



**Kentucky Public Health**

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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# Farm to Early Care & Education

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## Connecting Young Children With Local Foods

**Trainer:** Rebekah Duchette, Early Care and Education Program Coordinator

**Resources:**

**Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** partners with childcare centers, Head Start programs and family daycare homes to provide healthy meals and snacks. The CACFP contributes to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of children by providing institutions monetary reimbursement for serving healthy meals. CACFP supports farm to ECE. For more information on becoming a part of CACFP, call (502) 564-5625 or visit the website <http://education.ky.gov/federal/SCN/Pages/CACFPHomepage.aspx>.

**Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC)** provides consultation and technical assistance on health, safety and nutrition for children ages 0-5 to child care providers. For more information, visit the website <http://www.kentuckycchc.org/> or call the helpline at 1-877-281-5277.

## Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE)

Farm to ECE is about connecting young children (0-6) with local foods.

### Training Objectives:

- Define Farm to ECE
- Identify rationale behind Farm to ECE and the link to child health outcomes
- Develop a classroom plan to support farm to ECE

Curriculum and classroom experiences

Gardening

Field trips

Incorporating local foods into meals and snacks

### Nutrition and young Children

- Early childhood is a time of establishing food preferences and habits that will last a lifetime.
- Repeated exposure to foods is needed to develop taste for foods
- Optimal nutrition supports brain and body development

Family and community engagement

### Benefits of local foods

- Local foods tend to taste better as they have not spent time travelling to reach your market and are fresher.
- Children learn where their food comes from
- Buying local foods supports the local economy
- Helps viability and preservation of small farms



HEALTHY NUMBERS FOR KENTUCKY FAMILIES

Five: Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Two: Limit screen time to no more than two hours a day.

One: Be physically active at least one hour a day.

Zero: Do not drink sweetened beverages.

The 5-2-1-0 campaign is designed to be a memorable way to talk about the key evidence-based behaviors that reduce childhood obesity and promote child health. Free materials including brochures, classroom posters, logs, activity booklets and stickers are available. To order or download these free materials visit <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dmch/hpb/Pages/5210-program.aspx>

What is one thing you notice about children in your care when they are eating fruits and vegetables?

## Reflective Activity

Think about your own food preferences...

List 3 vegetables you enjoy

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

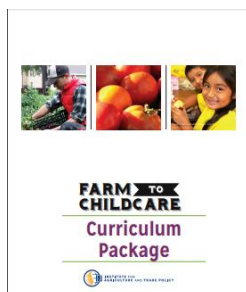
Are there vegetables or fruits you do not enjoy? If so, list them here

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Describe how your preferences today may be linked to your experiences with food as a child

## Farm to ECE: Classroom Experiences

### Preschool Supplemental Curriculum

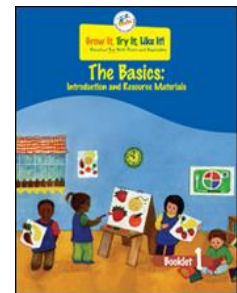


#### Farm to Childcare Curriculum Package

<https://www.iatp.org/documents/farm-to-childcare-curriculum-package>

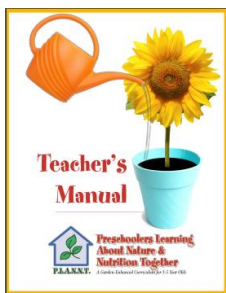
#### Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it> A free hard copy is available for programs participating in CACFP. Curriculum is available to download at no charge by all programs and homes.



#### Food for Thought

<http://www.csgn.org/content/food-thought>

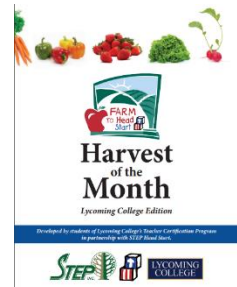


#### P.L.A.N.N.T. Preschoolers Learning About Nature & Nutrition Together

<https://nkyhealth.org/business-or-organization/licensed-childcare-providers/child-care-health-consultation/>

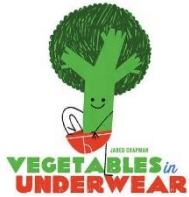
**Harvest of the Month** – Curriculum offers 12 months of creative and engaging activities aimed at introducing children to fruits and vegetables through sensory exploration while learning about the health benefits of fresh produce.

[http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/LYCO\\_Edition-Harvest-of-the-Month-FINAL.pdf](http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/LYCO_Edition-Harvest-of-the-Month-FINAL.pdf)

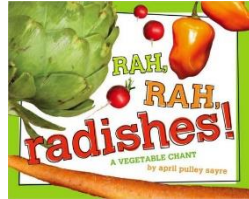


## Farm to ECE and children’s literature

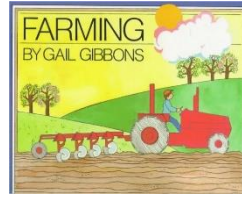
Children’s book are another strategy for increasing familiarity with fruits and vegetables as well as children’s understanding of farms. Check with your local library for titles available. More garden and farm themed books can be found in each of the curricula listed on page 3.



