

# Farm to Preschool



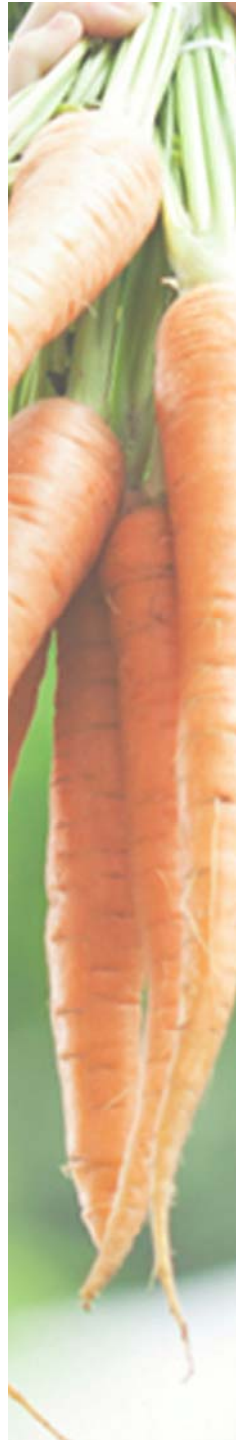
Katey Swanson, RD



Nemours is currently funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under a five-year Cooperative Agreement (1U58DP004102-01) to support states/localities in launching early care and education learning collaboratives focused on childhood obesity prevention. The views expressed in written materials or publications, or by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

# Agenda

- What is Farm to Preschool?
  - Goals of the movement
- Steps to Getting Started
- Resources to Support the Effort
- Next Steps

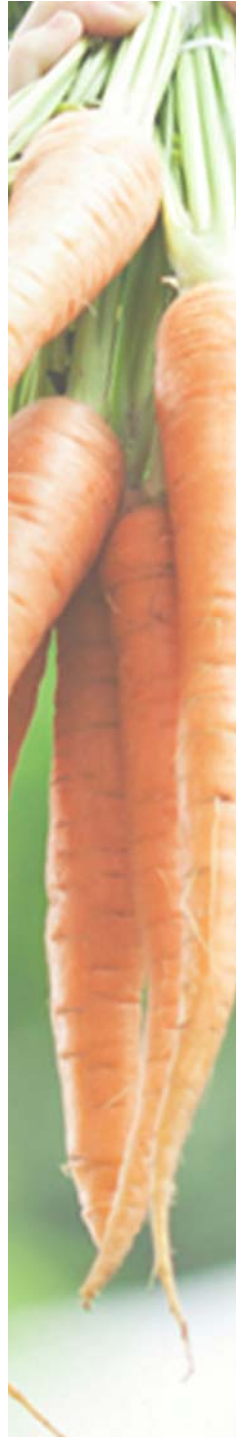




# What is Farm to Preschool?

# Farm to Preschool

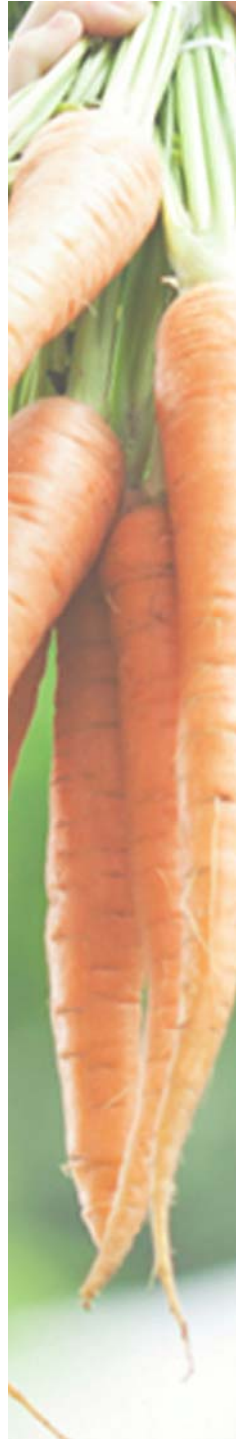
- **Expansion of the farm to school model**
  - Not always directly linked to the Farm to School Network
- **Targets Head Start, center-based, school-based, and family child care programs**
- **Goals:**
  - To connect early care and education (ECE) settings to locally-grown produce
  - To enhance nutrition education in the classroom
  - To provide additional educational opportunities





