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FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

Growing Stronger Together

Cultivating Healthy Habits from the Start: Farm to Early Care and Education





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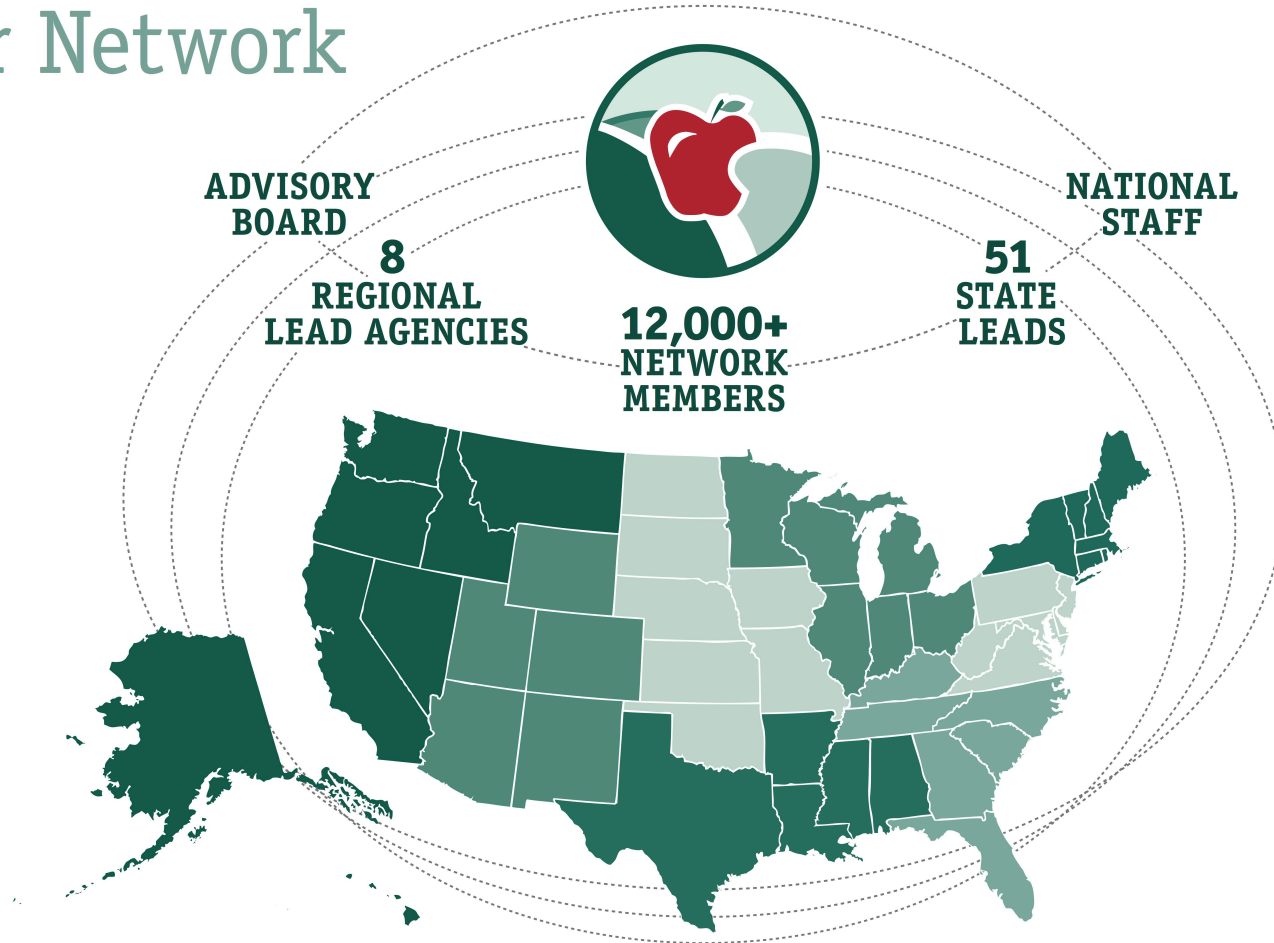
INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK



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Our Network





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National Farm to School Network is a hub for:

Information

Networking

Advocacy

Connecting people to:

Resources

People

Policy



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WHAT IS FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION?

Photo Credit: Taking Root Tennessee



Farm to Early Care and Education

- Group of strategies and activities that offer:
 - increased access to healthy, local foods
 - gardening opportunities and
 - food-based activities
- Targets children ages 0-5
- Leverages infrastructure and success of K-12
- Adapts to all ECE settings



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CORE ELEMENTS OF **FARM to SCHOOL**





Education

- Farm and garden books
- Cooking activities
- Taste tests
- Special visitors - farmers, chefs, etc.
- Sensory exploration





Education (cont.)



