

Texas

Farm to Child Care Takes Root in Texas



Farm to Child Care is taking root in Texas, thanks to [USDA's Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\) Child Care Wellness Grants](#). In 2010, FNS awarded \$1 million in grant funds to the Texas Department of Agriculture, the agency that administers the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in Texas. The funds were designated for projects aimed at improving the health and nutrition of children in child care and early education settings. Texas put a portion of that funding toward establishing Farm to Child Care (FTC) initiatives in centers and day care homes across the state through 32 mini grants.

The FTC mini grants reached 292 child care centers and day care homes and more than 14,000 preschool children and their parents or guardians. The grants were used to establish connections with local growers and farmers, develop direct purchasing relationships to buy local fruits and

vegetables that were then integrated into CACFP snacks and meals, and sustain change in child care settings through policy and environmental advances.

Specifically, FTC encouraged centers and day care homes to buy local produce and increase the appeal and nutrient quality of preschool meals. Caregivers partnered with parents and farmers to teach children healthy food habits and establish a connection to where food comes from. FTC lesson plans were aligned with the existing preschool curriculum to teach children and parents how to start their own gardens, which prompted children to request that their parents serve more fruits and vegetables at home. An [educational video](#) that features a visit to an urban farm was produced as a part of the grant.

Introducing children to farming, gardening and fresh produce can establish a lifetime habit of eating healthfully and being active. [Learn more about Farm to Child Care.](#)