

## **BANANAS Success Story**

BANANAS is a nonprofit child care resource and referral agency serving the diverse families in Northern Alameda County. Workshops, classes, and support groups are offered to parents and caregivers, and they connect families with all types of child care options, from babysitters and nannies to preschools and family child care centers.

BANANAS' mission is "Partnering with families and child development professionals to raise happy, confident children. As soon as you walk through our front door, you will see children busily exploring the BANANAS Playroom, parents stocking up on books and toys from our free boutique, and families meeting with counselors to find the perfect child care fit. Bananas offer person-to-person, individualized support in a friendly and welcoming environment that is inclusive of all people.

In May 2016, BANANAS passed 100% Healthy Beverage, Physical Activity, Breastfeeding and Smoke-Free Workplace standards.

BANANAS held their 1st annual biggest loser contest and a large number of staff participated in the 3 month contest. The staff shared recipes, cooked/ prepared healthy breakfasts and lunches here at BANANAS, took walking breaks and exercised after work. The contest was a lot of fun and encouraged all the staff to focus on healthier life styles. They are already thinking about having another wellness/ health challenge of sorts for the spring.

BANANAS organizational culture includes celebration of staff's birthdays, anniversaries and cultural traditions that includes cooking and sharing food often. So in entering to this process of shifting the organizational focus to health and wellness while maintaining the internal culture, they had to rethink celebrations that included food. The wellness initiative inspired staff to find healthy ways to make their favorite traditional meals.

"The wellness challenge inspired me to change my habits at home and to find healthy ways to cook with my two year old daughter" – Janae N

