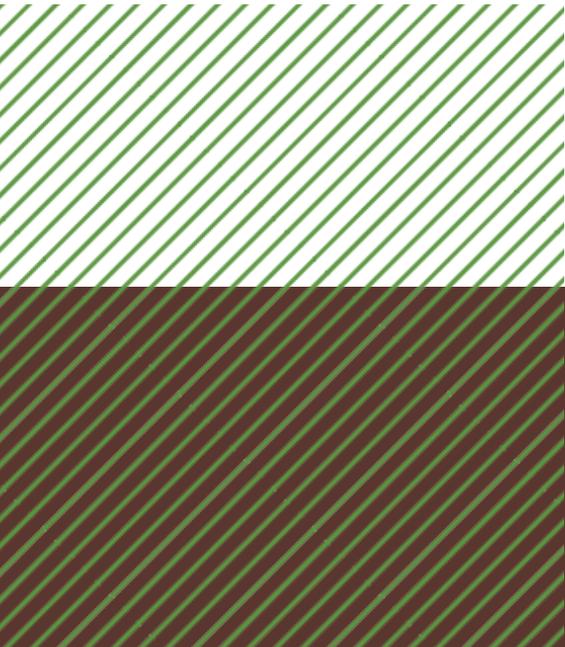




# Farmers Market *Kids Club* Toolkit



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## Program Introduction

The Farmers Market Kids Club is a Georgia Organics and Community Farmers Markets initiative to increase family engagement at local farmers markets. The program was piloted at the East Atlanta Village Farmers Market, in partnership with Burgess-Peterson Academy for ten consecutive weeks in the fall of 2021.

The engagement strategies used include:

- Promotion of the farmers market date, time, and location
- Education campaigns to engage children around seasonal produce and local farmers
- Motivational incentives to encourage repeat visits and routine forming

The Farmers Market Kids Club proved an effective strategy for engaging students and their families. The program brought 973 children to the market and stimulated over \$7,000 in sales during the autumn 2021 season. A spring 2022 study proved 62% of students and families continued to visit the market following the program.

We've created this toolkit to guide others in engaging students in their community. A Farmers Market Kids Club program may be a good fit for your farmers market if you host a regular farmers market outside of school hours and close to a partner school.



# Case Study:

## East Atlanta Village Farmers Market

The East Atlanta Village Farmers Market (EAVFM) was founded in 2006 in a vacant lot central to the East Atlanta Village neighborhood. The lot, which now features a learning garden, a production garden, a play area, and picnic tables, is a gathering space for the community throughout the week and hosts the farmers market every Thursday night. During the market, CFM partners with Wholesome Wave Georgia to implement the “Fresh for Less” program, which allows all SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) dollars to be doubled when spent on locally-grown fruits and vegetables.

### Fast Facts:

- Founded in 2006, managed by Community Farmers Markets (501c3) since 2011
- Location features a learning garden, a production garden, a play area, picnic tables
- Staff
  - Full-time market manager
  - Part-time assistant manager
  - Contract security guard
- Vendors
  - Approximately 25 per week
  - Farmers and vendors of vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, honey, meat, baked goods, prepared food
- Weekly Programming
  - Chef Demonstration
  - Kids Booth
  - Musician



# Case Study:

## Burgess-Peterson Academy

The Burgess-Peterson Academy (BPA) is an elementary school in Atlanta Public Schools. David White has served as the principal of the school since 2015 and in 2022 earned the honor of APS Principal of the Year. He is a resident of the neighborhood and has been a consistent presence at the farmers market and beyond.

The school has had a robust school garden program for over a decade, thanks to the leadership and consistent work of neighborhood volunteer, Michelle Rice. Raised garden beds fill the school's large courtyard, and there is a fruit orchard behind the school and an outdoor classroom in a wooded area on the property.

This program even attracted the attention of Michelle Obama on her visit to Atlanta in 2011.

### Fast Facts:

- About 500 children enrolled
- 14.3% qualify for free and reduced lunch
- 68% Black, 21% White, and 11% other

# Program Components

The program components can be implemented independently, one at a time, or they can be layered, as in the case study. Each requires varying amounts of time, energy, and funds - with many of the components requiring very little.