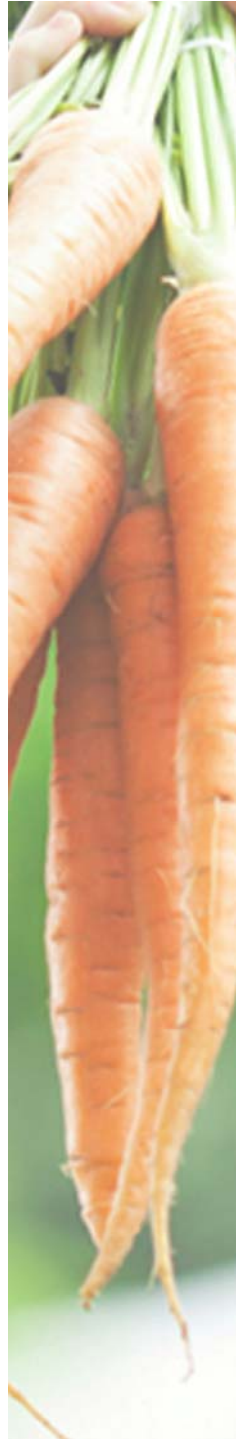
# Farm to Preschool

- **Elements of the model include:**
  - Procurement
    - Local foods are purchased and served for meals, snacks, and/or as a taste test
  - Education
    - Opportunities are provided to teach children about agriculture and nutrition within the classroom
  - School gardens
    - Children learn through on-site gardening



# State Example

- **New York State Department of Health**
  - Funded through SNAP-Ed
  - Offered mini grants to 11 ECE programs
  - Provide food demonstrations
  - Teachers use the “Grow It, Try It, Like It” curriculum
  - Programs participate in Community Supported Agriculture
    - Boxes of produce are delivered to a program
    - Parents can purchase produce using their EBT cards
  - Trips to the local farmers’ market are organized
  - Child size gardening tools are provided

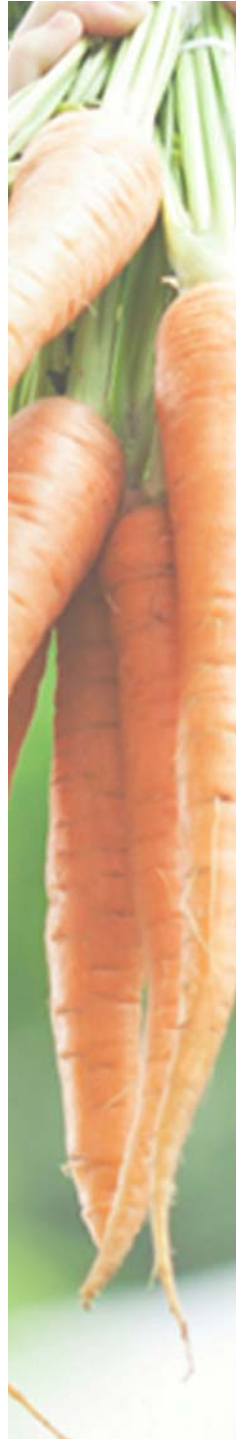


# Steps to Getting Started



# Getting Started at the Local and State Level

1. Convene stakeholders
2. Establish goals
3. Make connections
4. Seek and use funding
5. Learn from others





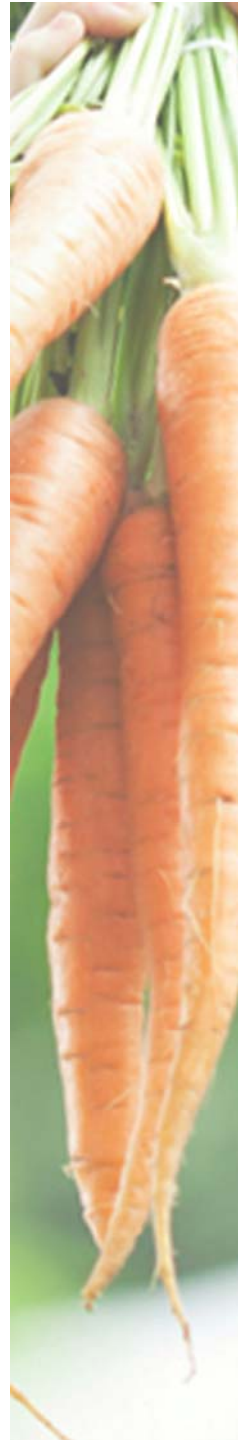
# 1. Convene Stakeholders

## ECE Programs

- Food service personnel
- Administrators
- Teachers
- Parents
- Local farmers
- Local colleges & universities
- Community organizations

