



**Farm to Early Care and Education  
Learning Collaboratives  
Food and Farming Education  
Resource Guide  
July 2024**

## **DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Nemours Children’s Health (Nemours Children’s) acknowledges the invaluable contributions of organizational partners across the country committed to supporting children’s health and development through their participation in Learning Collaboratives for Early Care and Education (ECE) programs for more than fifteen years. The Farm to ECE Learning Collaboratives build on past versions of ECE Learning Collaboratives focused on nutrition and physical activity topics and were made possible in part by a grant from Jump IN for Healthy Kids, which is supported by Coronavirus Relief Fund Grants from Department of the Treasury. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department of the Treasury.

We thank Jump IN for Healthy Kids and SPARK Learning Lab in Indiana for their partnership, expertise, and implementation support throughout the development and pilot phases of the Farm to ECE Learning Collaboratives. Their dedication to the ECE programs and professionals in Indiana facilitated positive changes in participating programs and contributed to the development of this final version of resources.

We also would like to acknowledge the Alabama Farm to ECE Coalition and their efforts to develop and implement Farm to ECE learning collaboratives since 2020. The Alabama resources were a catalyst and starting point for this project. Additionally, a compilation of resources from many states are included in this learning collaborative content. We are grateful for the many organizations across the United States that are working to advance Farm to ECE efforts and to increase nutrition security and physical activity of young children and their families.

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## Welcome to the Learning Collaborative

You are joining a group of Early Care and Education (ECE) providers that are committed to supporting and promoting the health and development of young children through Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) strategies. We look forward to supporting your ECE program through this process of change as you integrate policies and practices that encourage healthy habits for your children, families, and program staff through Farm to ECE. Your work will have an important impact on your program and the lives of the children and families you serve.

### Overview

Learning Collaboratives bring together staff from different ECE programs to increase knowledge and make policy, practice, and environment changes to promote healthy habits. They provide an opportunity for programs to share experiences with each other, try out new strategies, and equip participants to engage all ECE program staff in the process.

The Farm to ECE Learning Collaborative Curriculum includes content on three topic areas: **Gardening**, **Food and Farming Education**, and **Local Food Purchasing**. Your Learning Collaborative will focus on one or more of these areas and will include various types of activities and tasks you will complete. ECE program staff will participate in Learning Sessions where discussions and activities enhance learning. Learning Sessions are followed by Action Periods, a period of time between the Learning Sessions where ECE programs assess current activities using a self-assessment, educate fellow staff on their learning, and lead staff through a process of change to increase healthy habits. Throughout the Learning Collaborative, connections are made to show how Farm to ECE activities contribute to all domains of children's development.

### Resource Guide:

This Resource Guide was created to share information, tools, and resources to help you incorporate Farm to ECE recommended practices into your ECE program policies, practices, and environments. Additional materials will be shared during the Learning Sessions. The activities and resources found in this Resource Guide are available as individual PDF documents. Your coach can provide you with any of the resources you would like to share with other staff members and families. It is important to connect with local and state partners and to highlight any state-specific gardening and Farm to ECE resources or materials. We hope this guide is a useful tool on your journey of discovery to improve the health and wellness of children, families, and program staff through Farm to ECE.

Please, take time to review this resource, and please reach out to us if you have any questions or need any support. Throughout this Learning Collaborative, your coach is here to answer questions and provide you with support.

#### My Coach

Name:

Organization:

E-mail address:

Phone number:

#### Assessment Tool Information

Website:

Username:

Password:



## Farm to Early Care and Education

This series of Learning Collaboratives focuses on Farm to ECE practices and strategies for ECE programs. Farm to ECE is a set of strategies and activities that increase: gardening opportunities, access to healthy, local foods, and food and farming education. Farm to ECE targets children ages birth to five and adapts to all ECE settings.



Farm to ECE uniquely includes many opportunities to partner with different types of industries that few other early childhood activities do. These potential partnerships include organizations and institutions focused on public health, education, economic development, and the environment. Farm to ECE provides a triple win: 1) Kids who participate in Farm to ECE eat more servings of fruit and vegetables, 2) by shortening supply chains, farmers keep a bigger share of the dollar and 3) communities win when farmers reinvest in their local communities and kids take what they learn home with them.

The chart below provides more information about the specific topics that are covered.

Gardening	Food and Farming Education	Local Food Purchasing
Teaching children about how food and plants are grown and giving them the opportunity to experience growing themselves.	Teaching children about food, where our food comes from, how it is grown, how farms and gardens work, and other concepts.	Purchasing local foods, such as fruits, vegetables, proteins, dairy and grains, from a local farmer or producer and serving these items in meals and snacks.

### What are the sources for the Recommended Practices?

The recommended practices found in the Learning Collaboratives align with several reputable sources, including:

- [Caring for Our Children, 4th Edition](#),
- [Child and Adult Care Food Program meal requirements and recommended practices](#),
- [“Farm to Early Care and Education Self-Assessment” published by ASPHN \(Association of Public Health Nutritionists\) and the National Farm to School Network \(NFSN\)](#), and
- [The Nemours Children’s Health Wellness Workbook for Early Care and Education](#).

