



**Farm to Early Care and Education
Learning Collaboratives**
Local Foods, Healthy Kids
Resource Guide
July 2024

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

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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. To contact us, please email info@healthykidshealthyfuture.org. 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 about how our world works.	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>Self-Assessment</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>Action Planning</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>Engaging Staff</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>Identifying Resources</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>Storyboards</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.</p> <p>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 Local Food 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 Local Food 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.

Local Foods, Healthy Kids Learning Collaborative

Overview

The Local Foods, Healthy Kids Learning Collaborative is included in a three-part Farm to ECE Learning Collaborative series. This Local Foods, Healthy Kids Learning Collaborative focuses on the role local foods 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 local food procurement recommended practices and identify goals for healthy change that their ECE program will work towards.

Key content includes:

- Recommended practices for local food procurement
- Benefits of local foods 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, families, and the community in local food activities
- Helpful resources and materials created specifically for ECE programs
- Guidance to help sustain healthy changes made through the Learning Collaborative



Local Foods, Healthy Kids 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 are Local Foods?

- While there is no universal definition of local foods, local food is generally understood to mean food that is grown and transported from nearby.
- Nearby or local can apply to within a city or town, a county, a state, or even a larger region.

3. What are the benefits of integrating Local Foods into your program?

- Economic benefits- Dollars spent directly with local growers increases money kept in the local economy.
- Community engagement - Purchasing local food can increase social connectedness within communities, connecting children to people in the food system.
- Foundation of healthy habits - Serving local foods can provide more nutrient dense options and teach children about healthy eating.
- Health Equity - When providers center equity in their purchasing decisions and processes, their spending can support good health and economic prosperity within communities impacted by health inequities.

4. How do we get started?

- Explore options for buying local and what's in season- consider farmer's markets, grocery stores and more!
- Consider how you can connect with community partners to support your efforts.
- Start small- think about swapping one item on your current menu for a local item.

Additional resources to share with our ECE program staff:

- Fresh Farm Produce 101 includes storage, preparation, and cooking tips for produce: <https://www.freshfarm.org/produce101>
- North Carolina Extension knife skills video: <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/local-food-nutrition-health/cooking-local-foods/knife-skills/>

What takeaways from this Local Foods, Healthy Kids Learning Collaborative do we want to share with staff and families?

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

Indiana [ingredient]!



Enjoy local [insert ingredient] from [farm name/location]
[today/this week/this month/next week]!



[Insert a fact about growing this item -- how it grows, how long it lives, what the plant looks like... Or click and delete this row.]



[Insert a health or nutrition benefit, or click delete this row.]



[Insert a fun fact or delete this row.]



[Insert Indiana harvest dates, or delete this row.]



When we choose local ingredients, we support local farm families and we enjoy fresh, delicious food!

[This week's/next month's/etc.] menu also includes these local items:

- [Ingredient name]
- [Ingredient name]
- [Ingredient name]
- [Ingredient name]

[Add additional info and/or delete any text you don't need.]





Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for Best Flavor

Store in the refrigerator

<u>FRUIT</u>		<u>VEGETABLES</u>				
Apples (more than 7 days)	Berries	Artichokes	Belgian Endive	Cauliflower	Leafy Vegetables	Radishes
Apricots	Cherries	Asparagus	Broccoli	Celery	Leeks	Spinach
Asian pears	Cut Fruit	Green Beans	Brussel Sprouts	Cut Vegetables	Lettuce	Sprouts
	Figs	Beets	Cabbage	Green Onions	Mushrooms	Summer Squashes
	Grapes		Carrots	Herbs (not basil)	Peas	Sweet Corn

1. Place fruits and vegetables in separate, perforated plastic bags.
2. Use within 1-3 days for maximum flavor and freshness.
3. Store each group in different produce drawers in the refrigerator to minimize the detrimental effects of ethylene produced by the fruits on the vegetables.

Ripen on the counter first, then refrigerate

Avocados Kiwi Nectarines Peaches Pears Plums Plumcots

1. To prevent moisture loss, store fruits and vegetables separately in a paper bag, perforated plastic bag, or ripening bowl on the counter away from sunlight. Ripening fruit in a bowl or paper bag can be enhanced by placing an apple with the fruit to be ripened.
2. After ripening, store in refrigerator and use within 1-3 days.