## Community/State

- Farm to School Network State Lead
- Colleges & universities
  - Cooperative Extension Service
- State agencies
  - Department of Health
  - Department of Education
  - Department of Agriculture
- Child Care Resource & Referral agencies
- Head Start and other ECE programs



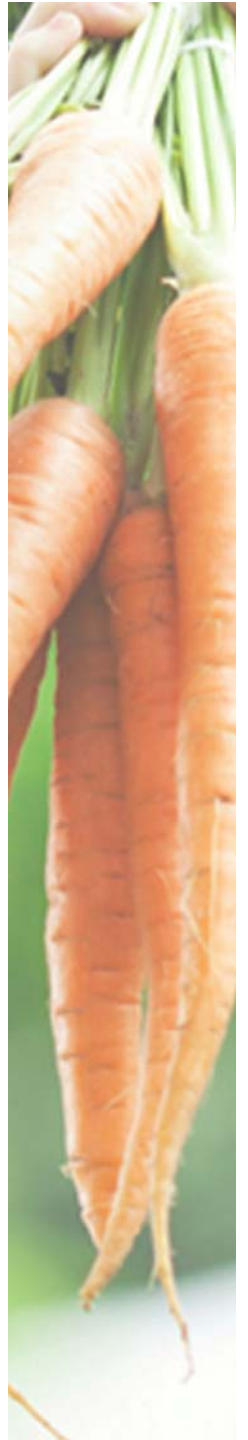
## 2. Establish Goals

### ECE Programs

- Form a planning team
- Identify snacks or components of a meal to serve local foods
- Make connections and discuss how to partner
- Plan a local foods event
- Search for local donations or grant opportunities

### Community/State

- Identify ECE programs to target
- Develop resources
- Disseminate resources
  - Handouts/fliers
  - On-site technical assistance
  - Statewide conference
  - Community meeting
- Create a space to link ECE programs to farmers



# 3. Make Connections

- **To purchase local food, contact a:**
  - Food distributor or food service company
  - [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)
    - Local farmer
    - Local farmers' market
    - Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- **To build a garden, contact:**
  - Cooperative Extension Service
  - Local farmer
  - Local Boy/Girl Scouts



## Stay Informed

Join our network:  
[www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)

Twitter  
@FarmtoSchool

Facebook  
<http://on.fb.me/nfsnf2s>



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

Farm to preschool enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices in early care and education programs. Students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities such as edible gardens, cooking lessons and farm field trips. Farm to preschool empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities.

### Options for purchasing local food

There are many different types of farm to preschool activities. One option is to serve local food in meals and snacks. Spring is the best time of year to begin planning food purchases since summer and fall are peak harvest seasons for farmers. Child care centers can most easily buy locally-grown food in the following ways:

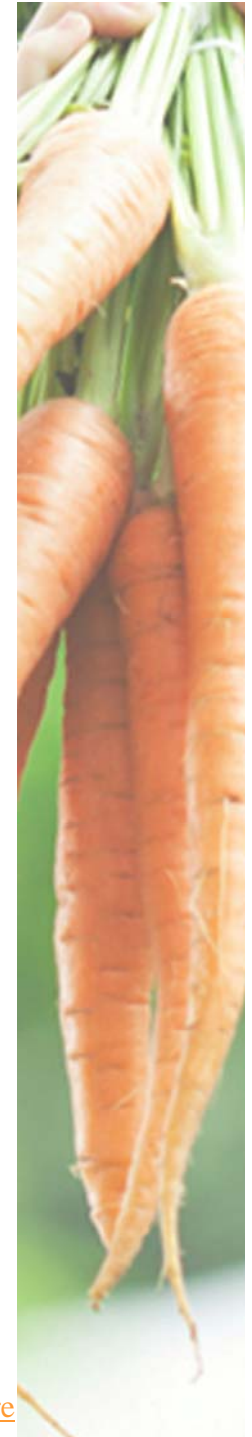
**1 Through your food distributor or food service management company:** Many distributors and food service management companies (FSMCs) can supply locally grown food. If you are already purchasing from a distributor or working with an FSMC, start by asking them where their food comes from and requesting local items. You can also think about incorporating local foods in future contracts.

