

# TEACHER

FROM A1

she said. "I'm thankful that I had that, and I knew what to do."

Facility manager Debbie Euhardy said all teachers and staff at Under the Rainbow receive first-aid training, including the Heimlich maneuver. Euhardy, however, said this was the most serious safety incident that has occurred at the center in the 30 years she was worked there.

It appears that Meyer saved the 3-year-old boy with lifesaving techniques that were textbook perfect, Euhardy said.

"I told her she did a great job," Euhardy said.

Along with other children in his age group,

Andrew was sitting in a chair about 9 a.m. Tuesday eating a breakfast that included fresh fruit. After jamming a whole strawberry into his mouth, he began making strange noises and another teacher asked him, "Andrew, are you choking?"

Working with other children across the room, Meyer overheard what was happening and immediately rushed to Andrew's side. She first slapped him on the back a couple of times. When that did not work, she crouched down behind him, wrapped her arms around his torso and squeezed Heimlich maneuver-style.

The strawberry became dislodged and passed down his throat,

as Meyer felt the little boy's body relax and return to normal.

"I could feel him breathing, and he was fine," she said. "It happened so fast."

Abby Behnke, a schoolteacher who also has a 5-year-old daughter, said Andrew has developed a bad habit of eating too fast and not chewing his food. He remembers feeling frightened while choking on the strawberry, she said, so she hopes that he will be more careful in the future.

When Behnke considered how close her son came to a life-threatening accident, she was overcome with emotion.

"I was just horrified," she said. "I'm not a huggy person, but I gave that woman the biggest hug of my life."