



# God's Precious Blessings Daycare

## **Contact Information**

<b>CACFP Sponsor</b>	First Step to Nutrition
<b>Child Care Facility Name</b>	God's Precious Blessings Daycare
<b>Child Care Provider Contact Person Name</b>	Tamica Reynolds
<b>Contact Person E-mail</b>	msmica1@clear.net
<b>Contact Person Phone Number</b>	484-685-3582 or 484-477-3743

## **Description**

God's Precious Blessings Day care is a Christian, licensed family daycare home. We currently serve five children aged 2 to 5 ½. Although we serve a mixed age group of children, we benefit from our small size as each child is able to get one on one time throughout the day to focus on his or her developmental goals. We have been truly blessed as all of the children and their parents are very supportive of whatever we strive to do or the new things we share with them.

## **Keystone STARS Level 1**

### **Category**

**Foods and Beverages provided during snacks, meals, or celebrations** – N1 Fruits and Vegetables; N4 Menus and Variety

### **Goal**

My goal was to plant our first garden and incorporate the fruits and vegetables into our menu.

### **Promising Practice**

To serve a variety of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables, I visited a farmer's market website to see what was in season for our area. We organized a taste test with donations from each family every Wednesday. Instead of toys for show and tell, children bring something healthy to share, like low fat yogurts and low sodium/low fat dips. We had group discussions about where each fruit and vegetable lived (bush, tree, underground, or vine). I used pictures from Color Me Healthy, the internet, and magazines. I purchased two cookbooks; one that was kid friendly and one for vegetarians. I used these to guide the revision of my 4 week cycle menu (allowing time for new vegetables and fruits to be introduced a little at a time). We planted our vegetable and fruit seeds in our raised garden beds. Pumpkins, watermelons, cilantro, peas, tomatoes, carrots, corn, lettuce, and radishes are now growing in our own play area, and we did it!

### **Action Steps**

- Visit the farmers' market to learn about seasonal fruits and vegetables.
- Research what to plant in the garden.
- Map out the garden and plant seeds.
- Involve children in caring for the garden, like planting, watering, and harvesting.
- As fruits and vegetables ripen, offer taste testing to introduce the new foods.
- Incorporate foods from the garden into the menu cycle.
- Include the fruits and vegetables into other center activities. For example, grow pumpkins and you will not have to visit the pumpkin patch in the fall. You can pick your own pumpkins.

## **Materials**

<b>Item Purchased</b>	<b>Cost of Item</b>
Greener 4x4 Cedar Raised Garden Bed	\$34.97
Vegetable Seed Mat	\$19.99
Vegetable Soil	\$7.77
Plastic Strawberry Planter	\$4.98
Kids Cup Pumpkin Seed Starter Kit	\$0.97
Kids Cup Watermelon Seed Starter Kit	\$0.97

## **Advice**

Involve parents in the changes you plan on making and see if they can bring in recipes, food, or volunteer to help. This process made me leave my comfort zone and get the children into new foods and practices that are healthy and will affect how they will choose to live. Always send information home so the parents can help by carrying these new practices or ideas into their homes.

## **Evidence of Success**

I know these practices are working because the children now have the desire to change what they eat at home. The children are not afraid to speak up and say "I can't eat that. It's not healthy," or "Ms. Mica, is chocolate cake healthy?" They try new things as long as they can lick or take two small bites to taste it! This is a big change from children who said, "All done," as soon as they sat down because there were vegetables on their plate.