**2 Directly from a local farmer:** When purchasing directly from a farmer, delivery can often be arranged. Your National Farm to School Network State Lead can help you find farms in your area. Find your State Lead at [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)

**3 Your local farmers' markets:** If you only need small quantities, you can shop at a farmers' market or arrange with a farmer in advance to pick up a larger order at the market. Find a market near you: <http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>

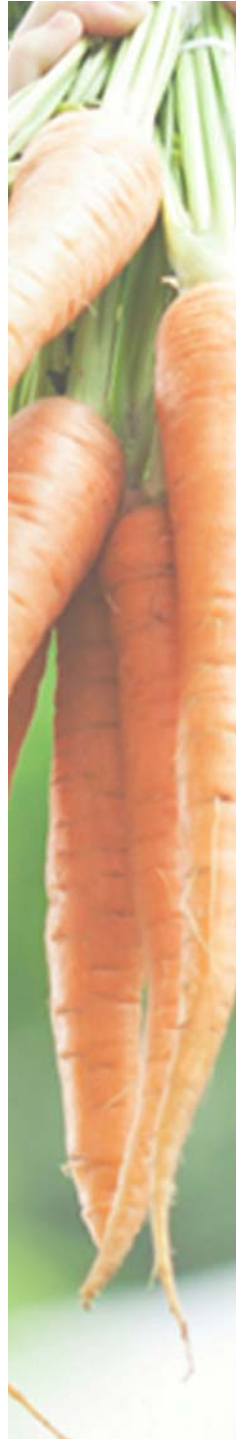
**4 A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program:** Food purchased through a CSA is often paid for up front. Weekly boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables are delivered or available for pick-up all season long. A CSA provides a good chance to try new foods. If using a CSA, speak to your farmer for ideas and recipes so that you're able to use the variety of produce that you will receive. Or, ask the farmer if your box can contain less variety but more quantity of the items you want to serve. Also consider asking your families if they'd like to receive CSA boxes to take home with them. If so, the farmer might be willing to make weekly deliveries to your site.

**5 An edible garden:** Edible gardens are perfect for smaller amounts of produce. Fun, easy foods to start with include snap peas, radishes, lettuce, herbs, cucumbers and squash. If you are unsure about your soil quality or have limited space to grow, consider growing food in pots or containers. Contact your county's Cooperative Extension for advice on starting, maintaining and harvesting from a garden in your region: [www.csees.usda.gov/Extension/](http://www.csees.usda.gov/Extension/)



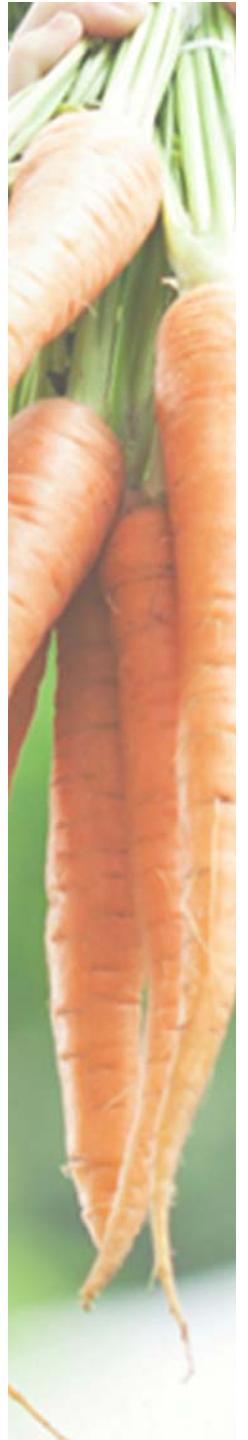
# 4. Seek & Use Funding

- **Funding sources**
  - Private funding
  - USDA Child Care Wellness grants
  - USDA Team Nutrition grants
  - CACFP allowable food costs
    - Purchase fresh fruits & vegetables from farmers' markets
    - Plant an edible food garden
- **Use the funding for:**
  - Mini grants for ECE programs
  - Statewide or local conference/meeting
  - Technical assistance to ECE programs
  - Purchasing nutrition curricula for ECE classrooms and provide staff training