# Learning Collaborative Components

Learning Collaboratives combine a few primary elements that work together to walk ECE programs through a process of change. These components are below.

## Leadership Teams

Center-based and school-based ECE programs identify two to three staff members to form a Leadership Team. This team approach allows for greater buy-in and feedback from staff that play a variety of roles and have many skillsets. Leadership Teams should include the center or program director, as well as teaching staff and anyone involved in the content area being covered.

For family child care home (FCCH) programs, most often run by an individual, usually only the owner/director attends the Learning Sessions. However, FCCHs are welcome to invite other staff to participate if it meets the needs of the program. This might be a family member of an enrolled child or a second staff member.

The Leadership Team attends the Learning Sessions, completes the Action Period tasks, including self-assessments, and facilitates change in the ECE program.

## Learning Sessions

Learning Sessions are hands-on and interactive trainings focused on fostering a supportive, adult learning environment that encourages trust and relationship building between staff of ECE programs.

Each Learning Session highlights the recommended practices and strategies for Leadership Teams to consider implementing in their programs while showcasing state/local initiatives. The Learning Sessions include large group presentations, small group activities, and breakout sessions to facilitate learning.

Learning Sessions offer opportunities for Leadership Team members to:

- Increase their knowledge on how Farm to ECE impacts children's health and why the ECE setting is an important place to focus on healthy habits through Farm to ECE strategies.
- Receive support for ECE programs to implement recommended practices in specific content areas.
- Participate in peer networking and learning opportunities.
- Explore strategies for overcoming common challenges.
- Access helpful resources created specifically for ECE programs.

## Leadership Team Model



## Action Periods

Between each Learning Session, Leadership Teams engage in Action Periods. During this time, the Leadership Team shares what they learned at the Learning Sessions with program staff and families, and they complete specific tasks. Each Action Period also includes a technical assistance meeting with a coach.

During Action Periods, Leadership Teams will:

- Complete self-assessment.
- Review self-assessment results to determine current practices and opportunities for improvement.
- Receive support from coaches to develop action plans and to implement new strategies.
- Share information with other staff and families.
- Work on areas of improvement by completing action plan steps.

## Technical Assistance (TA)

Coaches provide on-going customized support and TA to participating ECE programs throughout the Learning Collaborative. This support may include TA through site visits, virtual meetings, phone calls, emails, and texts. Coaches also support ECE programs by providing resources to use when making program improvements and connecting ECE programs to community resources.

## Why is the Learning Collaborative Model Effective?

Learning Collaboratives are effective because they:

- Bring together a community of learners.
- Create a network for sharing ideas and building mutual support.
- Offer evidence-based guidance about ECE practices and policies.
- Offer opportunities to build important knowledge and skills: being leaders and champions of change, nurturing collaboration among ECE program staff, and implementing recommended practices successfully.
- Support long-term, sustainable improvements by engaging ECE programs and families as partners in support of children's health, development, and well-being.
- Provide a model for ECE programs to examine current practices and implement changes that can be used after the Learning Collaborative.

## **Action Period Guide**

Action Periods include specific tasks for Leadership Teams to complete as they walk through the process of planning and implementing changes in their ECE program. This Action Period Guide will help you understand tasks and components that are typically included in the Learning Collaborative framework.

<p><b>Self-assessment</b></p>	<p>Leadership Teams complete an assigned self-assessment. Completion of a self-assessment provides an opportunity for Leadership Teams to reflect on their current practices.</p> <p>Leadership Teams repeat the self-assessment after the final Learning Session so they can evaluate their progress and celebrate their accomplishments.</p>
<p><b>Action Planning</b></p>	<p>After completing the assigned self-assessment, Leadership Teams select goals and develop Action Plans. Draft Action Plans will be provided for Leadership Teams to customize to fit their needs and available resources. These Action Plans provide step-by-step guidance to make healthy changes.</p>
<p><b>Engaging Staff</b></p>	<p>Following each Learning Session, Leadership Teams share what they learned with the staff in their program. Key Learnings handouts and relevant resources are provided to support these discussions. It is important to share this information with all staff since everyone will be involved in implementing goals. This is needed to make and sustain healthy change.</p>
<p><b>Identifying Resources</b></p>	<p>To help put the plans into action, Leadership Teams can review resources shared throughout the Learning Collaborative and in this Resource Guide.</p>
<p><b>Storyboards</b></p>	<p>To document the process of change, Leadership Teams create and present a Storyboard to share their program’s successes and progress made to implement action plans. Other Leadership Teams, along with the staff and families in their program, learn about the Learning Collaborative experience, both challenges and successes, through the Storyboards. Often, the sharing of Storyboards inspires additional healthy change in other ECE programs. Storyboards can be presented in a variety of formats, and coaches and Leadership Teams should decide together how this information should be documented and presented.</p>



## Engaging Staff

Share information with teachers and staff using the Key Learnings handouts and other resources found in this Resource Guide. Review the information ahead of time with the Leadership Team to decide on key points to discuss during a staff meeting.

