



Montgomery Early Learning Centers - Norristown

Contact Information

CACFP Sponsor	Diane Gross
Child Care Facility Name	Montgomery Early Learning Centers- Norristown
Child Care Provider Contact Person Name	Kira Marcy
Contact Person E-mail	Kmarcy@melc.org
Contact Person Phone Number	610-275-2640

Description

Montgomery Early Learning Centers (MELC) was founded in 1963 as the Day Care Association of Montgomery County, Inc. to address unmet needs for child care locally, especially those of low-income and "working poor" families. The MELC-Norristown site is located in the heart of the county's most impoverished neighborhoods. As a large child care facility, we offer care to 100 children between the ages of six weeks and five years. The bulk of our children walk to school with a family member, giving us a community feeling.

Keystone STARS Level 4

Category

Physical Activity Time or Environment – PA1 Active Play and Inactive Time; PA Play Environment

Goal

Our goal is to improve the nutrition and physical activity practices of our children, staff, and children's families while at the center and at home.

Description

Montgomery Early Learning Centers (MELC)-Norristown is Moving and Grooving for a healthier lifestyle. Utilizing Hatch Early Learning "Fit4You" classroom kit, we have been increasing physical activity time at our center. Each kit includes book collections, activity guides for teachers, a poster set, fitness manipulatives such as a dumbbell, water bottle, gym bag, soccer ball, basketball, jump rope, numbers ball, exercise dice, healthy play food, fruit counters, and games. The kit also includes music and movement CDs, exercise cards, home activities, and checklist for families to use. One element of the Fit4You kit is the "Henry's Fitness Gym" for the dramatic play area. Included in the kit are a gym bag, gym membership card, busy body cards (for exercising), posters, exercise equipment such as dumbbells and a CD for exercising. Teachers placed a large mirror in the Gym Center so children could watch themselves exercise. This learning spills over into the outdoor environment and home. Teachers were able to adapt the "Fit4You" activities and games so that they can be played outdoors in a large group. Also, families are encouraged to borrow books and certain activities for home use. Parents provide positive feedback about this opportunity, and children talk about doing the activities as a family.

After participating in I Am Moving, I Am Learning Training, teachers developed a better understanding of the importance of physical activity and how easy it was to increase the amount of physical activity time provided each day. We increased our outdoor play time from 30 to 60 minutes (weather permitting) and our indoor active play time from 30 to 60 minutes. This was done in small intervals so the children and staff could adapt

to the changes. Teachers also learned, through I Am Moving, I Am Learning Training, that physical activity was a great way to support transition times throughout the day. Finally, we purchased active equipment such as balls, jump ropes, exercise CDs, and Let's Get Moving Activity Mats. All of the equipment can be used either outside or inside.

Action Steps

- Increase outdoor active playtime (weather permitting) from 30 to 60 minutes.
- Increase indoor active playtime from 30 to 60 minutes.
- Ensure that all Teachers and Assistants read all materials before implementation.
- Implement the Fit4You curriculum, which includes music and movement CDs, exercise cards, soccer balls, basketballs, jump ropes, a numbers ball, and exercise dice.

Materials

Item Purchased	Cost of Item
Fit 4 You Program	\$365.35
Good Morning Exercises for Kids - CD	\$15.99
Cool Aerobics for Kids - CD	\$15.99
Let's Get Moving Activity Mats	\$39.95

Advice

All Teachers and Assistants need to become familiar with the materials before implementing a new program.

Evidence of Success

Weekly anecdotal writings and observations reflect an increase in children's interest in physical fitness. The new curriculum, materials, and use of physical activity during transition times have increased the amount of physical activity time offered to children.