

Provider Appreciation 2025



Maggie Tucker

Operating in Summerville since 1992, child care provider Maggie Tucker, of W.C. Christian Academy, has maintained a high-quality and inviting environment for all families in the Lowcountry. “We love being a childcare provider because it reflects the core of who we are. We care deeply about others, especially young children, because they are so vulnerable and full of promise. “

Maggie has shown one of the ways she cares deeply about others is by including Dual Language Learners in her program. She and her staff have taken CCR&R’s Spanish for ECE Professionals class. And with the help of her Quality Coach, Joy Huyck-Oswald, W.C. Christian Academy has added bilingual labels around her classroom and translated material for parents into Spanish.



Maggie says of her program’s staff, “our goal is to help them build a foundation for a joyful and meaningful life. We take great pride in creating a safe, nurturing environment that supports their growth and well-being. We are their advocates, standing in the gap of those who cannot always speak for themselves. Like the powerful question asked in Antwone Fisher, “Who will light for the little boy within?” We choose to

fight, protect, and nurture the child within every child we serve.”

Dion Gaines

Dion Gaines is a Family Child Care Provider in Greenwood, SC. Being an FCC provider means that Dion has gotten to be part of her son’s educational experience, as well as being a stable and encouraging presence for the other children in her program.

For Dion, “the most valuable part of my job is being a part of the village for our families. I enjoy seeing the kids’ faces when we do group activities like coloring and sing-alongs! I am blessed to be able to care for and teach my son, who is on the spectrum, all while working with other children. I love being a positive and motivated person for my children to imitate.”



Monica Akers-Bellamy, CCR&R FCC Quality Coach and Team Lead, has gotten the pleasure of experiencing Dion’s determination firsthand. When reflecting on Dion’s journey, she said, “Dion is so positive, energetic, and has the families and children in her community at heart. [Dion] worked tirelessly, completing every task that was given to her and did not give up when faced with personal adversity. She may have paused to take a breath, but came back with twice the determination to succeed with a quality program for her community.”

Renee Collins

Renee Collins is a Family Child Care Provider in Spartanburg, SC, serving the area for 9 years. Renee excels as an FCC provider in her willingness to mentor and support other providers. Renee’s Quality Coach,

Tammy Penner, is excited to highlight Renee “for her current passion and excitement of extending her indoor learning environment into her outdoor learning environment.”

Last year, Renee got her 3.5-hour Project Learning Tree certification at Roper Mountain Science Center. Project Learning Tree is an award-winning environmental education program. Since receiving her certification, Renee has gone above and beyond to integrate the teachings of PLT into her program.



As Tammy Penner says, “Renee has invested in enhancing and transforming her current outdoor learning environment by focusing on an all-natural outdoor experience. She has currently expanded her back deck, added a roof, two mud sinks/kitchens, wood beams for balancing, and added a raised planting box for flowers/veggies. Renee’s next steps are to add pots, pans, and lids for a music area, create a library/reading area, add a block area using different pieces/sizes of wood, and add wooden seats from different-sized tree trunk pieces.”

Monica Rogers

Monica Rogers’ center, This is My Child in Spartanburg, SC has earned the ABC Quality rating of A! According to Monica’s Quality Coach, Sherry Ly Ching Chen King, part of what has earned Monica this quality level is her skills as a director. “Monica is a dynamic director. She always puts the center’s vision and needs in her communication and operation practices. She works with teachers in assisting and supporting their needs.”

For Monica, she attributes her success to three values: supporting children, supporting your teaching staff, and supporting the families you serve. “One of the most fulfilling aspects of being an early care and education provider is contributing to the development and well-being of young children during their most formative years. The teaching staff in a program are its most valuable asset and have a lasting, positive impact on both children and families. I take great pride in supporting educators as they create safe, nurturing, and engaging environments where children can learn, grow, and thrive. Building strong partnerships with families and supporting each child’s unique needs and potential is both a responsibility and a privilege I deeply value.”



Monica has been able to grow her business while maintaining the same level of quality. She recently broke ground on a new center and was able to involve her center’s children by having them plant flower pots.

Lashawn Lumpkin

Lashawn Lumpkin takes pride in the stability and warmth she provides in her program. Especially because many of the children Lashawn serves are coming to her from the foster care system. Using her own words, “One thing I truly love about being an in-home childcare provider is the opportunity to serve children and families from the comfort of my own home. It allows me to create a warm, nurturing environment where children can fully be themselves, free to learn, grow, and thrive as the unique individuals they are.”

Lashawn’s coach, Tammy Penner, has enjoyed getting to know Lashawn and being an ally in helping her increase her quality of care. “[H]er drive and determination have been astounding to watch. It is an honor to

coach Lashawn... [h]er enrollment has and is still increasing, she is always looking for ways to enhance her business, reaches out to discuss her thoughts/ideas, and together we discuss what resources she may need, create action steps, and she puts forth the effort to see each thought/idea/action step through to completion.”

Lashawn applied to T.E.A.C.H. and will begin ECD 101 later this month!



Thank you so much to all the providers who allowed us to highlight you this month! You all are the backbone of South Carolina's families, workforce, and early investment in children. Your work inspires us, and we're so lucky to get to work with you!