

# VOICES FROM THE FIELD

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## Tredena Trott, Family Child Care Educator

*Written by Stephanie Thompson*

Ask family child care (FCC) educator Tredena Trott if she has any advice for FCC colleagues who are thinking about attending DIEEC's 1st State Family Child Care Conference this year, and her response is simple: "GO!"

Being the only adult in your workplace can be challenging. The conference is an opportunity to meet and connect with people from all over the state. Tredena loves the chance to exchange phone numbers with these colleagues and the supportive relationships that form as a result.



*Tredena Trott, images by Stephanie Thompson*

Tredena says that in family child care, "you always have to be versatile and multitasking." Family child care professionals are educators, but they are also small business owners. She appreciates the knowledge she finds in the breakout sessions at the conference: "How to organize, how to keep your books- they bring in people who have those careers who are able to help!"

Some 15 years ago, Tredena was a customer service representative with Aetna. She noticed that many of her colleagues struggled to find care options for their children with hours that worked for them. Tredena, who had previous experience caring for children at her church, saw both a need and an opportunity.

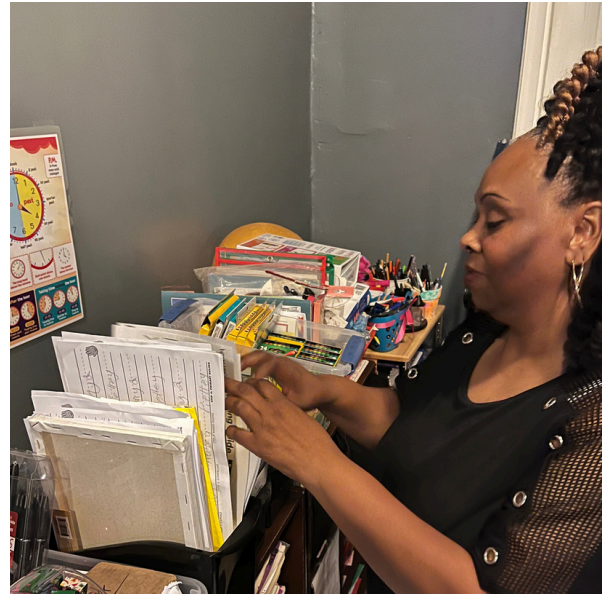
She and her husband moved from Sussex county to Felton, Delaware, and when they built their home, they used the space allocated for a garage to instead create an inviting space for Tredena's family child care program.

As a licensed family child care provider, Tredena currently has 9 children enrolled in her program, ranging in age from 1 year to 12 years. With children of different ages and different personalities, Tredena says you don't always know what you're going to get from day to day, but it keeps things interesting!

She particularly enjoys time spent working with young children on fundamental skills like ABCs, colors, and numbers. The basics don't have to be boring, though- Tredena knows that children benefit from varied approaches, and that different learners engage in different ways. In her classroom, they might learn about colors together, then get up and go exploring to find things that are red or blue or green- using their eyes and their bodies to support learning. She also emphasizes the importance of communication with parents and families- open two-way communication about children's needs is essential to creating an environment where they will thrive.

Self-care helps keep Tredena motivated and engaged. During the week, if Tredena needs extra support, she calls on a substitute teacher. This can help give her a few additional hours to work on important tasks, or even just time to take a walk around her development, allowing her a few minutes to recharge. She says that on "Fridays I go down emotionally, physically, mentally...When I close that door to the garage- I'm getting into my relaxing clothes and reclining." On Saturdays, Tredena typically reserves quiet time for herself, but at other times she makes a point of seeking out adult company at a church gathering, or a change of scenery by taking a quick weekend trip with her husband. "You have to be creative, you have to make time," for self-care.

Groups like DIEEC’s Family Child Care Network offer Tredena a source of support, ideas, and new perspectives. She particularly looks forward to the in-person meetings she attends on the first Saturday of the month and the Make Time for Me self-care events. She has also found many FCC connections within her church community, and cherishes those. The connections formed through networks and conferences endure outside of those events: Tredena participates in ongoing group chats and social media groups with other family child care educators where they share information and fill each other in. The connection with other family child care professionals, says Tredena, “gives you the energy to be able to keep going.”



To learn more about the Family Child Care Network visit: [www.dieec.udel.edu/family-child-care/family-child-care-network](http://www.dieec.udel.edu/family-child-care/family-child-care-network)

To register for the 2024 1st State Family Child Care Conference visit: [www.dieec.udel.edu/whats-new/1st-state-fcc-conference](http://www.dieec.udel.edu/whats-new/1st-state-fcc-conference)