



Maria Claudia Ortega

Home Child Care Provider

www.cacfp.org

After immigrating to the United States from Columbia, Maria Claudia Ortega realized she could still have her dream of taking care of children through her own home child care. She immediately became licensed and opened her doors to My Little Geniuses. Eighteen years later, she continues educating and caring for children, working diligently to provide a safe, secure, and happy environment.

“Love is the most important part of caring for children. I hope that they will take what I teach them and the experiences that they have with me throughout their lives.”

She wants to provide the children with opportunities to explore and develop their own unique individuality. Maria loves music and uses songs to teach the children preschool academics. She encourages physical activity through play, taking daily walks to the park and walking to the library frequently. There is a farm in the area where both the children and the parents spend time learning where food comes from, how to milk a cow and even how to gather eggs from a chicken.

Maria knows it is important to provide nutritional experiences. She teaches her children about gardening basics, and as the children gain experience and interest, she encourages them to cultivate tomatoes, lettuce, cilantro, and many other vegetables. The children get firsthand experience of the food cycle when the plants they grow appear on the dinner table. Their favorites are making homemade tomato sauce for pizza and incorporating their homegrown fruits and veggies into smoothies.

Maria uses MyPlate and her own experiences to educate parents. She holds two nutrition training classes a year. Last summer, she taught the parents about sugar, specifically the sugar in sodas and other sugary drinks. Every month she sends a recipe home and encourages parents to serve them hoping to reinforce what she has taught and encouraging good nutrition habits with the whole family. For Maria, this is one more way she can help establish a healthy environment for children.

From Atlanta, GA, Maria has been a CACFP participant through Quality Care for Children since 2006.

CACFP is an indicator of quality child care.

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