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# Cindy Whitaker & Mickey Geisler

## Home Child Care Provider

When one door closes another one opens. Cindy and Mickey took that expression to heart when they opened their own child care center after the large center where they were coworkers decided to close their doors. Twenty-three years later, they are still working together as co-teachers, co-owners of 'Lil Rascals Child Care. At 'Lil Rascals they strive to create a love of learning the children can take wherever they go.

*“Every group of kids is different. We have to find what works for them and us as teachers to make everyone comfortable and able to learn.”*

In the search for the right fit for their group of students, Mickey and Cindy have discovered a nutritional program through the state of Colorado that works alongside CACFP to be beneficial. With the Food Friend Program, they encourage every child to try a new food and vegetable each week. Even Cindy has tried new foods she is not accustomed to! They further their nutrition education by planting a garden and going to a nearby apple orchard.

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

Cindy and Mickey also use the Mighty Moves program for teaching physical education and understanding the important role it plays in a healthy lifestyle. The kids are encouraged to be outside as much as possible. This ranges from playing on a sledding hill in the winter to swimming in the summer. The kids have a climbing area, a place to ride bikes and play sports like soccer and basketball.

At Lil Rascals, it is important the children have a healthy, happy day. Cindy and Mickey use puppets to teach social emotional skills such as how to deal with frustrations and finding a solution for problems. With expectations increasing every year in school, children need to be well-rounded and prepared beyond academics. With all of the learning taking place each day, Cindy and Mickey feel accomplished and at the same time honored that parents entrust the children to their care.

From Cortez, CO, Cindy and Mickey have been a CACFP participant through Wildwood CACFP since 1994.

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