# 5. Learn From Others

- **Reach out to local, state, or national contacts to overcome barriers**
  - Farm to Preschool website ([www.farmpreschool.org](http://www.farmpreschool.org))
    - Program models (<http://www.farmpreschool.org/programmodels.html>)
  - Farm to School website ([www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org))
    - Farm to School Network state lead
  - Child Care Resource & Referral agency
  - Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
  - Other ECE programs participating in the movement
  - Colleges and universities
    - Cooperative Extension Service





# Resource for ECE Programs

- Assess where you are
- Form a team
- Establish goals
- Learn from others
- Promote Farm to Preschool in the community



## GETTING STARTED WITH FARM TO PRESCHOOL

### Stay Informed

Join our membership:  
[www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)

Twitter  
@FarmtoSchool

Facebook  
<http://on.fb.me/nfsnf2s>



**FOURISHING KIDS AND COMMUNITIES**  
The National Farm to School Network sprouted from the desire to support community-based food systems, strengthen family farms, and improve child health. Funded in part by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Network coordinates, promotes and expands the Farm to School movement at the state, regional and national levels. The Network is a project of the Tides Center.

### What is farm to preschool?

Farm to preschool is a natural extension of the farm to school model, and works to connect early care and education settings (preschools, Head Start, center-based, programs in K-12 school districts, and family child care programs) to local food producers with the objectives of serving locally-grown, healthy foods to young children, improving child nutrition, and providing related educational opportunities.

### Getting started

Farm to preschool offers multiple strategies to improve the health of children and communities. This list provides some easy first steps to develop a lasting farm to preschool program in your community:

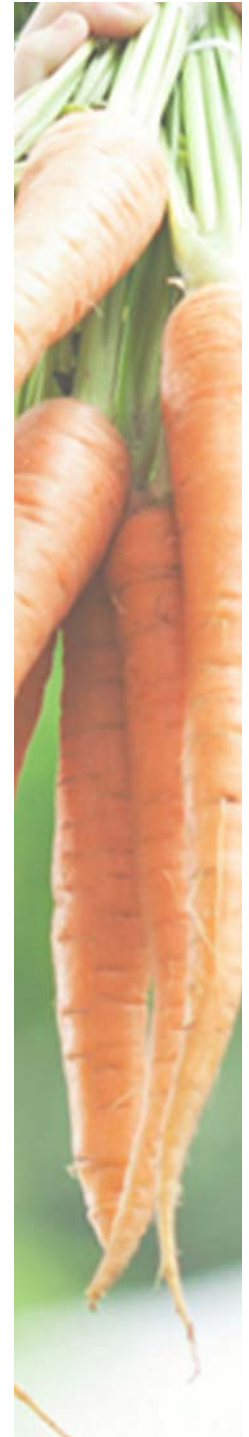
- 1 Assess where you are and where you'd like to be.**
  - Are your goals centered on:
    - Purchasing local foods to be served in meals or snacks?
    - Establishing a garden?
    - Implementing other farm to preschool activities (field trips to farms or farmers' markets, cooking lessons, etc.)?
  - Engaging families in local food access and education?
  - All of the above?
- 2 Form a team and collaborate:** Teachers and administrators, parents, Child Care Resource and Referral staff, local farmers, community organizations, and even local colleges/universities can play important roles in establishing a sustainable farm to preschool program.
- 3 Establish one or two attainable goals to get started.** Some ideas include:
  - Create a planning team that includes potential collaborators such as parents and teachers.
  - 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. Ask your local Cooperative Extension (<http://www.cseas.usda.gov/Extension/>) for help making these connections!
  - Plan a local foods meal, snack, day, or event.
  - Reach out to a local nursery or hardware store for donations or other support for starting an edible garden.

