



“I think micro-grants has been a great program...We’ve just been really, really pleased with how everything has made our center that one step up.”

**— Dina Bettin, Director
Marion Day Care, Inc.**

A Step Up With the YoungStar Micro-Grant Program

Marion Day Care Director Dina Bettin started participating in YoungStar from the very beginning of the program, with a foundation for quality already in place thanks to work done with [Child Care Resource & Referral, Inc.](#), her local CCR&R.

“We have found [YoungStar] shines a light on the things you forget about,” noted Dina. “You see your center through new eyes.”

For Dina, one of the biggest benefits of participating in YoungStar and receiving technical consultation over the years, has been gaining micro-grants to purchase materials, training, and other items that help her program meet their quality improvement goals. She stated that she has found the micro-grant process to be smooth and easy to follow, and has always appreciated that there is support available from Micro-Grant Specialists when she has questions.

“Don’t do the auto 2 Star because with micro-grants you could really benefit your center in a lot of different ways,” emphasized Dina. “Not just the physicality of getting new items...your center’s vibe or the feel of it could be improved.”

Dina worked with SFTA Micro-Grant Specialist Amanda Rose to order items for her most recent micro-grant, which was used to purchase materials to engage their older after-school children, such as a hopscotch rug that recently came in very handy on a snowy day. The funds were also used for items for the infant and toddler rooms such as bibs and changing pads (selected purchased items pictured in photos).

“We feel like it is giving us the right tools to be able to connect with and engage children,” said Dina. “That’s what we feel the micro-grant gives to us.”

Dina added that she would encourage providers to take advantage of the Micro-Grant Program and all that it offers if they have not done so yet, and to plan ahead for what they want to order based on what is laid out in their Quality Improvement Plan to ensure they purchasing in line with their program needs.

“Take the time and the energy to do it,” said Dina. “You can only get out of the program what you put into it.”



The Micro-Grant Program grants funding to support the Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) developed by child care providers in collaboration with their Technical Consultants, who guide providers in implementing their QIP as part of the YoungStar technical assistance process. Learn more at: supportingfamilies.together.org/youngstar-micro-grant-program/