### Setting the Stage

To encourage engagement of all staff, create a supportive and fun environment for learning. Consider the following tips:

- Be organized. Bring all needed materials and plan ahead so you can ensure all staff can participate and benefit from this experience.
- Be engaging. Smile, look people in the eyes, and be positive while helping them to learn.
- Initially, allow time to brainstorm. Encourage staff to share their ideas. Be open to new ideas and suggestions. Determine the feasibility of ideas later when you are refining your plans. This two-step process is a great way to share ideas as your staff works together collaboratively.
- Have fun!

### Engaging Staff in Discussion

To help engage program staff, try these discussion prompts and ideas:

- Use open-ended questions to encourage conversation. These types of questions require more than just a yes or no response.
  - What goals/changes would you be most motivated to work on?
  - What would you like to learn more about?
  - How could we further engage children and families in our program?
- Give staff time to share their ideas. After asking a question, pause and don't talk for 30 seconds. It may feel a bit uncomfortable at first, but it provides time for staff to collect their thoughts before sharing.
  - When program staff share ideas, record them on chart paper or a white board. It shows that you are listening, and staff can immediately correct any misunderstandings.
- Respond positively when program staff share their ideas.
- Provide a small reward for the first person who shares an idea as a way to engage staff, especially if this type of collaborative brainstorming is new to your program.

### Agenda and Talking Points

Create an agenda and take notes to capture staff thoughts from the discussions.

- Learning Session Recap:
  - Share Key Learnings handouts.
  - Discuss self-assessment results.
  - Discuss possible goals.
  - Discuss action planning.
- Review progress:
  - Share an update on your action plan progress.
  - Ask staff if they have any questions, needs, or thoughts about the progress you have made.
  - Ask them to share any changes they have seen in their classrooms.

### **Learning Collaborative Checklist**

#### **Before the Learning Collaborative Begins**

- Determine Leadership Team members from your ECE program.
- Share your program's participation in the Learning Collaborative with staff and families.

#### **During the Learning Collaborative**

- Attend all Learning Sessions.
- Work with Leadership Team members to complete the required self-assessment.
- Complete Key Learnings with Leadership Team.
- Share the Key Learnings with teachers and staff.
- Create action plans.
- Implement your action plans with the help of the resources found in this Resource Guide. Engage children, staff, and families in the changes you are making in the program.
- Update your ECE program's policies to reflect your new commitment to promoting Farm to ECE strategies and healthy habits.
- Document your progress on your program's Storyboard.
- 

#### **Final Action Period Tasks after the Learning Collaborative is Over**

- Work with Leadership Team members to complete the final self-assessment.
- Complete the Sustaining Your ECE Program's Food and Farming Education Activities Handout to continue your healthy habits journey.
- Celebrate your success! Thank you for participating. Stay healthy!

#### **Ask for Help as Needed**

Reach out as needed to your coach or other participating ECE programs for support, ideas, and resources.

#### **Continuing the Process of Healthy Change**

Upon completion of the Learning Collaborative, Leadership Teams should continue to work together with program staff and families. Identify additional areas where there may be opportunities for healthy changes. You can utilize tools shared during the Learning Collaborative to continue the quality improvement process.

Leadership Teams can use the Sustaining Your ECE Program's Food and Farming Education Activities found at the end of the Resource Guide to help facilitate this discussion with program staff and to develop next steps for creating additional healthy changes.

## Food and Farming Education Learning Collaborative

### Overview

The Food and Farming Education Learning Collaborative is included in a three-part Farm to ECE Learning Collaborative series. The Food and Farming Education Learning Collaborative focuses on the role food and farming education can play in ECE settings to support healthy habits, improve language and literacy skills, relationships, and overall child development. During the Learning Sessions, participants will increase their knowledge and skills around food and farming education recommended practices and identify goals for healthy change that their ECE program will work towards.

Key content includes:

- Recommended practices for food and farming education
- Benefits of food and farming education in ECE programs and ways to implement changes within your program
- Using a self-assessment and action planning tools to make healthy changes
- Strategies for engaging children and families in food and farming education activities
- Helpful resources and materials created specifically for ECE programs
- Guidance to help sustain healthy changes made through the Learning Collaborative



### Food and Farming Education Key Learnings

#### 1. Farm to Early Care and Education is a set of strategies and activities that focus on providing children the opportunity to:

- Consume healthy, locally grown foods,
- Grow their own food, and,
- Participate in hands-on activities that teach about nutrition and food

#### 2. What is Food and Farming Education?

- Food and Farming Education teaches children about food, where our food comes from, how it is grown, how farms and gardens work, and many different concepts about how our world works.
- These activities and lessons enhance the health and education of young children by providing experiential, hands-on learning opportunities that connect children and their families with local food and farms.

