



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

Farm to Preschool Subcommittee:

Center for Child and Family Policy,
Duke University, Jenni Owen

Center for Regional Food Systems,
Michigan State University, Laura God-
deers

Centers for Disease Control and Preven-
tion, Diane Harris

Child Care Aware® of America, Karen
Davis Platt

Childcare Development Services, Caro-
lyn Morrison

Ecotrust, Katy Pelissier

Farm to Keiki, Tiana Kamen

Food Research and Action Center, Geri
Henchy

Fruit and Vegetable Growers Associa-
tion of Delaware, David Marvel

Institute for Agriculture and Trade
Policy, Erin McKee

Mass. Farm to School Project, Kelly
Erwin

Montana State University Carmen
Byker

National Association of Family Child
Care, Barbara Sawyer

National Farm to School Network
(NFSN), Mary Stein

National Head Start Association, Jane
Adams

National Indian Child Care Association;
Colusa Indian Community Hand-in-
Hand Learning Center, Kim Nall

Neighborhood House Association,
Kristine Smith

Northeastern University, Cathy Wirth

Partners for a Healthier America,
Caitlin McKeown

Shelburne Farms, Linda Wellings

The Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutri-
tion, Amy Yaroch

US Dept of Health & Human Services,
Administration for Children and Fami-
lies, Kam Sripada

USDA, CACFP, Traci Mouw

USDA/FNS/NERO, Alicia Rampulla

Western Carolina University, Sherry
Robison

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 Net-
work's expansion into preschool and
early care is a natural outgrowth
of its leadership in the K-12 Farm
to School movement. The Farm to
Preschool Subcommittee represents
the first national effort to organize
this work on a broader scale, con-
necting and supporting the many
programs in existence and helping
to grow the movement.

The subcommittee is comprised of national leaders in the field of early care and Farm to School, who work to:

- Coordinate the movement and convene stakeholders at a national level
- Facilitate leadership development with stakeholder agencies
- Collect, synthesize and disseminate successful models
- Provide a framework and infrastructure for the movement
- Encourage collaboration, integrated decision-making and transparency
- Facilitate connection to and continuity with K-12 movement

To further the Farm to Preschool movement, the subcommittee:

- Launched a national website with resources and models: www.farmtopreschool.org
- Publishes the monthly e-news, Taking Root, with updates on new programs, resources, research and policies
- Conducted the first national survey of Farm to Preschool programs
- Organized Farm to Head Start Day as part of National Farm to School Month
- Is developing new resources and trainings for early childhood education programs
- Is exploring Farm to Preschool policy options and solutions for local foods procurement and distribution in early care settings

Look for a Farm to Preschool and Early Care track at the next Farm to Cafeteria Conference in Austin, Texas, April 15-18, 2014!

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

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

Emily Jackson

Appalachian Sustainable
Agriculture Project,
Southeast Regional Lead for the
National Farm to School Network
emily@asapconnections.org

Zoë Phillips

Urban & Environmental
Policy Institute, Occidental College
phillipsz@oxy.edu

Stacey Sobell

Ecotrust,
Western Regional Lead for the
National Farm to School Network
ssobell@ecotrust.org

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