

PA NAP SACC Innovative Practices in Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy

Child Care Center

Sonshine Christian Academy

Contact Person

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Do you participate in Keystone Stars?

Yes, Level 4



What is your early childhood education center like?

Sonshine Christian Academy serves children from 6 weeks through Kindergarten in a high quality early education and care setting. We are located in the Education Building of the Drexel Hill Church. Our licensed capacity is 133, with an average daily attendance of 104 children. We believe that children learn best through play. Sonshine's aim is to provide opportunities for two hours of physical activity throughout our day. We incorporate a learning environment to allow all children to succeed regardless of their learning style or developmental level.

Where do you make an Innovative Policy Change?

Indoor and Outdoor Play Environments

What was the objective of your Innovative Policy?

To allow two hours of physical activity throughout the day.

Describe your Innovative Policy?

Since children are naturally active, to provide time and space for movement is always a challenge, let alone two hours of activities. However, it can be broken down as simply as thirty minutes of child directed activity, outside/playground time and thirty minutes of teacher directed activities, inside or outside. Teachers can use CDs and YouTube Videos to dance, exercise, do yoga – there are limitless resources. One hour of physical activity can be broken down to 10 minute increments throughout the entire day – before, during and/or after circle time and during transition times. Creativity is key, and knowing what your children can do is imperative to providing an environment where they can move their bodies, yet be respectful of space and others. Teachers must be flexible and willing to learn from the children in implementing these activities.

What action steps did you take to reach your goal?

Presenting these ideas to the staff and allowing them time to reflect and offer their own ideas made it easier to implement. Expecting the staff to struggle and permitting them the space and resources to make it work for their room made it successful ---in different time frames.

What materials did you purchase to support your action steps?

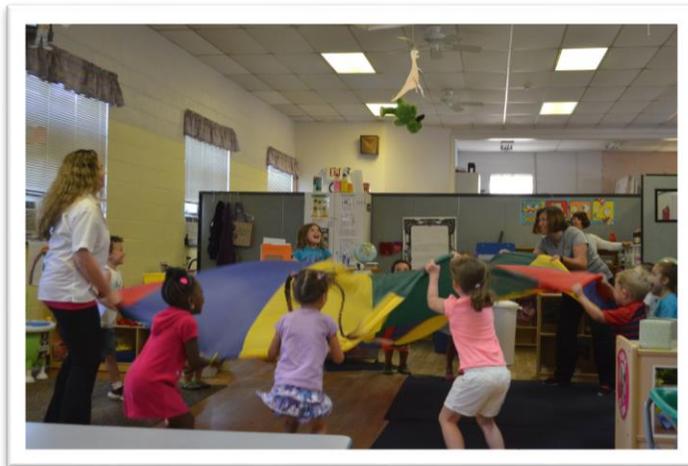
- Little Movers™ 5 Hoop Basket Ball Goal
- Rainbow Anti-Burst Hop-A-Long Bouncers

How did you measure success?

The major measurable success was our preschool room composed of 85% boys. They could not sit through a five minute circle time. Now the teacher starts and ends circle time with movement activities, allowing the children to dictate to her when they need to move. It took weeks for the flow to develop. Now they sit for a twenty minute circle time without interruption!

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

Change your viewpoint concerning time and space to accommodate movement activities for your children. Some people believe that if they don't have a large area or many "toys," that moving with children is impossible. Watch your children when they are given freedom to move within an environment and dedicated time to move and play. We don't need a lot of resources to accommodate our children and movement activities. However, when you are fortunate to have resources and space, then use them wisely. Change when things get boring and continue doing the same activities that excite and cause children to move!



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