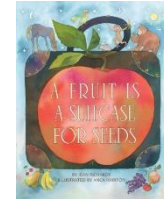
**Vegetables in Underwear**  
by Jared Chapman



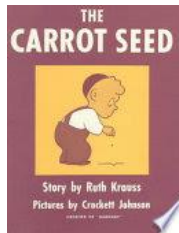
**Rah, Rah, radishes! A vegetable chant**  
by Audrey Pulley Sayre



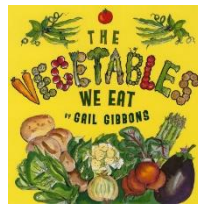
**Farming**  
by Gail Gibbons



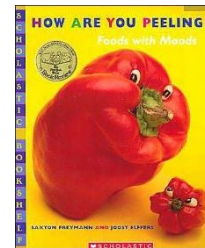
**Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds**  
by Jean Richards



**The Carrot Seed**  
by Ruth Kraus



**The Vegetables We Eat**  
by Gail Gibbons



**What Are You Peeling? Foods with Moods**  
by Saxton Freymann & Joost Elffers

### Reflective Activity

Identify a fruit or vegetable in the first column and three activities for your classroom or setting for the days in the following columns. Considers activities that support different learning domains. For more ideas, visit the websites of the curricula on p 3.

	Monday	Tuesday	Friday
<p><i>Example</i></p> <p><b>Week 1</b></p> <p><b><u>Apples</u></b></p>	<p>Circle Time-Read <u>Apples</u> by Gail Gibbons</p> <p>Sing “I like to eat... eat... eat apples and bananas”</p>	<p>Movement-Play ‘worm’ through the apple</p> <p>Math -Cut the apple and Count the seeds</p>	<p>Science-Look at pictures of apple trees in different stages from blossom to apple</p> <p>Make applesauce</p>
<p><b>Week 2</b></p> <hr/>			

## Farm to ECE: Gardening

Gardening is a new experience for many children. Gardening supports opportunities to plant, water, weed and harvest produce.

**Math**

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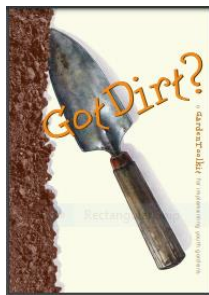
**Science**

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- 
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**Language**

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- 
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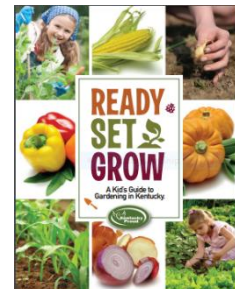
The resources below support both new and knowledgeable gardeners in creating a safe space for children that encourages learning experiences.



### Resources

The *Got Dirt? Garden Toolkit* is designed to provide simple, step-by-step plans for starting a garden. Even better, the toolkit also includes tips from garden experts and garden success stories. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/foodsystem/gotdirt.htm>

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture has created document **READY, SET, GROW. A Kid's Guide to Gardening in Kentucky** free to download. The guide has information on Kentucky planting dates as other useful tips for our region, pictures of produce from seed to maturity and the booklet activities are geared for school age students. <http://www.kyproud.com/readyssetgrow/pdfs/gardening-guide.pdf>



The Kids Gardening website has a gardening toolbox with information on gardening basics, garden activities and growing guides for different plants. <https://kidsgardening.org>

The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension has an 8-page comprehensive document on gardening in small spaces that can be useful for staff as you are planning a garden space.

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ID/ID248/ID248.pdf>

The National Head Start Association awards gardening grants annually for all types of gardens. <https://www.nhsa.org/our-work/initiative/head-start-garden-grants-project>

## Reflective Activity

How could you use gardening in your program? If you have space for a garden, design what you would plant in your yellow box as a garden bed. If container gardens are a better choice for your site, identify plants you will use and the location of containers.



## Farm to ECE: Field Trips

Making the most of Field Trips

- Who has been on a farm?
- What kind of things do you find on a farm?
- What do you eat that comes from a farm?
- What tools might we see on a farm?