**Promotional components** share the “what, when, where” of the farmers market and include:

- Signage
- Announcements
- Newsletters



**Educational components** share the “how and why” of the farmers market, and include:

- Featured Vegetable
- Featured Farmer
- Activity Sheets for Schools
- Kids Booth at Market



**Motivational components** build relationships and provide incentives to create new routines in visiting the market.

- Passports
- Contests
- Giveaways



## PROMOTIONAL COMPONENTS

The promotional components were designed to ensure that every family at our partner school was aware of when and where the farmers market was located. This was also an opportunity to market our “Fresh for Less” program that doubles SNAP dollars spent on locally-grown fruits and vegetables.

Essential elements to program’s success were the support of school leadership and having a key partner at the school to lead distribution of promotional materials. In the case study, our contact was the Instructional Coach. In other schools it may be an Assistant Principal or front office staff.



Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## PROMOTIONAL COMPONENTS

# Signage and School Marquee

**Audience:** Entire school community

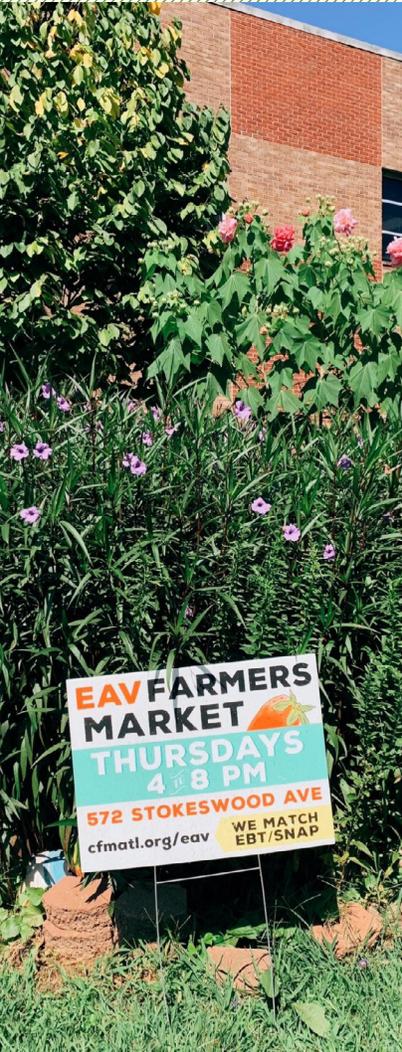
**Message:** Market logistics

For the first and last weeks of our program, we requested that the farmers market be announced on the school marquee. School marquees have limited space, so the message was short and sweet.

We also created signage to display around the school, including:

- durable yard signs to place in the school garden
- painted A-frame signs to place at the school entrance on each market day.

We would put it out the night before the market and pick it up the next evening after the market closed. You may consider painting an A-frame sign with chalkboard paint so you can announce featured vegetables or farmers each week.





Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## PROMOTIONAL COMPONENTS

# Morning and Afternoon Announcements

**Audience:** Students

**Message:** Fun and excitement at the farmers market!

Each week, three days before the farmers market, we emailed an example announcement to our contact at the school. We requested they read it during the morning and afternoon announcements each day leading up to the market. The message included a different “fun fact” to share each day.

We were intentional to communicate:

- The day of the week that the farmers market was hosted
- Something specific to look forward to at the farmers market that week
- An attention-grabbing “fun fact”



### EXAMPLE FROM OUR PROGRAM:

It’s the first week of our Farmers Market Kids Club and this week we are celebrating tomatoes! Did you know that the English word for “tomato” comes from the Spanish word “tomate”, which itself comes from the Nahuatl (the ancient Aztec language) word “tomatl”.

The Aztec name translates to “plump thing with a navel.” We hope to see you at the EAV Farmers Market this Thursday afternoon to taste many different varieties of plump



### TEMPLATE FOR YOUR PROGRAM:

We hope to see you this *(day of the week)* at the farmers market!

This week at the farmers market, you’ll find *(seasonal vegetable available at the market)*.

Did you know *(fun fact)*? Looking forward to seeing you on *(day of the week)* at the farmers market!





Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## PROMOTIONAL COMPONENTS

# Weekly Email Newsletter

**Audience:** Parents

**Message:** Farmers market logistics

Each week we submitted, via email, language to be published in the Parent Teacher Organization email newsletter. It was important to know the weekly submission deadline to be included in this email newsletter.

