

Pennsylvania Farm to School Network Success Story: **A MOTHER'S TOUCH CENTER FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT** Mercer County, PA



Cheryl Moss, the Owner and Director of A Mother's Touch, a daycare in Sharon, Pennsylvania, and her students visit their garden every day, even in the cold Western Pennsylvania winters. "We'll go out in 20-degree weather, fill buckets with snow, wear coats and goggles and make snowballs." Cheryl's love for gardening started in 2016 when A Mother's Touch received a wellness grant to construct four raised beds. The site now has nine beds in total!

Gardening has taught Cheryl that nurturing a garden and nurturing children isn't all that different. For gardens and children, it's important to understand "their development so you can give them the necessary tools to grow appropriately. Both can only

grow when you nurture and take care of it," says Cheryl.

"Both gardens and children are seeds to be planted," Cheryl continues. "Plants should be appropriately watered and children should be given developmentally appropriate experiences to help them learn and grow. Too much too soon or "over-watering" a plant can kill the plant. Too much too soon in children can make them unstable in all areas of development."

"I want to give them the opportunity to be willing to try."

-Cheryl Moss, Owner and Director





Both plants and children are sensitive to their elements: sun, heat, rain, temperature, and weeds. “Children are affected by the indoor and outdoor environments. Weeds of negative words, actions, and poor nourishment are pulled. With a good foundation, both plants and children will flourish.”





At A Mother's Touch, the students are involved in every part of the gardening process. "I want to give them the opportunity to be willing to try," says Cheryl, and they love to try what grows in the garden. They eat sugar peas and green beans straight from the vine and pick carrots and cucumbers from the garden beds for a snack.

"The seed is in them," says Cheryl. "Hopefully, these enjoyable experiences will give them the desire to garden when they are older."



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