#### 3. What are the benefits of Food and Farming Education activities?

- Provides many opportunities for hands-on learning and exploration.
- Promotes increased knowledge in Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, and Math (STREAM).
- Supports food and nutrition security.

#### 4. How do we get started?

- Take time to gather information and resources.
- Engage families from the beginning to create space for them to lead planning efforts.
- Consider how you can connect with community partners to support your efforts.

#### Additional resources to share with our ECE program staff:

- *Cherokee Elementary Farm to ECE Success Story - Hear about a Farm to Early Care and Education (Farm to ECE) success story from Nicole Efird, a teacher at Cherokee Elementary Pre-K Program in North Carolina. [Cherokee Pre-K](#)*
- *[Grow It, Try It, Like It](#) - The Grow It, Try It, Like It! Nutrition Education Kit is a garden-themed nutrition education kit for child care center staff that introduces children to three fruits and three vegetables.*

#### What takeaways from this Food and Farming Education Learning Collaborative do we want to share with staff and families?

You can find an editable version of the Key Learnings document [here](#).





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# GETTING STARTED WITH FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

## Stay Informed

Join our network:  
**FarmtoSchool.org**

Twitter  
**@FarmtoSchool**

Facebook  
**National Farm to School Network**

Instagram  
**@FarmtoSchool**



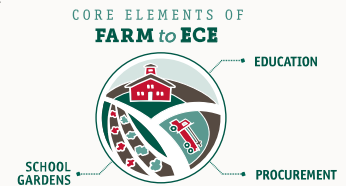
**NATIONAL FARM to SCHOOL NETWORK**

### GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER

The National Farm to School Network is an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing, school gardens and food and agriculture education into school systems and early and education settings.

## What is farm to early care and education?

Farm to early care and education is a set of strategies and activities that offer increased access to healthy, local foods through local procurement, gardening opportunities, and food and agriculture education activities to enhance the quality of educational experience. These same core elements as farm to school adapt well to all types of early care and education settings (e.g., preschools, child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, programs in K-12 school districts). In addition to promoting health, wellness, and high quality educational opportunities, farm to early care and education also expands healthy food access, encourages family and community engagement, provides additional market opportunities for farmers, and supports thriving communities.



## Getting started

Farm to early care and education offers multiple strategies to improve the health of children, increase the quality of educational experiences, and promote valuable family engagement opportunities, aligning with goals of the early care and education community. This list provides easy first steps to develop a lasting initiative in your community:

- 1 Assess where you are and where you'd like to be.** Are your goals centered on:
  - Purchasing healthy, local foods to be served in meals or snacks?
  - Establishing a garden or offering gardening experiences?
  - Enhancing the learning environment with other food and agriculture related activities (e.g., field trips to farms or farmers markets, cooking lessons, etc.)?
  - Engaging families in local food access and education?
  - All of the above?
- 2 Form a team and collaborate.** Educators and administrators, parents, Child Care Resource and Referral staff, local farmers and producers, community organizations, and even local colleges/universities can play important roles in supporting farm to early care and education activities.
- 3 Establish one or two attainable goals to get started.** Some ideas include:
  - Identify snack or meal items that you would like to transition to local.
  - Find a farmer, farmers market, grocery store, or wholesaler to connect you to local foods. Search LocalHarvest (localharvest.org) or reach out to the National Farm to School Network for help making these connections.
  - Identify curricula, activities or books related to gardens, preparing and eating healthy, local foods or learning about where food comes from and how it grows.
  - Plan a local foods meal, snack, day, or special event.
  - Reach out to a local nursery or hardware store for donations or other support for starting an edible garden.
  - Plan a farm or farmers market field trip, a farmer or chef visit to the classroom, or host a tasting of local produce.

## WHY FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION?

### KIDS WIN

Farm to early care and education provides all children access to nutritious, high quality, local food so they are ready to learn and grow. Farm to early care and education activities enhance classroom education through hands-on learning related to food, health, agriculture and nutrition.

### FARMERS WIN

Farm to early care and education can offer new financial opportunities for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers by opening the doors to an institutional market worth billions of dollars.

### COMMUNITIES WIN

Buying from local producers and processors reduces the carbon footprint of food transportation while stimulating the local economy. Educational activities such as school gardens and composting programs help to create a healthy environment around the community.

The National Farm to School Network has a wide variety of resources and information about farm to school in early care and education. For more information visit [farmtoschool.org/ECE](http://farmtoschool.org/ECE).

Updated September 2018

**4 Learn from others.** If you are running into an obstacle, it is likely that there is someone who has run into it before! Some places to connect and learn from others include:

- The **National Farm to School Network** website ([farmtoschool.org](http://farmtoschool.org)). Find resources and contact information for people in your state and region who are working on farm to school and farm to early care and education. Sign up for our e-newsletter to receive regular communication about news, resources and opportunities. Search our resource database for tools and materials to support every facet of farm to early care and education.
- Your county or state's **Child Care Resource and Referral agency**. These agencies can provide resources and ways to learn about and connect with other early care and education programs and sites that are implementing farm to early care and education activities. Find your local agencies at [www.usa.childcareaware.org](http://www.usa.childcareaware.org).
- The **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** staff in your state. Learn how CACFP can help you make local food more economical and can free up resources for other farm to early care and education activities. CACFP state agency contacts can be found at [www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp).