Store only at room temperature

<u>FRUIT</u>			<u>VEGETABLES</u>			
Bananas	Citrus fruits	Persimmons	Garlic*	Peppers†	Tomatoes	
Apples (fewer than 7 days)	Mangoes	Pineapple	Ginger	Potatoes*	Winter Squashes	
	Melons	Plantain	Jicama	Pumpkins		
	Papayas	Pomegranates	Onions*	Sweet Potatoes*		

1. Many fruits and vegetables should only be stored at room temperatures. 2. Keep away from direct sunlight.
 - Refrigeration can cause cold damage or prevent them from ripening to good flavor and texture. For example, pink tomatoes ripen to a better taste and red color if they are left at room temperature. In the refrigerator, they do not turn red, and even red tomatoes kept in the refrigerator lose their flavor.
 - *Store garlic, onions, potatoes, and sweet potatoes in a well-ventilated area in the pantry.
 - †Cucumbers, eggplant, and peppers can be refrigerated for 1-3 days if they are used soon after removing from the refrigerator.

Cleaning Your Produce

Always keep produce separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Never use detergent or bleach to wash produce. Instead, rinse produce under running tap water immediately prior to use, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Washing too far in advance removes some of nature’s natural preservatives. However, head lettuce or leafy greens remain crisper when washed right away and then refrigerated. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled “ready-to-eat,” “washed,” or “triple washed” need not be washed. Refrigerate all cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables within 2 hours.

For information on how to store other fruits and vegetables go to FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org
 Source: UC Davis Postharvest Technology



Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers



How to Buy, Prepare, & Serve Local Foods



How early care & education sites can use local foods in their meals, snacks, & taste-tests

ECE sites can improve the nutrition of their children and cultivate lifelong healthy eating habits with local foods. Here's how to get started buying, preparing, and serving local fruits, vegetables, dairy, eggs, grains, and meat at meals and snacks.



A farmstand is the perfect place to practice color vocabulary with kids... while also grabbing fresh veggies for snack time.

Kick start menu planning

- **Start small.** Purchase items that can be used whole or are easily cut, such as apples, berries, peas, and cucumbers.
- **Swap it.** Substitute one local ingredient in an existing child-approved menu item or snack.
- **Dig in.** Involve children in every stage of the process. They can select veggies on a farmers' market visit or pick produce from the garden. Then they can use child-friendly utensils like [wavy choppers](#) to prepare the produce *veggies for snack time* for a snack!
- **Explore.** Use the [Wisconsin Food Seasonality Chart](#) to discover the wide range of local food items available! Wisconsin beef, chicken, eggs, yogurt, and milk are available year-round. Local spinach, sweet potatoes, squash, and kale are available even in the winter!
- **Learn.** Hone your culinary skills and practice seasonal Wisconsin recipes with the [Chop! Chop! video series and resource guide](#). This video training series even counts for Professional Development CEUs.

Identify your team and resources

- Connect with local farmers and food service staff to make a plan and put it into action. Schools doing farm to school and parents can also help you get started.
- Make a list of existing kitchen equipment (knives, food processors) and resources (eager parents, garden) that will help you reach your goals.

What?

Wisconsin Farm to Early Care and Education (WI Farm to ECE) offers increased access to local foods, gardening, hands-on learning, and family engagement opportunities that support the health and educational experience of children in all ECE settings.

Who?

All ECE providers including group child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, and 4K programs in K-12 school districts.

Why?

- Offers opportunities for hands-on learning
- Increases children's access to nutritious food
- Provides family engagement opportunities
- Supports local farmers and healthy communities



Full Resource Found [Here](#)

CHILDREN AGES 1-5: BREAKFAST, LUNCH + SNACK

CACFP is an indicator of quality child care.

CACFP Weekly Menu

MEAL	COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
BREAKFAST	Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup					
	Fruit/Vegetable	1/4 cup	1/2 cup					
	Grain/Meat+	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq					
LUNCH	Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup					
	Fruit*	1/8 cup	1/4 cup					
	Vegetable	1/8 cup	1/4 cup					
	Grain	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq					
	Meat/Meat Alternate	1 oz	1 1/2 oz					
SNACK	Milk	1/2 cup	1/2 cup					
	Vegetable	1/2 cup	1/2 cup					
	Fruit	1/2 cup	1/2 cup					
	Grain	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq					
	Meat/Meat Alternate	1/2 oz	1/2 oz					

* Meat and meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component at breakfast a maximum of three times per week. * The fruit component at lunch may be substituted by a second vegetable. oz eq = ounce equivalents



Age 1 serve whole milk
Ages 2-18 serve 1% or fat-free



At least one serving of grains per day
must be whole grain-rich.