We were intentional to communicate:

- The day and times of the farmers market
- The location of the farmers market, with a map showing how to get from the school to the market
- Information about the “Fresh for Less” program that doubles SNAP dollars when spent on locally-grown fruits and vegetables



### EXAMPLE FROM OUR PROGRAM:

*Bring your family to visit the East Atlanta Village Farmers Market this Thursday between 4:00-8:00! The farmers market is located less than a mile down Glenwood from BPA, at 572 Stokeswood Ave SE. It is accessible via Marta buses 32 and 74 and street parking is available on Stokeswood Avenue.*

*At the market this week, you will find greens, carrots, sweet potatoes, and apples, as well as bread, honey, and other staples. Remember, when you use your SNAP card, your dollars double when spent on produce. We hope to see you on Thursday!*



### DIGGING DEEPER

You may also consider coordinating dedicated transportation to the farmers market from the school (and/or nearby after school programs or housing complexes).

This may look like:

- Renting a school bus or charter bus to run the route to the farmers market and back
- Scheduling a time to meet at the public transportation bus stop close to the school to ride to the farmers market together
- Coordinating a walking/biking group from the school to the farmers market





Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## PROMOTIONAL COMPONENTS

# Weekly Email Newsletter Template



### TEMPLATE FOR YOUR PROGRAM:

Bring your family to the farmers market this *(day of the week)* between *(time)*! The farmers market is located *(how far from the school)* at *(farmers market address)*.

It is accessible via *(public transportation routes)* and parking is available at *(address where parking is available)*.

At the market this week, you will find *(available seasonal produce)*, as well as *(available staple items)*.

We hope to see you on *(day of the week)*!



## EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS

The program's educational components shared our values with program participants. We featured different locally-grown vegetables each week because we value the change of the harvests throughout the seasons and how that connects us to the rhythms of the world around us.

We featured different farmers each week because our farmers are the heart of markets, and we believe in building a relationship with the ones that grow the food that nourishes our bodies.



Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS

# Weekly Featured Vegetable

Each week throughout the program, we featured one specific, locally-grown fruit or vegetable that was available at the farmers market that week. We shared recipes, fun facts, and other activities for that featured vegetable.

### Probiotic Okra Pickles



Image sourced from: <https://nourishedkitchen.com/fermented-okra/>

#### Ingredients

- okra
- natural salt, such as Himalayan pink salt
- fresh non-chlorinated water
- quart jars with lids
- other vegetables like garlic, ginger, carrots, onions
- scale

#### Steps

1. Wash and prep vegetables for fermentation by rinsing under cool water and cutting of the stems of the okra.
2. Boil jars completely submerged in water for 15 minutes through the sanitizing setting of the dishwasher.
3. Place jar on the scale and tare jar.
4. Pack jars with okra and other vegetables to the shoulder.
5. Cover veggies with fresh water but leave one inch of head space.
6. Weigh jar again. Use the total weight to determine how much salt to add. (For good fermentation, students should figure out 2.5% of the total volume.)
7. Add that much salt to the jar and loosely place lid on top. All veggies should be submerged. Let sit in a cool dark place for 3-7 days depending on how sour the students want them.)
8. Enjoy your okra pickles!

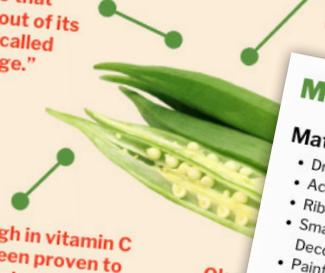
**This video is awesome for explaining how the science works and how to do the math: [bit.ly/OkraPickles](http://bit.ly/OkraPickles)**

### Okra Facts

The goo that comes out of its pods is called "mucilage."

Okra is a members of the Mallow family, which also includes hibiscus and cotton.

Okra is high in vitamin C and has been proven to boost your immune system.



### Make Okra Ornaments!

#### Materials

- Dried Okra
- Acrylic Paint
- Ribbon
- Small Natural Decorations
- Paint Brushes
- Wax Paper
- Hot Glue Gun (Adult use only) or a strong glue
- Needle and Thread (Adult use only)



Activities and photos adapted from <https://www.thegarden-at-big-milk.com/okra-ornaments-from-the-garden-at-big-milk/>

#### Steps

1. Start by painting the okra in any color of your choosing. Once finished, spread the okra out on wax paper to let it dry completely.
2. Take the needle and thread and poke a hole through the stem or top of the pod. Run the length of thread through the hole and tie it off to make a hanger. It will take around 5-6 inches of thread.
3. Tie a bow with the ribbon, and glue it on to the okra ornament. Then, glue the smaller decorations from nature onto the ornament. Hang up your beautiful ornament and enjoy!



