

Sharon Day Care appeals to younger crowd

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BY RUTH EPSTEIN REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

SHARON — Carrie Olsen had a vision soon after being hired as the executive director of the Sharon Day Care center last July: to expand its offerings to include care for infants and toddlers. That vision will become clear in September when the facility will open its doors to those as young as 12 weeks.

During a tour of the center this week, Olsen showed the room that will house the newest customers. It has previously been used for some equipment and an office, but now boasts cribs and other furniture, new carpeting and other amenities to satisfy the necessary requirements. Olsen said local artist Theresa Kenny will be painting a colorful mural on one of the walls.

"I told the board at my first meeting about my plans," she said, noting she'd had several phone calls wondering if the program could include infants and toddlers. As someone who has spent a lot of her career in early childhood programs, and as a parent who once had to find suitable day care, she knew how important it would be to the Sharon program.

She set about meeting the state regulations and received approval from a very supportive board, she said. Obtaining certification was a rigorous process, but she was persistent and finally met with success.

The center is located in a section of Sharon Center School, and Olsen said the school staff has also been very cooperative. While the facility is licensed for up to 16 infants and toddlers, the center will restrict the number to eight. There are already three signed up for September.

The day care currently takes children age 3 and up.

There is a preschool program and one for those who come after school.

Some new staff will be hired to meet the necessary one-adult to four-children ratio. She has some employees in mind, noting, "it takes a special person to take care of babies."

The rates at the center are \$55 per day; \$40 for half a day. Those wishing to enroll their children or want further information may contact Olsen at 860-364-5182.



Carrie Olsen, executive director of the Sharon Day Care, stands beside cribs that will be used at the center starting this fall. The program is expanding to offer infant and toddler care services. Ruth Epstein Republican-American

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