



# Alabama Department of Education Child and Adult Care Programs



## Farm to Preschool

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# What is Farm to Preschool?

- **Connects local food producers and processors with the preschool cafeteria or kitchen**
- **Local food and farm-based education in the classroom, lunchroom, and community (gardens, farm field trips, cooking with locally grown food in the classroom, and locally grown food highlighted in the daily meal)**
- **Ages 0-6**
- **Childcare centers, preschool, Head Start, daycare centers, and in-home care**



# Farm to Preschool- History

**In 2010, Congress approved a resolution to officially designate October as National Farm to School Month, to celebrate the connections between children and local food. Each day of the month will feature a different theme. Farm to preschool includes the full spectrum of child care delivery: preschools, Head Start, center-based, programs in K-12 school districts, and family home care facilities. National Farm to School is currently operating in 50 states 2,500 + programs in K-12.**



# Key Concepts

- **K-12 farm to school movement is strong and growing**
- **Farm to preschool movement is emerging**
- **Farm to preschool is a systems approach**
- **National Farm to School Network and website provide resources and support**



# Why Farm to Preschool?

- **Early patterns are a determinant of later eating/physical activity habits**
- **Dramatic increases in obesity among preschoolers**
- **Low consumption of fruits and vegetables**
- **Children consume as much as 80% of daily nutrients in childcare**
- **Rely on parents/caregivers to create food/activity environments**
- **Benefits local economy and environment**
- **Improves opportunities for small farmers**

# Where do we start with infants and toddlers?

- Infants learn about the world through their senses - touch, sight, sound, taste, and smell.
- Creating safe, diverse and developmentally appropriate outdoor learning environments can offer benefits across curriculum and developmental areas.
- The key to creating positive experiences in outdoor learning environments lies not only in the physical environment but with the modeling and behavior of caregivers.



# Farm to Preschool Activities

- ▶ **Purchasing local foods for meals and snacks**
- ▶ **Curricula and classroom activities**
- ▶ **Farm and farmers' market field trips, farmer visits**
- ▶ **Gardens**
- ▶ **Cooking and tastings**

# EX. Preschool Gardens



- ▶ Preschool gardening engages children by providing an interactive environment to observe, discover, experiment, nurture and learn. School and child care gardens are living laboratories where interdisciplinary lessons are drawn from real life experiences, encouraging children to become active participants in the learning process.



# Food –What is our job?

- Offer healthy choices
- Creative positive food environments
- Invite participation: Opportunities to involve and educate parents
- Think seasonal



# Resources

- School Gardens
- Farm to Preschool
- Grants
- National Farm to School
- Where to find Farmer markets
- USDA MyPyramid for Preschoolers (free)
- Eat a Rainbow (Deluxe Kit) (\$44.95)
- Food For Thought-Nutrition Across the Curriculum (\$19.95)
- UC Davis Cooperative Extension: The Lunch Box series for preschoolers (free)

# Funding

May use our funds to purchase seeds, fertilizer, watering cans, rakes, etc. to grow food that will be used in the food service or for nutrition educational activities.

# Contact Information

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Child Nutrition Program

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