



# Andra Burke

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## Home Child Care Provider

Seventeen years after beginning her home child care, Andra Burke cannot imagine doing anything else. Through the Great Start to Quality program she is the first and only 5 Star Home Child Care Recipient in St. Claire County, Michigan. The key to success at Andra's child care is creating a healthy atmosphere with children learning how to be self-sufficient.

*"Life is full of choices. Even young children can learn that the choices they make affect their day."*

When Andra first started out, her schedule was very structured. She is now taking a new approach allowing the children to determine much of the schedule and learning. Circle time discussions will lead to the schedule for the day which the children put together with Andra. Each child also gets to choose an activity from an assortment of activity cards. Throughout the day, the kids are learning skills like tying their own shoes and cleaning up their own messes. Andra knows the extra time spent is worth it because the children are learning independence.

Nutritious meals and snacks are included every day and are a key component in the healthy atmosphere. Andra attributes the success of her kids eating nutritious foods to simply not giving unhealthy options. As soon as the children are developmentally ready, their choices are healthy fruits and vegetables along with needed protein. The children help prepare, serve, and clean up their meals and snacks. They even entered Blake's Chili Cookoff and won first place!

Andra likes to keep her kids active as much as possible and starts swim lessons at age three. One of their favorite activities is playing in the outdoor mud kitchen Andra has created with leftover building supplies and donations. It is complete with stainless steel sinks and real pots and pans! Whether it be in this outdoor kitchen or during a lesson from circle time, Andra loves seeing the kids progress and knows she is making a difference that will affect the children for the rest of their lives.

From Fort Gratiot, MI, Andra has been a CACFP participant through ACD since 2002.

***CACFP is an indicator of quality child care.***

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