**5 Promote farm to early care and education in your community.** Ideas include sharing information and recipes in parent newsletters, posting garden or field trip photos to a website or on social media, or inviting local media to your activities.

### Opportunities in early care and education settings

A few key characteristics of early care and education settings make them ideal for local food procurement, gardening, and food and agriculture education:

**Local foods procurement:** Early care and education programs tend to purchase at smaller volumes and generally do not offer a la carte choices or multiple meal options. Small purchasing volumes can be a good fit for small farmers who may not have enough volume to work with an entire school district.

**Curriculum:** Experiential education is highly encouraged in early care and education settings. This is a great fit with many farm to early care and education activities such as gardening, cooking, and taste tests. Farm to early care and education activities align well with existing early care and education curricula and support achievement of early learning standards.

**Family involvement:** Family involvement tends to be strong during the early childhood years, which can be a huge asset for farm to early care and education programming. Families can engage in farm to early care and education activities in the early care and education setting and children take home what they learn, influencing family food choices in the home.

### FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IN EVERY SETTING

Farm to early care and education adapts to all kinds of settings. Here are two examples:

#### Family child care as the perfect platform for experiential education

Family child care providers across the country are providing valuable hands-on education opportunities to children through backyard gardens, cooking activities, farm field trips and more. Farm to early care and education is a great fit for family child care because activities can adapt to all the different age groups and abilities that may be served in one family child care setting.



#### Farm to early care and education supports Head Start success

Head Start offers vital, high quality early care and education opportunities to low-income families across the country. Farm to early care and education offers benefits that align with Head Start priority areas, including an emphasis on experiential learning, family and community engagement, and life-long health and wellness for children, families and caregivers.

# Stories in Motion

## In-Class Activity Breaks

Continue each bulleted activity or set of activities for 15-30 seconds.

### Through the Seasons

- In Fall, leaves fall from the trees. Put on your jacket and tie up your tennis shoes. The ground is covered in leaves. Rake them up into a big pile. Get a running start and jump in the crunchy leaves. Now let's play a game of touch football. Hut. Hut. Hike. Go long. Throw a pass and then catch it and run down field. Touchdown! Show me your victory dance. Fall is a time for the last harvest of apples and pumpkins. Reach up high to get apples from the trees and then reach down low to pull pumpkins from their vines.
- It is getting colder outside and the trees are bare. Winter must be here. Put on your snow suits, boots, gloves and hats. Let's walk our sleds up this big hill and then slide down. Hold on to tight! Roll some snow balls and stack them into a snow man. Let's go over to an even bigger hill. Put on some skis and grab some ski polls. Here comes the ski lift. Sit down to ride it to the top of the hill. Now stand up and ski down. Turn your knees from side to side to steer yourself back and forth.

The snow is starting to melt and the days are getting longer. Spring is coming. April showers bring May flowers so put on your raincoats and grab an umbrella. Splash around in the puddles. Let's practice some basketball. Dribble the ball with your right hand and then your left hand. Shoot a basket! Now, take a deep breath and smell the spring flowers. Bend down low to pick some!

- It is getting really hot now. Summertime! Wipe the sweat off your brow and put on some sunscreen. Let's walk down to the water. Put on a life jacket and carefully get in to a canoe. Pull your paddle through the water to move the canoe forward. Cast out your fishing poll. Let's see if anything is biting. Reel in your line and then paddle back to the shore.