## DIGGING DEEPER

- Visit local farms and take photos of what the vegetable looks like growing.
- Interview farmers about their favorite varieties and how to care for the vegetable.
- At market, host a chef demonstration to show ways to prepare the vegetable.
- At market, host a special event around the vegetable (for example: Okra Day!).





Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS

# Weekly Featured Farmer

Each week throughout the program, we featured a farm and farmer that sold produce at the farmers market each week. We shared photos of them both on their farm and behind their booth at the farmers market.

We also shared video interviews that we collected at the farmers market and, specifically, their responses to these two questions:

- Why do you love farming?
- What is your favorite thing to grow?

### Meet a Georgia Farmer



**May**

Mayflor Farm  
Stockbridge, GA

#### Why do you love farming?

I love to farm because it is fascinating when I start something from a seed and it grows. I love watching the process of the growth and I love nurturing. It grows from the seed, to the plant, then I harvest it. It is so fresh and then you cook them and it's so delicious!

**What is your favorite thing to grow?**  
I like to grow Asian vegetables because I'm from the Phillipines. I love bottle guards, bitter melons, Asian greens, and edible flowers.



### DIGGING DEEPER

- Host a workday at the featured farmer's farm.
- Capture "Day in the Life" photos of the farmer on their farm.
- Interview the farmer on what it's like to be a farmer.
- At market, put "Featured Farmer" signage on their tent.
- At market, host a chef demonstration preparing that farmer's produce.





Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS

# Weekly Activity Sheets

The weekly featured vegetable and the weekly featured farmer could be shared through any of the previously mentioned promotional components of this program: the chalkboard signage, the school announcements, or the weekly email newsletter to parents. Additionally, this information could be printed on activity sheets.

We delivered activity sheets to the front office of the school each Monday, and the school distributed them to each teacher to go home to the parents of each student. We often saw these activity sheets come to the farmers market, leading us to believe that they were a good reminder for students and families to come to the farmers market.

These activity sheets always included:

- Featured vegetable (recipe, fun facts, activities)
- Featured farmer (photo, interview questions)
- Time and location of the farmers market
- Website or QR code to learn more



Did you know?  
Abelmoschus esculentus (ah-el-MO: aus-ee-ahv-LEH-ah-vi) is the scientific name for okra. Abelmoschus derives from Arabic, meaning "source of musk" or "father of musk," and esculentus derives from Latin, meaning "full of food" and "edible."

Label the Parts of Okra!



**Parts of the Okra Plant**

A. Flower - This is a beautiful part of the okra plant. When pollinated, it develops the seed pod.

B. Bud - This is what the flower looks like when it starts to form, before it blooms.

C. Seed pod - This is the "fruit" of okra. It is what we eat and is full of seeds.

D. Stem - This is the structure that supports the seed pod.

E. Leaves - The leaves capture sunlight to make food for the plant.

Parts of the Okra Fruit Cross-Section



A. Seed - This is used to plant okra. It has lots of vitamins and minerals!

B. Locule - These are long rows within the okra pod that contain stacks of seeds.

C. Septa - This is a thin layer that separates each locul from one another.

D. Skin - This protects the okra pod from the outside.

E. Mesocarp - This is the middle region of the okra pod that where all of the seeds connect and therefore bring the locul together.

F. Tricoma - This is known as the "fur" of an okra plant.

Meet a Georgia Farmer



**John**  
Cosmos Farm | Carrollton, GA

Why do you love farming?  
I like farming because it keeps me connected to the natural world and it gets me outside and moving my body.

What is your favorite thing to grow?  
I love to grow okra because it grows really easy and there's a lot of it!

Did you learn something new about fruits or vegetables?  
Yes or No

Answer the question above and circle the activities that you completed to receive a FREE PRIZE at one of the following Community Farmers Markets:

\*Grant Park Farmers Market: Sundays, 9:00am-1:00pm  
\*East Atlanta Village Farmers Market: Thursdays, 4:00-8:00pm  
Expires June 30, 2022

Parents: Want access to okra-themed recipes, activities, and lessons?