### FARM TO PRESCHOOL IN ACTION

Many programs exist across the country—here are two examples:

**In-home providers create farm to preschool through a backyard garden**  
In Los Angeles, Ethan and Friends Family Child Care owner Shaunte Taylor has transformed her modest inner-city backyard to include raised beds, a compost bin, multiple fruit trees, and a chicken coop. Now, children plant seeds, amend the soil, while investigating worms and insects, water plants, and harvest and prepare simple recipes using their garden produce.

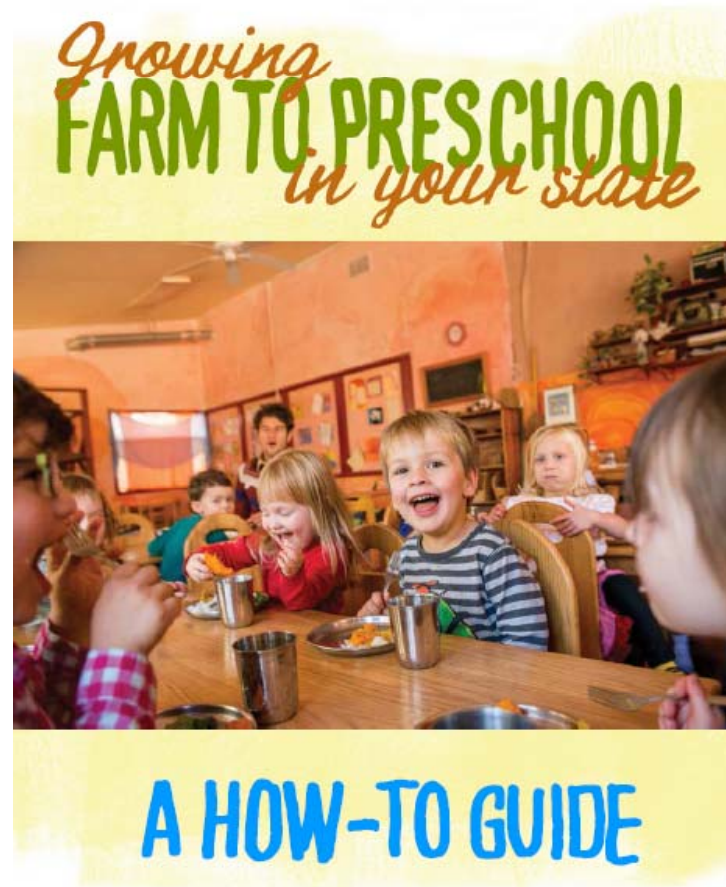
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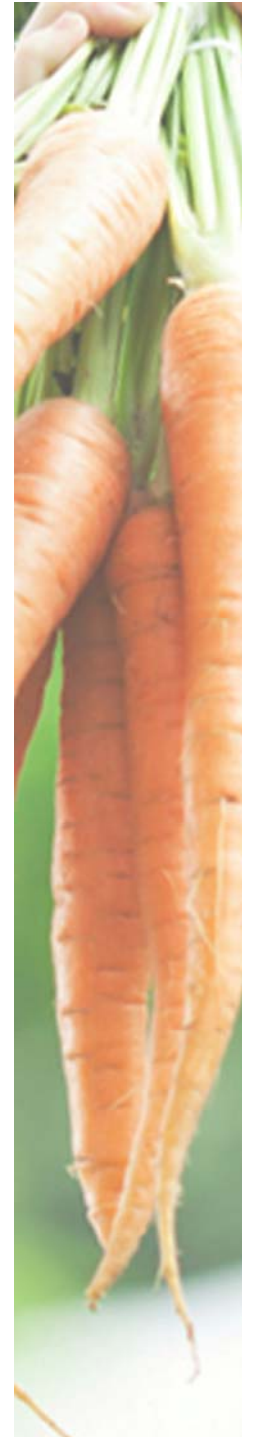
Find the handout [here](#)

# Resources for State

- Convene appropriate stakeholders
- Create and define the role of an advisory group
- Identify priorities and activities
- Choose a form of communication and set regular times to meet
- Seek funding



Find the resource [here](#)