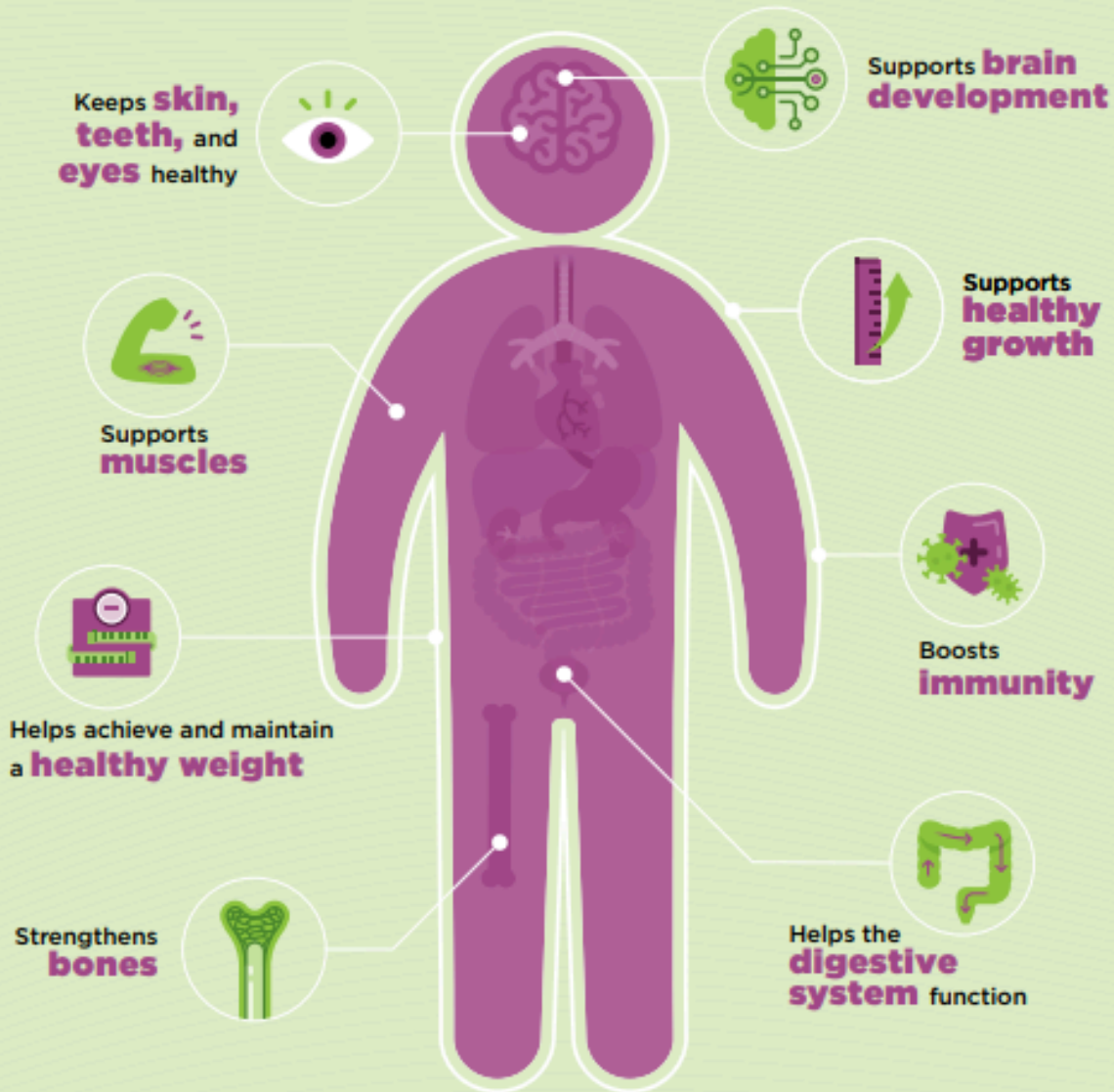
We can active all year round!

**TEAM NUTRITION**  **IOWA™**

Full Resource Found [Here](#)



# Benefits of Healthy Eating for Children



TO LEARN MORE VISIT  
[cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy\\_eating](https://cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating)



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# Plant Life Cycles

## Key Concepts:

- Seeds grow into new plants
- Seeds are a lunchbox for the new plant (they are a source of energy for the new plant)
- Seeds need water and warm temperatures to sprout
- Roots grow first followed by the stem and leaves

## Activity: Seed Viewers

**Overview:** Plant bean seeds in clear plastic cups to allow students to watch seeds sprout.

## Materials:

- Plastic cups (can be washed and reused)
- Construction paper
- Paper towels
- Soup bean seeds
- Water

## Instructions:

*Prep Work: Cut pieces of construction paper into rectangular strips to fit inside the plastic cups.*

1. Help students place a piece of construction paper inside a plastic cup so that it lines the side of the cup.
2. Ball up a few pieces of paper towels and place them inside the construction paper liner until the cup is full.
3. Let students pick out 3 to 4 beans from the dry soup bean mix (avoid using any beans that are split) and place them in the cup between the side of the cup and the construction paper liner.
4. Gently water the paper towels until saturated.
5. Place the cups on a shelf or windowsill and watch them grow. First you will notice the seed coat expanding (wrinkling) as the seed absorbs water and then the root will start to grow in 2 to 3 days. Water as necessary to keep the paper towel and seeds continually moist. Seed germination can be impacted if the temperatures are too cold (if you are comfortable, most likely your seeds will be too).
6. After the roots emerge, the stem and leaves will begin to appear. You can continue to grow your plant as long as you want for observation, however generally seeds that have been sprouted this way do not transplant well out into the garden and they will not be able to go grow to maturity in the cup.



# Engage Families with Farm to ECE



*Early childhood sites can foster strong family partnerships with farm to ECE activities.*

Family engagement is central to early care and education quality. When families are involved in education, children benefit, the program benefits, and families benefit.

**Farm to early care and education (farm to ECE) can be used as a tool to promote successful family partnerships.**

Through farm to ECE's emphasis on health, community connections, local food, hands-on learning, and diversity, it can also

- Promote social and racial equity,
- Inspire parent-child activities, and
- Help sites collaborate with families to determine their needs, interests, strengths, and goals.



