Farm to Child Care: The Freshest for the Youngest!

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What is Farm to Child Care?

http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/communications/documents/unzip/033990/index.html
WHAT IS FARM TO PRESCHOOL?

IT’S ABOUT CONNECTING YOUNG CHILDREN (AGES 0-6) WITH LOCAL FOODS!
FARM TO PRESCHOOL includes ANY TYPE of CHILD CARE that INCORPORATES
LOCAL FOODS through: MEALS & SNACKS, TASTE TESTS, LESSONS, FARMER VISITS,
COOKING, FIELD TRIPS, GROWING food, or COMMUNITY and PARENT ENGAGEMENT.

"WE TAUGHT CHILDREN ABOUT LOCAL
TRADITIONAL WAYS OF PRESERVING FRESH PRODUCE"

Tribal Preschool Development Director
Farm to Childcare Benefits:

- **HEALTH:** Kids Win
- **AGRICULTURE:** Farmers Win
- **ECONOMY:** Communities Win
Better Nutrition

• Kids eat more fruits and vegetables
• Helps prevent obesity and related diseases
• Kids try new foods
Child and Adult Care Food Program

Lunch meal pattern:

• 2 fruits and/or vegetables – emphasis on variety
• Milk – low fat or fat free
• Grain/bread – emphasis on whole grains
• Meat/meat alternate – emphasis on lean meats
Farm and Food Knowledge
Economic Development
Access to Healthy Foods

- Increases access to fresh, healthy food
- Communities control their own food system
Family Engagement
Community Ties
Benefits of Farm to Child Care

• Consume majority of daily nutrients in child care
• Rely on parents/caregivers to create food/activity environments
• Early patterns determine later eating habits = early obesity prevention
• Children as agents of change for family behavior
• Links to K-12 Farm to School movement
• Experiential education is the norm
Activity: Opa! Dill Yogurt Dip
Where do I start?

STEP ONE: Incorporate local foods into meals and snacks

Where can I buy local foods for my childcare program?
- Farmers markets
- Roadside stands
- Local farms (U-pick or farm stores)
- CSA shares
- Local grocery store or co-op
- Child care garden (grow your own!)

MN Grown directory
Where do I start?

STEP ONE: Incorporate local foods into meals and snacks

Introducing new foods:
- Create a positive environment
- Cater to their preferences
- Role model
- No thank you bite
- Start with small portions
- Help, don’t hinder phrases
- Keep offering new foods
Minnesota Farm to Child Care Foods

- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Grains
- Specialty meat  cheese
- Wild rice, dried beans, etc.
Where do I start?

STEP TWO: Incorporate local food themes into child care curriculum and activities
Where do I start?

STEP THREE: Field trips to the farm, farmers market, and gardening

Farm Tour at Featherstone Farm – Rushford, MN
Farm to Childcare Strategies

• Multiple interactions with each food to influence taste preferences
• Local foods from HAFA in meals
• Experiential Curriculum
• Family Engagement
• Building relationships with our farmers
• Culturally responsive content
Scheduling Approach

Each food for two weeks:

• Monday: activity teacher chooses
• Tuesday: activity teacher chooses
• Wednesday: HAFA food on the menu
• Thursday: HAFA food on the menu
Farm to Childcare Trainings

• Source/serving local foods as part of healthy meals and snacks

• Engage children in understanding where their food comes from

• Stories, activities, cooking, gardening, field trips.

http://www.renewingthecountryside.org/farm_to_school
Farm to Childcare Learning Groups
Farm to Child Care Best Practices

- Use resources that are already available
- Align with existing standards
- Incorporate into what you are already doing
- Consider the culture of your community
- Eat locally grown foods!
- Include lots of different kinds of activities
- Gardening is a great complement
- Family engagement reinforces lessons at home
Resources

- Farm to School Children’s Literature - Growing Minds
- Farm to Childcare Curriculum - Institute for Ag. and Trade Policy
- Grow It! Try it! Like it! - Team Nutrition (USDA)
- Got Dirt? - WI Dept. of Health Services
- Got Veggies? - WI Dept. of Health Services
- Farm to Preschool Harvest of the Month Curriculum and Farm to Preschool Training Manual - Occidental College Urban & Environmental Policy Institute
- Farm to Early Childhood Programs - A Step-by-Step Guide - Michigan State University
- Harvest for Healthy Kids - Portland State University and Mt. Hood Community College
Activity: Guess that Seed!