necessity, but out of a strong desire to make a difference in this world. Right the wrongs of history, it could be said (not having good male role models in my own life growing up). I do not want one child to miss out on the learning opportunities that males can provide."