Read below for ideas on how to use farm to ECE to engage families.

## CONNECT FAMILIES TO COMMUNITY HEALTH RESOURCES

Use this pathway to take small steps to connect your families to a whole host of local resources from food pantries to farmers' markets.



### *Did you know?*

Your families that participate in FoodShare/SNAP or WIC can use their benefits to buy fresh and local food at farmers' markets.



Full Resource Found [Here](#)



# FACT SHEET

## Have a SNAP/EBT Card? Get FREE Fruits & Veggies

### What is Double Up?

- Double Up is a program that gives you free fruits and vegetables when you use SNAP/EBT.
- Each purchase using a SNAP/EBT card earns a \$1 for \$1 match (or 50% off) when you buy fruits and veggies!

### How Do I Use Double Up?

- First, visit a market or store that offers Double Up.
- Make sure you use your SNAP/EBT card to make purchases.
- Follow the instructions from farmers market or store staff – each offers the free produce in a slightly different way.

### Where Can I Use Double Up?

- New locations are always being added, so please visit [www.DoubleUpIndiana.org](http://www.DoubleUpIndiana.org) for a current list.
- For information in languages other than English, use the translation tab at the bottom of the website.

### What Products Can I Buy with Double Up Food Bucks?

- You can purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, mushrooms, fresh herbs, and plants and seeds that produce food.

### Is There a Limit to the Amount of Double Up Food Bucks I Can Use?

- You can use up to \$20 per day, per customer.

### How Can I Find Out More?

DoubleUpIndiana.org • @DoubleUpIndiana on Facebook • DoubleUpIndiana@sjchf.org



LEARN MORE:  
[DoubleUpIndiana.org](http://DoubleUpIndiana.org)



Full Resource Found Here in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

### *Links to Additional Food and Farming Education Resources*

- [Indiana Grown Farm to ECE Toolkit](#)
- Tasting Examples:
  - [Taste the Rainbow](#)
  - [Mystery Bag Activity](#)
  - [Farm to Preschool Taste Test Guide](#)
  - [Apple Tasting for Young Children](#)
  - [Two Bite Club](#)
- Colorado Farm to Child Guide: [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Arabic](#)
- [Grow It, Try It, Like It](#)
- [Growing Minds- Farm to ECE Bookshelf](#)
- Kids Gardening resources:
  - [Lessons on Pollinators](#)
  - [Activity Ideas and handouts in English and Spanish](#)
- [Growing Head Start Success with Farm to Early Care and Education](#)



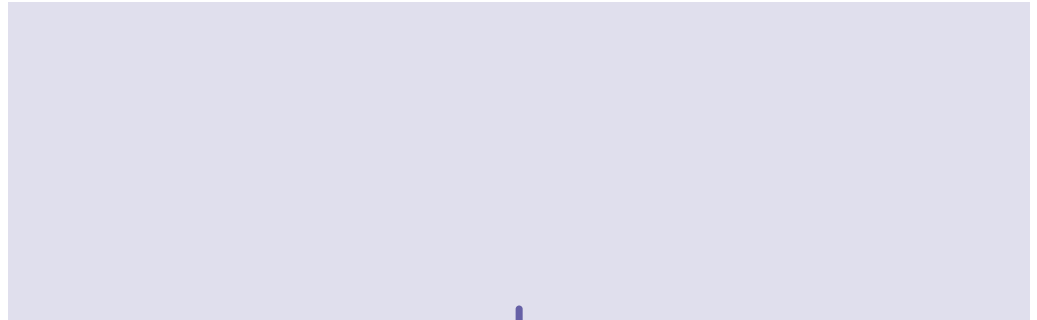


## Sustaining Your ECE Program's Food and Farming Education Activities

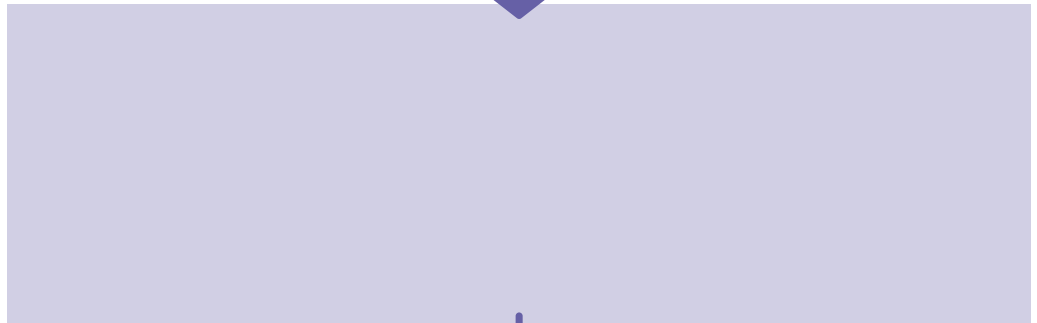
You, your Leadership Team, and ECE program have worked hard during this Learning Collaborative to create a healthier ECE environment, impacting children's health and development today and into the future. Today we celebrate these changes and start planning your next step on this healthy journey!