- Food and garden lessons – how food grows and where it comes from
- Field trips – farms, gardens, farmers' markets, etc.
- Math, science, literacy lessons



Gardening

- Containers
- Raised Beds
- In ground gardens
- Hydroponics
- Vertical gardening



Credit: NSAC



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Photo Credit: Fairyland Family Childcare, YMCA of Madison, WI, Taking Root Tennessee, IATP Farm to Head Start



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Local Foods

- Meals
- Snacks
- Taste Tests



Photo Credit: Fairyland Family Childcare, IATP Farm to Head Start



Unique Opportunities for Local Food

- Flexibility of purchasing
 - Varying class and program sizes
 - Year round programming
- ECE Priority Areas
 - Experiential learning opportunities
 - Family style meals
- Best Practice in CACFP
- Capitalize on K-12 successes and infrastructure





Farm to ECE Objectives

- Increase access to locally-grown, healthy foods
- Provide gardening opportunities and hands-on experiences
- Enhance the quality of the ECE educational experience
- Promote and enhance family and community engagement
- Create a culture of health and wellness in ECE settings





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Movement Break

How do our tomatoes
grow?





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Planning for Success

What farm to early care and education activities
are you already doing?



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**WHY FOCUS ON FARM TO
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION?**



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Why Farm to Early Care and Education?

Same reasons as Farm to School!



Kids WIN



Farmers WIN



Communities WIN



...and more

- Family and Community Engagement
- Enhanced Educational Experience
- Health and Wellness



**= alignment with early care and education
priorities and goals**



Family and Community Engagement

- Emphasis on parental engagement
 - Most successful parent engagement actively engages with experience and feedback
- Meets needs of children of all ages
- Children as agents of change
- Impact on caregivers
 - Prioritize healthy eating
 - Expand acceptance of new foods
 - Encourage positive attitudes and modeling
- Connect to community, culture, and heritage





Family Engagement Opportunities

- Family dinners
- Family taste tests
- Cooking classes
- Community supported agriculture
- Story time
- Garden days
- Field trips





Enhanced Educational Experience



- Alignment with ECE standards and systems
 - State Early Learning Standards
 - Head Start Program Performance Standards
- Experiential education is the norm
 - Supports appropriate cognitive, physical, social and emotional development



Health and Wellness

- Early development of eating patterns and preferences
- Rely on parents/caregivers to create food/activity environments
- Increase availability, acceptance, and consumption of healthier foods
- Increase knowledge and improve food choices of parents and caregivers





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Planning for Success

What is your vision for farm to Early Care and Education?

What resources do you already have to achieve your vision?

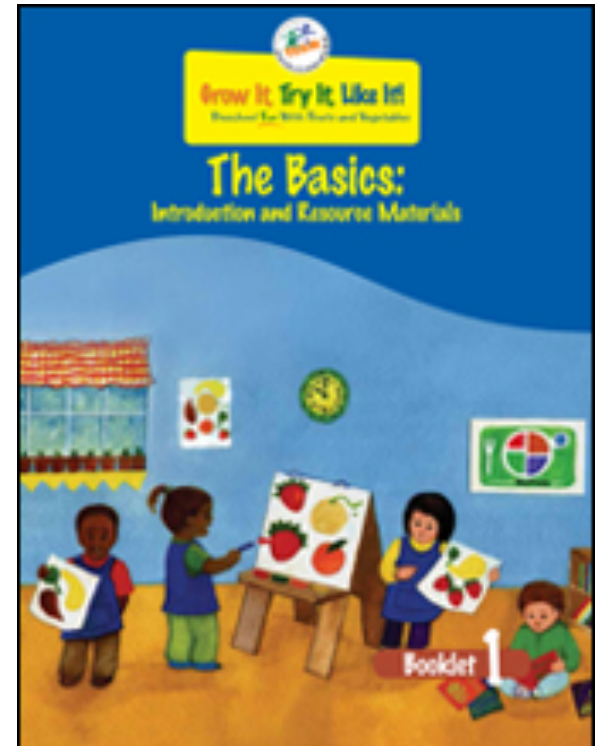


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USDA Grow it, Try it, Like it! Spinach Lane Activities

- Mystery Box
- Leaf rubbing
- Tasting





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**RESOURCES FROM THE
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Farm to ECE Landing Page

www.farmtoschool.org/
earlychildhood



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Farm to Early Care and Education

Cultivating healthy habits for our littlest eaters

Farm to School in Early Childhood Builds Healthy Kids with Bright Futures

Results from a National Survey of Early Care and Education Providers

In 2015, the National Farm to School Network surveyed early care and education providers across the country to better understand their current farm to school initiatives, motivations for applying farm to school and challenges to starting or expanding these activities. We received responses from 1,496 providers serving 183,639 young children in 49 states and Washington D.C. This snowball sampling helps us understand what support is needed to continue to grow these activities.

