



The Academy of Young Minds is conveniently located just off State Route 94 in Wadsworth.

# The Academy of Young Minds offers the ultimate in childcare

By: Ray LeRoy

Being apart from the ones we love is a challenging situation. It causes so much stress in people that it even has a name, separation anxiety. Perhaps there is no greater example of this syndrome than when a man or woman makes the decision to use childcare for their youngster in order to get back to work to provide a better family income. A parent in this situation is looking for some specific attributes from the place where they are leaving their children. First and foremost, they are looking for a safe and secure environment. Second, they are searching for an environment that will nurture their child making the child feel comfortable and keeping them active and happy. Lastly, they long for a place that will stimulate their child, a place where they won't spend all day in front of a television set.

There is a place in Wadsworth that knows just how you feel. In fact, the owners of Academy of Young Minds have created a place that addresses these issues and many more in a new and creative way. Their full-service childcare center is a dream come true for parents who need daycare for their children.

Academy of Young Minds is the result of a collaboration between Kathleen

Clark, the director, and David Hoffman her partner and the business manger. Kathleen brought a wealth of ideas and experience to this project. She has a degree in art and is working on her Masters in Education with an emphasis on art. Additionally, her family has been active in the daycare industry, owning a variety of centers over the years. Kathleen has the practical experience of working and directing many of these. David has a Masters in Political Science from the University of Akron and has worked in the fields of education and government. He has also owned and operated a business in the private sector.

Kathleen and David have a mutual goal of directing their skills and experiences towards a career with meaning and purpose. Both agreed that providing a high-quality childcare center that would positively impact early childhood development would make a difference for individuals, and ultimately, society in general.

Once they had the idea to open Academy of Young Minds, David and Kathy traveled around the country looking at many different daycare centers and keeping track of the very best ideas they found. Then they worked together to create a new model daycare facility. They

incorporated every good idea they had, or had found in their travels. Then they modified it to fit their budget. The result is a state of the art facility designed lavishly to exceed state requirements for space and programming.

Academy of Young Minds boasts ten different rooms. Children spend the day with children their own age. The facility offers rooms for junior infants, senior infants, junior toddlers, senior toddlers, preschool, pre-k, and school-age children. There is an expansive activity room with a vaulted ceiling as well as a designated art room and computer lab. Children participate in a creative curriculum that emphasizes the arts. Some of the program is teacher directed while other parts of the educational program are child directed – that is teaching children what they show an interest in learning. There are two different outside playgrounds, one for younger children, one for older. There is also the indoor activity room mentioned above with equipment that allows the children to exercise their large muscle groups even on those days that offer inclement weather.

"The goal here is to offer children age appropriate learning to feed the minds. Many on our staff are degreed educators

and others have come to us with an abundance of experience. Together the staff works to prepare children for school. Kathleen has developed a program in which children excel. They love being here and our parent feedback during the first five months has been excellent.

"We encourage those who visit here to visit other daycare centers and compare. We want them to choose the place they feel is best for their children. We are gratified that so many of these people have chosen the Academy of Young Minds. We offer many opportunities for parents to interact with us through child/parent events, open houses, craft days, or even to stop by and have lunch with their child when their schedule permits. Most parents are surprised to find that this extra measure of service doesn't cost more than most other centers," David adds.

Academy of Young Minds offers several programs including half days, 2 days per week, three days per week, and fulltime. They are open 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. They are located at 311 Weatherstone, just off state route 94, north of Great Oaks Trail in Wadsworth. For an appointment to tour the center, call 330-336-6000.

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