One 8 oz. glass of water per year of
age until 8 years old.



Full Resource Found [Here](#)

USDA Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Family Style Meal Service With Children

in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

FNS-1010 | February 2024



[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 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



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

Links to Additional Local Food Resources

- Indiana Grown Toolkits:
 - Farm to ECE Toolkit
 - Procurement Toolkit
- USDA Resources:
 - Procuring Local Food for Child Nutrition Programs
 - Food Buying Guide
 - Crediting Tipsheets
- Indiana Local Food Resources:
 - Indiana Harvest Calendar
 - Indiana Community Supported Agriculture
 - Farmer's Markets in Indiana
 - Indiana Grown for Schools Buyer's Guide
 - Indiana Harvest of the Month Resources
 - Indiana Seasonal Crop Calendar
 - Indiana Seasonal Produce Calendar
- Harvesting and Storing Garden Vegetables
- Knife Skill Videos:
 - North Carolina Extension
 - Colorado CACFP
- FRESH FARM Produce 101



Sustaining Your ECE Program's Local Food Activities

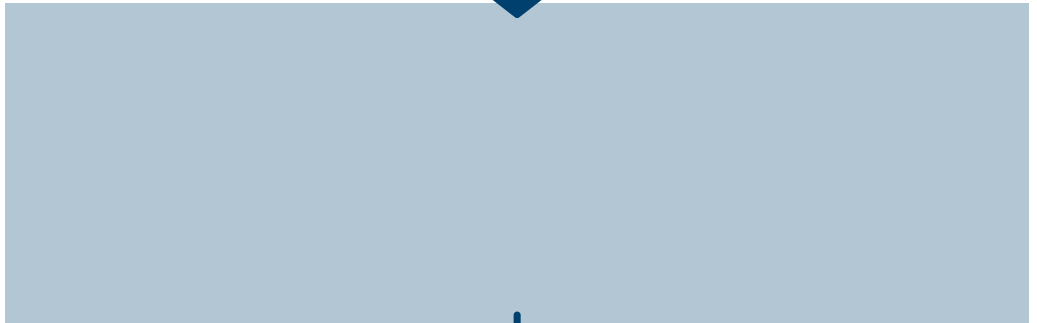
You, your Leadership Team, and ECE program have worked hard during this Learning Collaborative to create a healthier ECE environment, impacting children's health and development today and into the future. Today we celebrate these changes and start planning your next step on this healthy journey!

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.

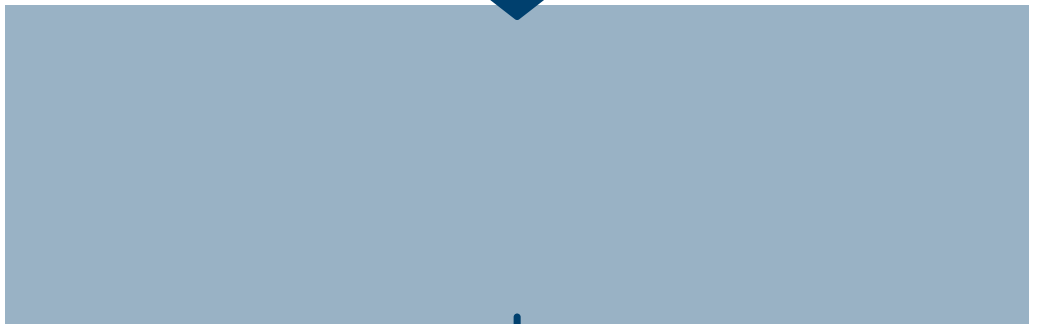
1. What went well with the activities we tried?



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.)



We made great progress with our Local Foods! Let's keep going!

Glossary

<p>Action Period</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>Action Plan</p>	<p>List of tasks to guide an ECE program to implement a new recommended practice.</p>
<p>Coaches</p>	<p>Individuals responsible for leading the Learning Sessions and providing ongoing technical assistance to participating ECE programs.</p>
<p>Early Care and Education (ECE)</p>	<p>The field, sector, or industry that includes care and learning experiences for children from birth to age five.</p>
<p>Early Care and Education Program (ECE Program)</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>Early Childhood</p>	<p>A developmental period of time, typically birth to age five.</p>
<p>Facility</p>	<p>The physical place where an ECE program is offered.</p>
<p>Leadership Team</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>Learning Collaborative</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>Learning Session</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>Project Coordinator</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>Recommended Practices</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>Resource Guide</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>Self-assessment</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>Technical Assistance (TA)</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>

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