

Douglas County, Lawrence, Kansas

Early Educators Embrace Farm to Preschool



The Douglas County Child Development Association (DCCDA) in Lawrence, Kansas, is headed into the fourth year of its Farm to Preschool initiative to support healthy eating and healthy lifestyles for preschoolers. Realizing the significant impact of the National Farm to Preschool program, DCCDA is working to address issues of childhood obesity prevention by creating a more sustainable and comprehensive local food system. Its goal is to foster healthy relationships around food and lifelong healthy eating habits among young children.

As part of the Families, Farmers and Educators United (FFEU) program, DCCDA is increasing the number of childcare

providers each year who are implementing the program's Root for Food Curriculum. The curriculum gives specific lessons on teaching children where food comes from, how fruits and vegetables are grown, and how to make healthy food choices. Not only is training provided on the curriculum, but support is also given to child care providers on developing and maintaining their center gardens. Additionally, each center is matched with a local farmer who delivers weekly vegetable subscriptions for families who choose to subscribe to the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). This provides a convenient way for families to access fresh, local produce and also increases the number of customers for the local farmers.

“We have been extremely pleased that early educators have embraced the Root for Food curriculum and are seeing their preschoolers enthused about trying new fruits and vegetables they are actually growing in their gardens,” said Emily Hampton, Farm to Preschool coordinator for DCCDA. “We have trained more than 150 child care providers since we began the FFEU program in 2011. We continue to see success as more providers are joining with us to learn how nutritious food choices can be easily accessible through gardening and local farmers.”

The Root for Food curriculum has 15 weeks of themed lesson plans. Activities on cooking, organizing a garden, understanding plant science, learning about nutrients found in foods and discovering food traditions of many cultures are included in the curriculum. “DCCDA is excited to be a part of this national effort to reach children during the early years. Teaching children where their food comes from in order to

instill healthy habits just makes sense,” said Hampton.

[Read More About the Families, Farmers and Educators United Program »](#)

[Read More About the Farm to Preschool »](#)

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