Scan the code to sign up for Livin' La Vida Okra resources.



## DIGGING DEEPER

We also occasionally led hands-on gardening or cooking activities with individual classes at the school throughout the week. This opportunity to speak directly to students about the farmers market and to lead activities around the featured vegetable helped build personal relationships and increased students' motivation to come see a familiar face at the market.





Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS

# Kids Booth at Market

By having a dedicated “Kids Booth” table at the farmers market, we further extended educational opportunities. All children that attended the farmers market were directed to and attracted to the space with the large, colorful kids booth banner and the low tables full of hands-on activities.

The “Kids Booth” table often included:

- Taste test of the featured vegetable
- Craft or game with the featured vegetable
- Children’s books about the featured vegetable, farming, or the seasons



# EAV Farmers Market Kids Club



## MOTIVATIONAL COMPONENTS

We layered into our program additional components beyond promotion of when and where our farmers market was held and education around the farmers and produce students would find there. We also included components that would motivate students to visit and continue to visit to build relationships and create routines with their families.

We were intentional to learn children's names and get to know their families. We often hung their artwork around the tent and even posted polaroid photos of the children who visited the Kids Booth. They loved seeing photos of themselves and their friends week after week, and it seemed to give them a sense of ownership and identity with the farmers market.



Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



### MOTIVATIONAL COMPONENTS

## Passport and Weekly Stamps

Each child who visited the Kids Booth received a “passport” that they would bring to market each week throughout the program. They filled in their name at the top to help our Kids Booth staff remember their names and greet them by name.

It listed the market dates and the theme for each, which was connected to the featured vegetable of the week. For each week that they visited, children were excited to receive a stamp (a sticker or a check mark would also work).

We chose to run our program for ten weeks, starting in September after children were back to school, and continuing through the end of our market season, in mid-November. However, this program could be implemented with any number of weeks.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

### Farmers Market Book Club

Sep-Nov 2021

Sep 6 - 12	Time for Tomatoes		
Sep 13 - 19	Eat the Alphabet		
Sep 20 - 26	First Day of Fall		
Sep 27 - Oct 3	Green Bean Cuisine		
Oct 4 - 10	Farmers Market Finds		
Oct 11 - 17	Eat the Rainbow		
Oct 18 - 24	Celebrating Soil		
Oct 25 - 31	Pumpkin Party		
Nov 1 - 7	Apple Season		
Nov 8 - 14	Giving Thanks for Farmers		

East Atlanta Village Farmers Market / Thursdays 4-8  
Grant Park Farmers Market / Sundays 9-1





Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## MOTIVATIONAL COMPONENTS

# Class Contest

We hosted a class contest for the students at the Burgess-Peterson Academy. The students of the class that had the most farmers market visits by the end of the first nine weeks of the program received a free cookie from one of our local bake shops when they came to market on the last week of the program. Also, the teacher of the winning class received a \$25 gift certificate to the farmers market.

How to:

1. Create a list of the school's teachers, organized by grade level (See Template).
2. Ask each student who comes to the Kids Booth whose class they are in.
3. Mark one tally next to the teacher's name for each student who visits.
4. Mark two tallies next to the teacher's name for each time the teacher visits.

Each Monday, when we submitted the script for the morning and afternoon announcements, we included the standings in the contest, listing the top five classes in the lead and how many visits they had accumulated.





Estimated Time



Estimated Cost



## MOTIVATIONAL COMPONENTS

# Giveaways

If you have access to funding or in-kind donations, you may consider providing giveaways to children each week that they visit, or if they accumulate a certain number of visits over the course of the program.

These giveaways could be items to help families shop for local food, like reusable produce bags or tote bags. They could be items to help children prepare and cook local food, like a cutting board or a kid-safe wavy cutter or nylon knife.

### TOKENS TO SPEND WITH FARMERS

Each child who visited our Kids Booth throughout the ten week program received a \$5 produce-only token to spend with one of the local farmers at the market. The Kids Booth staff encouraged children to purchase the featured vegetable of the week and/or to shop with the featured farmer of the week, but children had the ultimate choice and ownership over how they were going to spend their token at the farmers market.

This was funded through Community Farmers Markets and had a huge impact on the farmers' sales during that time period and beyond. See more in the section titled "Case Study: Impact."