What did we hear from ECE providers? Farm to school is a critical strategy for early childhood development for two important reasons: **health and high-quality learning**.

See the survey results and help spread the word that farm to school build healthy kids with bright futures!

- View and share the **infographic**
- Download a **fact sheet** to share with local partners and policymakers
- Help spread the word using this **outreach toolkit**





Fact Sheets:

- Getting Started with Farm to Early Care and Education
- Local Purchasing for Family Child Care Homes
- Local Procurement for Child Care Centers



GETTING STARTED WITH FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Stay Informed

Join our network:
FarmtoSchool.org

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GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER
The National Farm to School Network is an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food and agriculture education

What is farm to early care and education?

Farm to early care and education is a set of strategies and activities that offer increased access to healthy, local foods, gardening opportunities and food-based activities to enhance the quality of educational experience in all types of early care and education settings (e.g., preschools, child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, programs in K-12 school districts). In addition to promoting health, wellness and high quality educational opportunities, farm to early care and education also expands healthy food access, encourages family and community engagement, provides additional market opportunities for farmers and supports thriving communities.

Getting started

Farm to early care and education offers multiple strategies to improve the health of children, increase the quality of educational experiences and promote valuable family engagement opportunities. This list provides easy first steps to develop a lasting initiative in your community:

- 1 Assess where you are and where you'd like to be.** Are your goals centered on:
 - Purchasing healthy, local foods to be served in meals or snacks?
 - Establishing a garden or offering gardening experiences?
 - Enhancing the learning environment with other food and agriculture related activities (e.g., field trips to farms or farmers markets, cooking lessons, etc.)?
 - Engaging families in local food access and education?
 - All of the above?
- 2 Form a team and collaborate.** Teachers and administrators, parents, Child Care Resource and Referral staff, local farmers, community organizations, and even local colleges/universities can play important roles in establishing a sustainable farm to early care and education program.
- 3 Establish one or two attainable goals to get started.** Some ideas include:
 - Identify snack or meal items that you would like to transition to local.

FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IN ACTION

Many programs exist across the country—here are two examples:

In-home providers offer experiential education through a backyard garden
In Los Angeles, Ethan and Friends Family Child Care owner Shaunte Taylor has transformed her modest inner-city backyard to include raised beds, a compost bin, multiple fruit trees, and a chicken coop. Now, children plant seeds, amend the soil while investigating worms and insects, water plants, and harvest and prepare simple recipes using their garden produce.
Continued on other side...



Resource Database

www.farmtoschool.org/
resources

Resources

Search our resource database

The National Farm to School Network has curated hundreds of resources related to farm to school and farm to preschool. Use the search criteria on the left to narrow your search results or scroll through our entire library, located below. Words or phrases entered in the keyword search field must be an exact match.

SEARCH BY KEYWORD

CHOOSE BY STATE ▼

PUBLISHED START 28

PUBLISHED END 28

Search only NFSN Publications

Search by Setting:

- Preschool / Early Care
- K - 12 School
- Farm to Institutions: Colleges, Hospitals, Prisons, etc.
- On the Farm
- Other
- After School / Out of School Time

Search by Topic:

- School Gardens
- Procurement
- Nutrition Education
- Culinary Education
- Farm-based Education
- Curriculum
- Marketing
- Research & Evaluation Methods
- Data, Statistics & Reports
- Peer Reviewed Articles

Resource Search Results

WEBINAR ARCHIVE: NFSN Farm to Early Care and Education Group Webinar

by National Farm to School Network | April 13, 2016

This webinar offers insight into early care and education (ECE) agencies and organizations, and highlights opportunities for state level partnerships to advance farm to school in ECE environments.

WATCH VIDEO

Sourcing Local Foods: Understanding Procurement Rules and Regulations Webinar

by MSU Center for Regional Food Systems | February 16, 2016

This in depth webinar focuses on proper procurement procedures for sourcing local food for school and early childhood food programs including strategies for successfully navigating the process.

VIEW RESOURCE

Growing Healthy Kids through Farm to Child Care

by Public Health Law Center | October 20, 2014

This resources is designed to help child care providers and other early childhood educators understand how farm to child care strategies complement existing licensing, quality ratings, and best practices standards.

VIEW RESOURCE

Survey Results: Farm to School in Early Childhood

by National Farm to School Network | April 13, 2016

In 2015, the National Farm to School Network surveyed early care and education providers across the country to better understand current initiatives, motivations and challenges in applying farm to school activities in early care and education settings.

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES



Resources

- USDA, Farm to Preschool
 - <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-preschool>
 - Policy Memos
 - Federal and Regional Contacts
 - USDA resources
- [Farmtopreschool.org](http://farmtopreschool.org)



Planning for Success

What are the first farm to early care and education activities/initiatives you will put into action?

What resources do you need to put these initiatives into practice?



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COMING OCTOBER 2016



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Questions?



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