

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?

Physical Activity Policy – Physical Activity Education and Professional Development

What was the objective of your Innovative Policy?

Our objective was to develop indoor and outdoor activities that would give children a way to expend their energy.

Describe your Innovative Policy.

We collaborated with the Head Start classroom where some of our children also attend. For a small stipend, and exercise physiologist agreed to provide professional development on activities that teachers and caregivers could do in the classroom and

outside. For six weeks, the staff, exercise physiologist and our preschoolers walked a block to the elementary school's Head Start classroom. Together we participated in an hour of fun activities that kept the children interested and moving. These activities could be replicated at our site and at Head Start. Because of poor weather, we weren't able to do the activities outside, but we simply moved the chairs and tables out of the way so we had the space to be active.

We purchased some minor equipment like dancing wands, cones with poles, potato sacks and CDs. The children learned to jump in and out, forwards and backwards, and side to side using ladder rungs. We used balance beams and created obstacle courses to help children to develop skills.

Our physical activity policy states that we will go outside until the temperature reaches 20°. We keep extra gloves, snow pants, boots and hats on hand in case a child does not have an item. We often take walks in the



neighborhood. Our policy also states that children will engage in 60-90 minutes of physical activity every day. We typically do half of the time in the morning and half after nap time.

What action steps did you take to reach your goal?

We collaborated with Head Start. Working with a professional like the exercise physiologist helped us develop activities that the children loved, and that they we could continue.

How did you measure success?

We measured success based on the responses of children and staff, including Head Start. The collaboration was a success. The Head Start teacher her classroom behavior improved. The children were happy and eager to try the activities. Our children would ask if it was Tuesday and if Coach Joe was coming! All children slept the entire nap time on the days we had activities with Coach Joe.

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

Don't be afraid to something. Increasing physical activity leads to many positive classroom changes. Let children see you participating in physical activity and role modeling healthy behaviors. Don't think of physical activities as being too simple or too advanced for children; be prepared to make adaptations.