



“Since I have been in YoungStar it has really changed the focus of how I teach, and the quality and safety of the environment.”

- Leah Zastoupil, Owner  
Zasty's Family Child Care, Milton

## A “Remarkable Child Care Provider”

### Roles in Early Childhood

Leah Zastoupil opened Zasty's Family Child Care in April of 2005 to meet her own children's need for quality care. Now, after nearly 11 years in business, Leah is a fixture in the early childhood field. Backed by her associate degree in Early Childhood Education and recently earned Administrative Credential, she is the Vice President of the South Central Association for the Education of Young Children, the Region 16 Board Member and Co-Conference Chair for the Wisconsin Family Child Care Association, a trainer for The Registry, and is a cooperating teacher with Blackhawk Technical College's Early Childhood practicum students. All this, and her program is a 5 Star. How has YoungStar altered her approach to child care? “Since I have been in YoungStar it has really changed the focus of how I teach, and the quality and safety of the environment,” said Leah. She added that she has a lot of respect for the “why” behind YoungStar, because she sees firsthand how it allows her to better support the children in her care. Furthermore, parents notice and respect the positive changes she has made through YoungStar, which she said helps her in marketing her business. One parent had this to say:

*“Leah is a remarkable child care provider and truly treats all of the kids like family. The amount of activities and learning that the children receive is amazing. She really works hard to make sure each child's needs are met with different activities for each age level...I can honestly say that my husband and I could not ask for a better daycare provider for our children. They are in such a fun, safe and loving environment. For parents it is truly a blessing that I can take my kids there every day and a worry never crosses my mind.”*

Leah's program has been highlighted in the news more than once this year, in [Family Child Care Magazine](#) and [her local news](#), showing that it is not just the parents who are taking notice of her achievements in quality.

### YoungStar Technical Consultation

This year, Leah is using her YoungStar technical consultation to focus on family engagement and developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). Her Technical Consultant, Jessica Austin of [4-C](#), was able to offer insight into both of these topics, and Leah has been pleased with the results. “It's unbelievable how much more family support I get because it is on the forefront of what I want to improve,” noted Leah. “Now I have an outpouring of support...it feels like more of a community.” Leah has also been able to complete an overhaul of her playground equipment through YoungStar consultation and micro-grants, and make updates to her program environment. Moving forward, Leah plans to sustain the quality of her program through YoungStar, and emphasizes the positive impact YoungStar and her continuing education have had. She said she would encourage all providers to use programs, like YoungStar, T.E.A.C.H. and Wisconsin Shares, that are available to support them in their work.

## Wisconsin's Stars are Shining

YoungStar informs parents, recognizes quality providers and brings resources and support to programs committed to improving quality. But what it's really all about is helping Wisconsin children shine bright.