



FARM TO SCHOOL IN PRESCHOOL

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NOURISHING KIDS AND COMMUNITIES
The National Farm to School Network sprouted from the desire to support community-based food systems, strengthen family farms, and improve student health. Funded in part by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Network coordinates, promotes and expands the Farm to School movement at the state, regional and national levels. The Network is a project of the Tides Center.

What is Farm to Preschool?

Farm to Preschool is a natural expansion of the Farm to School model and encompasses a wide range of programs and activities for the 0-6 years age group. Farm to Preschool serves the full spectrum of child-care delivery: preschools, Head Start, center-based, programs in K-12 school districts, nurseries and family home care facilities. Our definition of Farm to Preschool is intentionally broad, encompassing any pre-kindergarten program that serves children ages 0-6, and which includes some type of local food education or purchasing.

Farm to Preschool Goals

- Influencing the eating habits of young children while their preferences are forming
- Creating healthy lifestyles through good nutrition and experiential opportunities such as gardening
- Improving healthy food access at home and within the community
- Supporting local and regional farmers and food producers
- Ultimately influencing policies to address the childhood obesity epidemic through a local food lens

Farm to Preschool Components

Program activities can take an environmental and systems change approach by serving preschoolers, teachers and child care providers, parents and family members, as well as communities. Components can include:

- Sourcing local foods in school snacks and meals
- Promoting and increasing access to local foods for providers and families
- Offering nutrition and/or garden-based curricula; school gardening
- In-class food preparation and taste testing
- Field trips to farms, farmers' markets, and community gardens
- Parent workshops and other forms of outreach to families
- Implementing preschool wellness policies which address Farm to Preschool principles
- Influencing policies at the local, state or national level

Many preschools and child care centers are already implementing these activities, whether or not they refer to them as Farm to Preschool.

Stay Connected

Visit our website and join our mailing list at:
www.farmtopreschool.org

Receive our monthly e-newsletter Taking Root. To sign up, email info@farmtopreschool.org or click on "Newsletter Sign Up" on any page of the website

National Farm to School Network's Farm to Preschool Subcommittee Members:

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Carol Stroebel, Children's Environmental Health Network

Amy Yaroch, The Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition

Why this Age Group?

Early childhood is a critical stage of child development. Attitudes towards foods that are shaped at this time in life are strong determinants of later eating behaviors, and many preschoolers suffer from high rates of obesity and low consumption of fruits and vegetables. It has become increasingly imperative to establish healthy habits early on. Many preschoolers consume the majority of their daily nutrients in child care, and more than any other age group, they rely on parents and caregivers to shape their food and activity environments. Farm to Preschool programming is a perfect way to establish healthy patterns in our youngest citizens and connect them to the food they eat, while supporting local food systems.

Who's Leading this Movement?

The National Farm to School Network's Farm to Preschool Subcommittee represents the first national effort to organize this work on a broader scale, connecting and supporting the many programs in existence and helping to grow the movement.

Initiated in the spring of 2011 to better support the rapidly growing interest in Farm to Preschool programming from many diverse stakeholders, the Subcommittee is comprised of national leaders in the field of child care and Farm to School.

The Subcommittee is currently developing a strategic plan for moving the field forward and functioning as a forum for sharing and disseminating best practices.

Workgroups and Projects

Subcommittee members are currently undertaking the following work in order to further the Farm to Preschool movement:

- Analyzing a national survey of programs
- Conducting research and evaluation
- Engaging farmers and food producers
- Developing pre-service training for Farm to Preschool teachers
- Providing content for the website: www.farmtopreschool.org

National Farm to School Network's Farm to Preschool Subcommittee Facilitators:

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The Farm to Preschool Subcommittee of the National Farm to School Network is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The National Farm to School Network has compiled abundant resources on this topic and others and contact information for people in your state and region who are working on Farm to School programs. Find more information and join our network: www.farmtoschool.org