

PA NAP SACC Innovative Practices

Child Care Center

A Mother's Touch Center for Child Development

Contact Person

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Do you participate in Keystone Start?

Yes, Level 3

What is your early childhood education center like?

A Mother's Touch Center for Child Development is a group daycare with peach trees, grape vines, and a garden, all within the city of Sharon, PA. We are located a block away from one of three elementary schools. Daily, we serve 12-15 children ranging in age from four months to nine years. We provide breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. We have three employees and two summer helpers. We have a culturally diverse staff and children.

Where did you make an Innovative Policy change?

Nutrition Policy – Foods Served

What was the objective of your Innovative Policy?

Our goal was to increase servings of fruits and vegetables to three to four servings a day and support children to develop and appetite and appreciation for a variety of fruits and vegetables.

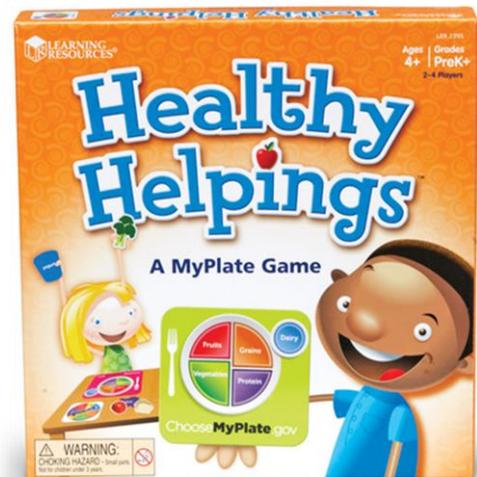
Describe your Innovative Policy.

We began to roast the majority of our vegetables in olive oil or seasoning or stir frying in the wok versus steaming or boiling them. The children seem to like the taste better. We also offer fresh fruit at least three times a day. We all eat together. We eat the produce that is in season, but supplement with frozen fruits and vegetables when needed. The children also enjoy smoothies that we serve with breakfast or snack.

Children play Healthy Helpings™ MyPlate game to learn about healthy foods. We share resources from ChooseMyPlate.gov with parents. Children have created art using pictures of fruits and vegetables from magazines. We added books about different foods to our library. When we eat together, we talk with the children about how the fruits and vegetables are nourishing our bodies, like carrots help us to see well.

What action steps did you take to reach your goal?

We took the time to find ways that our children would eat fruits and vegetables with the least amount of rejections. For example, we offer the children their favorite vegetable, roasted broccoli, once a week. They love it and ask for seconds and sometimes thirds.



How did you measure success?

The success is in the children eating more fruits and vegetables and enjoying them. After eating a healthy meal, we talk about how happy their hearts and bellies are and sing *My Heart Says Thanks* (Choosy Kids).

What advice would you offer to other child care programs that want to try your Innovative Policy?

Take the time to experiment with children to find ways to prepare fruits and vegetables in a way that children like. If you don't succeed at first, keep trying. We encourage children to try as many bites as their age. Children may not like raw spinach in salad, but they may try it in wedding soup or a smoothie. Remember that like adults, children care about presentation. Texture and appearance are important to them. If you can, a garden is a good way to encourage children to try fresh vegetables. We pick kale and make chips and smoothies. Be sure that your staff are eating the same foods as the children and modeling healthy eating habits. Talk with the children about the foods they are eating. Ask them to describe the food and how it tastes. Besides crunchy, sweet, and delicious, encourage them to invent new words like scrumpdillicious.