



Angela Dumas

Owner-operator of a listed family home in Houston, Texas

Texas Can't Work Without Her

As a listed family home in Texas, I can care for three children who aren't related to me. Currently I have two 1-year-olds and a 5-year-old. Being listed also allows for two older children who come after school. I've been taking care of kids for 15 years now. The first child I cared for was just 6 weeks old, the baby of a friend who was going back to work. What I love is seeing the little ones grow, seeing their excitement about life or something they've learned when they connect the dots about how something works. That's why if I gave myself a title it would be "Supporter of

"What I really love is being able to take the burden from parents who feel fear and anxiety when they're not sure if they can take care of their children and also go to work. I went back to school when my four kids were young, and sometimes I was in a bind where I had to reach out to family, friends, neighbors, or someone other than the child care facility at the college because I had to work on weekends or needed to work overtime. Sometimes I had to juggle lots of balls or make special schedule arrangements with my employer. So, I can put myself in parents' shoes."

Growth." That's what I do, I support children's growth and their family's health.

The families I have now are single-parent families. One is a healthcare worker and the other works in hospitality. They are both shift workers. The healthcare worker has to be at work at 6 a.m. and works for 12 hours, so I actually open as early as 5, so that I can receive her babies. The one in hospitality may work as long as 8 p.m. So many days, I work from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. The healthcare worker also works one weekend a month, so I also work on Saturday once a month to accommodate her schedule. For parents who don't work 9-5 and parents who really want a smaller environment, not a big facility, home-based care is what they want.

What I really love is being able to take the burden from parents who feel fear and anxiety when they're not sure if they can take care of their children and also go to work. I went back to school when my four kids were young, and sometimes I was in a bind where I had to reach

out to family, friends, neighbors, or someone other than the child care facility at the college because I had to work on weekends or needed to work overtime. Sometimes I had to juggle lots of balls or make special schedule arrangements with my employer. So, I can put myself in parents' shoes. My relationship with parents is a partnership where I design my services so that they get the care they need when they need it, and I'm able to grow my business. All of the children I care for receive a state subsidy, but it's only \$50 per week for listed providers. In Texas, there are three tiers of reimbursement and listed providers are on the bottom tier. We also don't get the reimbursements for transportation, for extra care for children with disabilities, for weekend care, or holiday care. So when I do provide those extras, I'm eating the cost of my end. As I get older and things get more expensive, I find I'm eating more costs.

If we work together more and home-based providers are supported, then we can provide the care so parents can work and be part of the economy or get an education so they can better themselves and their families. That's really a common goal for all child care providers, so I'm hopeful that upcoming changes will allow them to see how we are an important part of the system that gives parents lots of choices for quality care that meets their unique situations.