



In celebration of Earth Month, the Department of Human Services Child Learning Centers have launched the new initiative, Ready, Set, Grow! The program introduces children to:



**READY,
SET,
GROW!**




-  A source of nutrition
-  A wildlife habitat
-  A space for scientific observations and experiments

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Program Overview

Ready, Set, Grow! is aimed in engaging students enrolled in the City of Miami Child Learning Centers to the outdoors. A garden at each center will provide a hands-on learning experience introducing children to a source of nutrition, a wildlife habitat, and a space for scientific observations and experiments. The gardens will compose of fruits, vegetables, pollinators, and native plants preparing young learners to actively participate in science, nutritional, and environmental education.

Accreditation Alignment

The program was created to support Curriculum and Instructional strategies, Lesson Planning and Instruction, Environmental Design, and Family Partnerships.

Standard 5.1 Curriculum and Instructional strategies

- Preparation of the environment to allow children time for active, hands-on experiences with real objects
- Provisions for children to express their curiosity, their artistic ability, and their creativity

Standard 5.2 Lesson Planning and Instruction

- Lesson plans to include outdoor experiences, such as experiencing nature and exploration and discovery

Standard 7.2 Environmental Design – Outdoors

- Children have opportunities to play in the natural environment
- Outdoor areas provide opportunities for quiet play, books, manipulatives, and dramatic play. It is a natural place for science activities, art, and sand, and water exploration
- The outdoor area includes different surfaces, cement, grass, sand, etc.

Standard 8 Family Partnerships

- Parent involvement through the facilitation of center-based community events

Source: Florida Association for Child Care Management: <https://www.faccm.org/about-faccm/>



An Equal Opportunity Institution



Family Nutrition Program Garden Support

The Department of Human Services has partnered with the University of Florida IFAS Extension’s Family Nutrition Program (FNP) to establish gardens at our three Child Learning Centers. According to the University of Florida, research has demonstrated the ability of garden programs to increase willingness of students to taste and enjoy fruits and vegetables. FNP offers free garden programming support to schools participating in research and evidence-based nutrition education curricula as an enhancement of the nutrition education. FNP garden support includes materials and resources which provide school garden leaders and programs with knowledge, skills, and tools to lead their school gardens as independently as possible, and which are designed to engage their students in the process and experience of growing garden produce. The purpose of the garden support is ultimately for students to taste and learn to enjoy more fruits, vegetables, and herbs for healthy flavoring.

Family Nutrition Program Overview

The Family Nutrition Program is a FREE program that teaches nutrition to SNAP-eligible youth and supports healthy changes in communities. The program has been in effect in Florida since 1996. It teaches children and teens how to make more nutritious food choices and adopt healthier eating and physical activity habits to reduce the risk of obesity and chronic disease.

More information on the Family Nutrition Program can be found here:

<https://familynutritionprogram.org/>



School Garden Leadership Training

The Garden Club for parents at each Child Learning Center will be able to utilize the School Garden Leadership Planner to help each center create a seasonal plan for their school garden program step-by-step. The planner can be completed on an annual or seasonal basis and provide each center a blueprint for how to achieve goals through out the school year.

The planner encourages to:

- Create a vision for your school garden
- Build your garden team
- Set Seasonally appropriate SMART goals
- Create an action plan
- Outline student engagement and curricula connections
- Discover kid-approved crops
- Select your garden crops
- Map your garden
- Schedule your planting and harvest dates
- Maintain your garden
- Harvest your garden crops
- Celebrate with a tasting event
- Reflect on the growing season

Parent Engagement at Moore Park





Parent Engagement at Eaton Park





Parent Engagement at Lemon City





2023 Impact Report



2023 Impact Report



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112 Plants & Seeds Planted



66 Kids Received Garden Kits



66 Students Participated



90 Books Donated



39 Parents Engaged



5 Hours in the Garden per Week



48 Bags of Soil



18 Hours setting-up








Parent Testimonial



"It was a wonderful experience to participate in the Ready, Set, Grow! project at my daughter's school. It inspired me to start my own garden in the backyard. I was able to spend quality time with my daughter and create memories together. Everyone involved was welcoming, knowledgeable, and helpful. I recommend this project at every school."



What Did We Plant?



Interactive Exterior Mural at Eaton Park Child Learning Center

Artist Monique Boileau proposed an interactive exterior mural at Eaton Park Child Learning Center's playground for the "Ready Set Grow!" gardening program. The proposed theme referenced a whimsical nature scene that promotes environmental stewardship and awareness through playful imagery of local plants and animals, natural climate cycles, and gardening tools. One specific image requested is a watering can pouring out positive messages within water droplets. The mural included an interactive element of brown chalkboard paint as the "soil" for the bottom half of the mural where children can draw and write.



Before



After






Social Media



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**READY,
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GROW!**



Engaging curiosity



Nurturing environmental awareness



Promoting interpersonal skills



Promoting healthy eating and physical activity



Fostering academic achievement



Improving self-esteem



Learning to enjoy fruits, vegetables, and herbs



**READY,
SET,
GROW!**

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City of Miami Child Learning Centers
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