



Maria Russo www.cacfp.org Home Child Care Provider

The slogan at Maria's New Beginnings Family Child Care is "Healthy, Happy, Kids Here!" which is exactly what you'd find among her eleven enrolled children where safety is a top priority.

Maria keeps nutrition fun and educational for the kids. By finding something they like, she expands on that taste and incorporates it into other foods, like adding carrots into a pasta recipe. Maria tries to introduce 4 to 5 new fruits or veggies per month and to add to the fun, the kids get to help cook when age appropriate while learning valuable lessons too. For example, a grilled cheese sandwich reemphasizes the shape of triangles and a strawberry can be another example of the color red.

Maria and her team of three assistants introduce many skills to the kids such as math, science, and reading, but she also constantly works on finding opportunities to expand on the children's education with extracurricular activities. During the summer, swimming lessons are provided to the kids by a

licensed aquatic instructor. Once a month, a puppeteer comes to the center. Local professionals such as members of the police department and a baker have visited. Maria also involves parents and families by asking them to come in and talk with the kids about what they do at work.

Maria compares her kids to butterflies. "You nurture them, feed them, watch them grow and then you eventually have to let them go."

Maria has found her passion working with the kids. Watching the kids flourish gives her the greatest joy and makes her want to continue with her child care business. She knows even when she's having a rough day, "the kids can always bring a smile and wash any worries away."

From Medford, MA, Maria has been a CACFP participant through Clarendon Early Education Services since 2009.

CACFP is an indicator of quality child care.

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