### BOOKS

For our program, we also had the unique opportunity to purchase children's literature books for each child who visited the market each week. Based on each week's theme, we purchased copies of one title for K-2 students and one title for 3-5 students. These books were either about the featured vegetable of the week or about farming or the seasons. The books varied from fictional stories to non-fictional texts to poetry books. Throughout the ten week program, children had the opportunity to build a home library of up to ten unique books about food and farming.





## MOTIVATIONAL COMPONENTS

# How to Fund Giveaways

Funding for giveaways could come in many forms. We received a grant to do this project. You can receive an updated list of Farm to School grants by signing up for the Georgia Organics monthly farm to school email newsletter, the eBite.

You may also ask local businesses to sponsor the program. In exchange, you could promote their business on social media or print their logos on the activity sheets, tote bags, or on the Kids Booth banner. Some local businesses may be able to provide in-kind sponsorships of books, cooking supplies, or other giveaway items, too.

Keep in mind that you could also limit the giveaways to the amount that you have to distribute. For example, “the first 20 children to market on Thursday will receive a \$5 token to spend on produce”, or “all children who attend market on Thursday will be entered to win a set of cooking tools.”

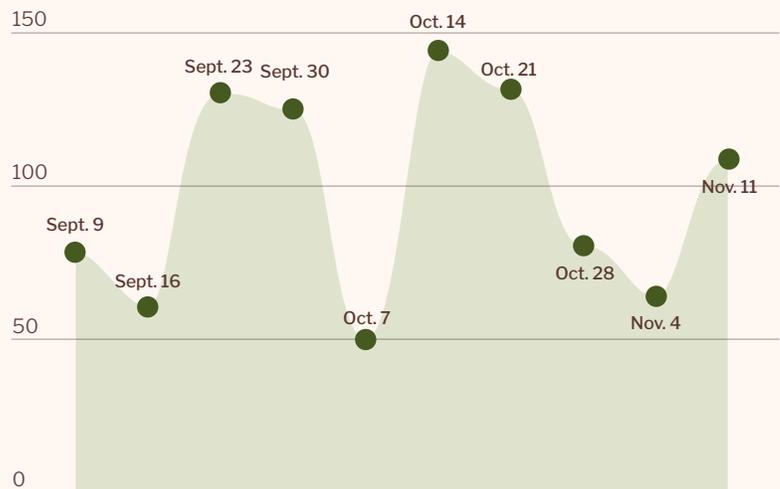


## Tracking

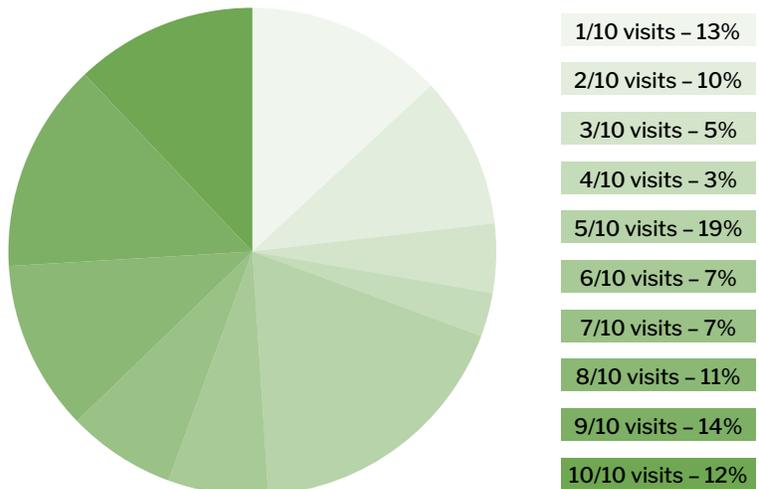
We developed many different ways to track the success of our program. You could capture the number of children who visited the Kids Booths each week.

You can see on the graph below the totals for each week of our ten-week program, totaling 973 impressions. Viewing the data in this way also helps us see the impact that the weather, school breaks, and special market events had on attendance.

Children Reached through the Kids Booth at EAVFM, Fall 2021



By using the weekly passport and stamp system, it was possible to track how many students came to what number of weeks out of the ten week program. You can see on the graph below that 12% of participating kids came to every week of the program, and about 70% of participating kids came to five or more of ten markets.





The class contest allowed us to collect weekly data on how many students came from each class. This data provided us with information about which grade levels and teachers were most engaged in the program.