Healthy change should be an on-going process. You can record your initial ideas on this handout. Discuss your ideas with your Leadership Team, staff, and families to make a final plan for your ECE program.

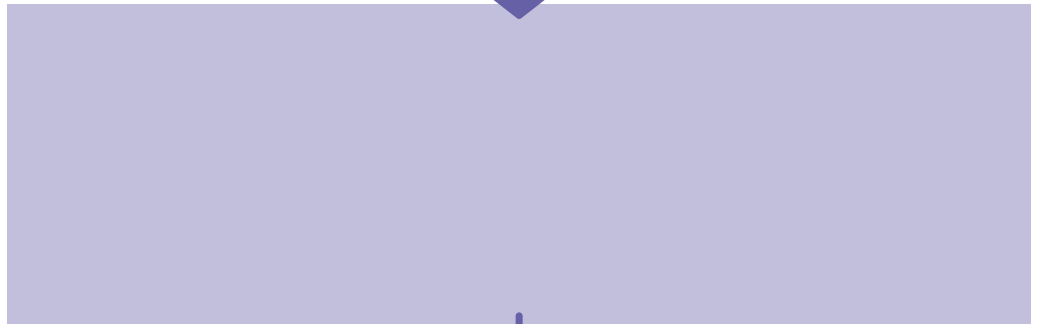
1. What went well with the activities we tried?



2. What challenges did we face?



3. What would we like to continue in the future? How can we build on this progress?



4. What do we need to sustain our activities? (Information, materials, etc.)



**Glossary**

<p><b>Action Period</b></p>	<p>A period between Learning Sessions during which Leadership Teams lead a variety of tasks. Leadership Teams share information learned with staff and families and complete self-assessments and action plans. They also engage others in implementing changes and documenting progress.</p>
<p><b>Action Plan</b></p>	<p>List of tasks to guide an ECE program to implement a new recommended practice.</p>
<p><b>Coaches</b></p>	<p>Individuals responsible for leading the Learning Sessions and providing ongoing technical assistance to participating ECE programs.</p>
<p><b>Early Care and Education (ECE)</b></p>	<p>The field, sector, or industry that includes care and learning experiences for children from birth to age five.</p>
<p><b>Early Care and Education Program (ECE Program)</b></p>	<p>A business or organized service that provides care and learning experiences to groups of children from birth to age five. ECE centers and family child care homes (FCCH) are common types of ECE programs.</p>
<p><b>Early Childhood</b></p>	<p>A developmental period of time, typically birth to age five.</p>
<p><b>Facility</b></p>	<p>The physical place where an ECE program is offered.</p>
<p><b>Leadership Team</b></p>	<p>ECE program staff that are committed to leading the work of the Learning Collaborative – attending the Learning Sessions and guiding the Action Periods. For ECE centers, the Leadership Team is usually composed of three people (e.g., owner/director, lead teacher, food service personnel, or other staff). A FCCH may have a Leadership Team composed only of the owner/teacher or may include additional personnel or family members of children in their care.</p>
<p><b>Learning Collaborative</b></p>	<p>A learning community of ECE programs brought together to increase their knowledge, create networks of support, and equip programs to make healthy changes to their practices, policies, and environments.</p>

<p><b>Learning Session</b></p>	<p>Learning Sessions provide the curriculum content. Most sessions are held live and offer active learning on nutrition, breastfeeding support, physical activity, or screen time, as well as their impact on children’s health and development. Live sessions provide opportunities to build relationships, develop leadership, increase collaboration, and plan for healthy change. All Learning Sessions can be conducted in-person or virtually.</p>
<p><b>Project Coordinator</b></p>	<p>The individual responsible for administering and providing overall coordination of the Learning Collaboratives in the state. To support delivery of Learning Collaboratives, this individual leads the recruitment of coaches and ECE programs, provides ongoing oversight and technical support for coaches, and facilitates communication about the project. This could be a separate staff member when multiple Learning Collaboratives are being coordinated simultaneously, or the coach may serve as the project coordinator if implementing independently.</p>
<p><b>Recommended Practices</b></p>	<p>In ECE, recommended practices are strategies, standards, methods, and techniques that provide guidance to ECE professionals and families on effective ways to improve health and learning outcomes of young children.</p>
<p><b>Resource Guide</b></p>	<p>An accompanying guide for Leadership Team members that includes activities and handouts used in the Learning Sessions or should be shared with ECE program staff and families.</p>
<p><b>Self-assessment</b></p>	<p>A questionnaire designed to help ECE providers identify which recommended practices they are and are not meeting in order to select relevant goals regarding program environments, practices, and policies.</p>
<p><b>Technical Assistance (TA)</b></p>	<p>Encouragement, support, information, and resources provided by coaches to help Leadership Teams develop and implement action plans for healthy change ensuring the inclusion of all staff members.</p>

***Notes:***

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