What type of farm would you take your class to visit on an imaginary trip? List three movements you might lead them in doing.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Farm to ECE: Incorporating local foods into meals and snacks



- Menu cycle that is 3 weeks or longer
- Menus that change with the season and the availability of produce
- Menus that offer a variety of healthy foods

## Training for cooks and kitchen staff:

- The Institute of Child Nutrition has free classes online at <https://theicn.docebosaas.com>. A variety of classes is available including menu planning with CACFP and many culinary techniques such as using seasonings. Another great resource for kitchen staff is the Twist & Sprout® video series. <http://www.providerschoice.com/twistandsprout/>

- Your local Cooperative Extension Agency has recipe ideas for using local produce and many county offices provide cooking classes.



### Twist & Sprout® Video Series: Save Time & Money in the Kitchen

[Kitchen Gadget Know-How](#)  
[Roasting Vegetables](#)  
[Twice as Nice with Spice](#)  
[Reduce Waste with a Great Plate](#)  
[Using the Senses](#)  
[Knife skills](#)  
[Herbs and spices](#)  
[Why parents choose you](#)

[Knives: Save Time, Stay Safe](#)  
[Nixing the Nuggets](#)  
[Kid-Friendly Names and Shapes](#)  
[Shopping & Prep Tips to Making Life Easier](#)  
[Making vegetables fun](#)  
[Food for positive behavior](#)

## Menu Resources

- The Association for Child Development’s Menu Planning Guide – Includes 4-week cycle menus for Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter and loads of resources to help child care centers and homes plan and serve healthy meals. All menus meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program meal patterns (CACFP)!  
<http://acdkids.org/mealpatterns.asp#.W3wFOUm0XIU>
- Twist & Sprout® Menus –4-week cycle menus that correspond with the four seasons.  
<http://www.providerschoice.com/twistandsprout/>
- Tip Sheets and Menus from the Texas Department of Agriculture – 4-week cycle menus, Tip Sheet for planning, preparing, and serving your menus. Menus indicate recipes that are Whole Grain-Rich, Multicultural Standardized Recipes, and USDA Standardized Recipes. <http://www.squaremeals.org/FandNResources/MENUModule.aspx>
- Institute for Child Nutrition – Time Saving Tips – Tips that help you organize and cut down on food preparation time. <https://theicn.org>

List three food or dishes you would like to see on your programs menus that are fruit or vegetable components.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Procurement

Local foods can be purchased from multiple sources including:

- Farmers & Farmers’ Markets
- Distributors & Producers
- Gardens

*A best practice is to confirm your food source has certification in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)*

## **Farm to ECE: Family and Community Engagement**

**Community Supported Agriculture**- also known as a CSA, farm share or farm basket. A list of CSAs registered with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture can be found at <http://www.kyagr.com/marketing/CSA.html>.

### **Reflective Activity**

**Consider how you might connect families with your Farm to ECE work**

**Menus** - *Ask families for menu ideas*

*Send menus home*

**Newsletters/Social Media** -

**Recipe Exchange** -

**Taste Testing** -

**Send home seeds/plants** -

**Cooking demonstrations or class** -

**CSA** -

**Displays** -

## **Farm to ECE: Getting Started**

Farm to Early Care and Education work connects young children with local foods and farms and provides experiential learning activities. Farm to ECE supports child nutrition and building healthy habits early in life.

The closing activity challenges you to create an action plan for your classroom, program or child care home focused on incorporating aspects of farm to child care. Your goals may be linked to your role in the program. For example, a classroom teacher may set a goal of incorporating classroom activities and a program director may work with the owner to develop a large garden space. A sample action plan is provided and a blank template is available on the next page for your use.



### Action Planning Example:

Gardening		
Goal- Start a Small Container Garden outside our classroom		
Steps	Supports	Target date
1. Download a resource and research best plants to grow. 2. Develop a plan for spring	Time, Wifi, printer	February 1
3. Study resources, identify type of plants to grow and gather necessary supplies	Funding/ donations of pots, soil and seeds	March 1
4. Develop classroom plans for activities and learning experiences to support plants selected	Time, Curriculum	March 15
5. Plant seeds and discuss caring for plants with children	Class time	April 1
Family Connection	I will share our gardening project with families by hanging a poster on my classroom door and by starting seedlings with the children to send home	
Co-worker support	I will share my plan with my program director and ask her for support	

Thank you for your participation in this module and for all you do to support the health and development of the children in your care.

## My Action Plan for Farm to Early Care & Education

### Instructions

1. Choose one component of farm to ECE work (Classroom experiences, Gardening, Field Trips, Incorporating local foods into Meals and Snacks) and a goal that is realistic
2. Identify the first three steps necessary to accomplish your goal, additional lines are provided
3. Name supports you will need to be successful
4. Define target goal dates to complete your steps
5. Describe how you will share this goal or your steps with families
6. Identify a co-worker or leader who you share this action plan with to support you in this process

My Goal-		
	Steps	Supports
1.		
2.		
3.		
Family Connection		
Co-worker support		