The East Atlanta Village Farmers Market collects additional data on the market as a whole that helped us tell the story of the impact this program had on the market.

See more in the section titled "Case Study: Impact" on the next page.



# Case Study:

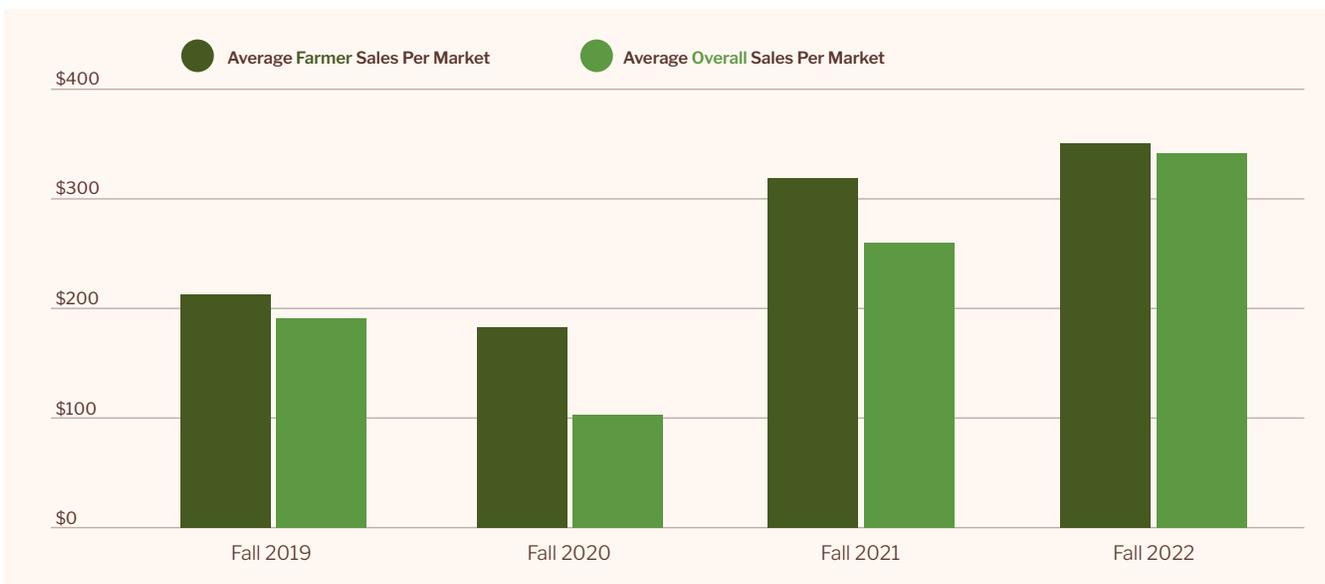
## Impact

Throughout the program, we reached 973 children at the EAVFM Kids Booth, distributing 973 children’s books and 973 \$5 tokens, sending \$4,865 directly to our farmers. Following the program, we were interested in analyzing our overall attendance and sales data to see the impact the program had on our market as a whole.

In the spring and summer of 2021, our average attendance per market was 908. During the program in the fall of 2021, that number rose to 1,072. While seasonal fluctuations at farmers markets are common, we believe we can attribute this bump in attendance numbers to the program.

We were also interested in how this program impacted not only farmer sales but overall sales at our market. The following graph shows how both farmer sales and our overall sales grew during the program in 2021, even above 2019 levels, and then continued to grow in 2022.

We also found that our dollar amount of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) redeemed at market grew during the time of the program, as well. In the spring and summer of 2021, we had an average of \$153 swiped per market. During the program in the fall of 2021, we had an average of \$199 swiped per market (a 30% increase in redemption).



# Additional Resources and Templates

Watch our Farmers Market Toolkit video

<https://bit.ly/FMKCTvideo>



Ver el video en español

<https://bit.ly/FMKCTvideoESP>



Watch the Instructional video

<https://bit.ly/FMKCTwebinar>





# Farmers Market Kids Club Passport

Name:

Market Time:

Teacher:

Market Address:

*Date*

*Theme*

*Stamp*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Stamp</i>
		
		
		
		
		
		



Thanks You

thank you!

All photo credit: Jenna Shea Photojournalism



[www.georgiaorganics.org](http://www.georgiaorganics.org)

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