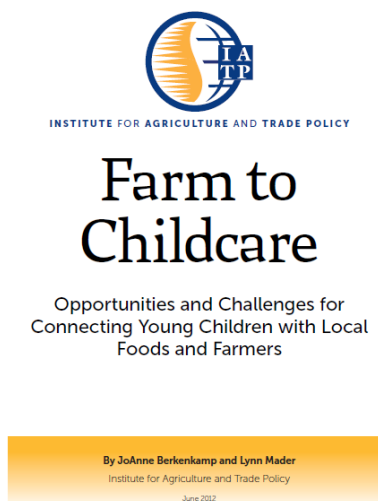
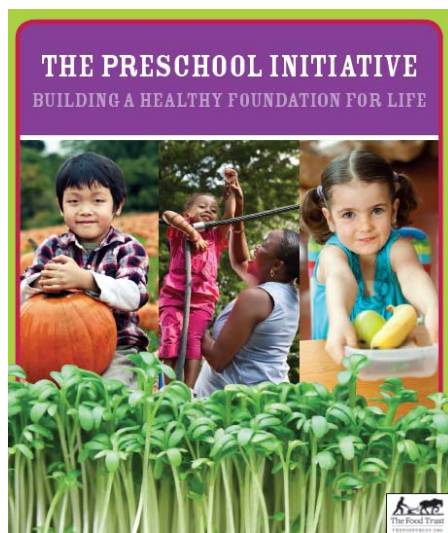


## Resources to Support the Effort



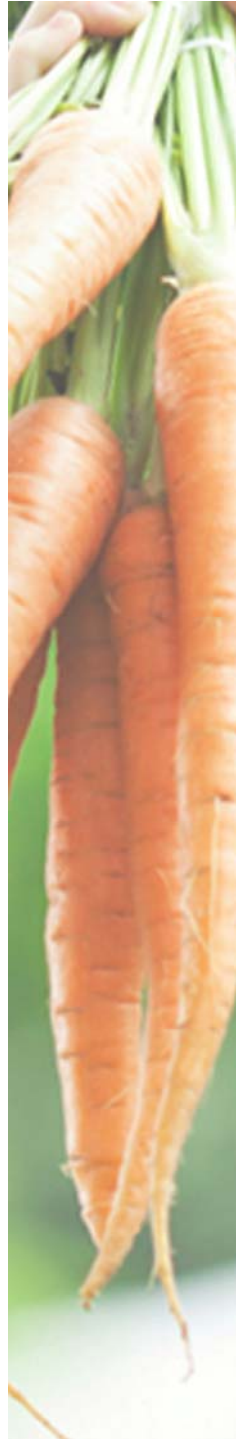
# Farm to Preschool Toolkits

- Farm to Preschool Initiative Toolkit
  - Food Trust
- Farm to Childcare: Opportunities and Challenges for Connecting Young Children with Local Foods and Farmers
  - Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
- USDA Interactive Farm to School Network [Toolkit](#)



# Nutrition Curricula

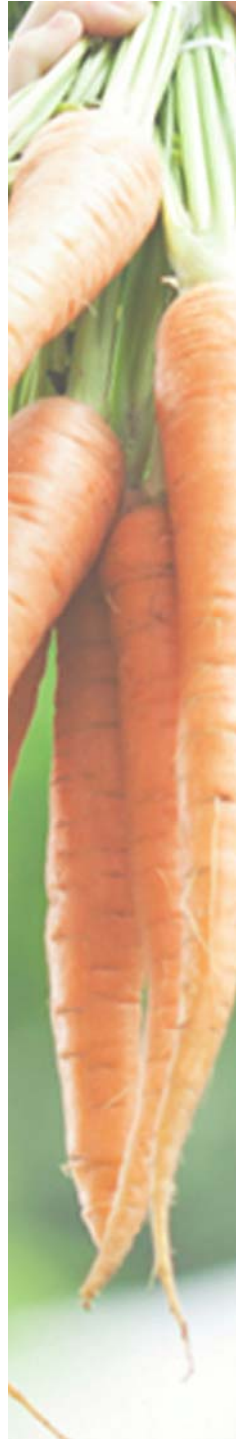
- **Grow It, Try It, Like It!**
  - Gardening and nutrition education kit
- **Early Sprouts**
  - Gardening and nutrition education kit
- **Eat Well Play Hard: In a Childcare Setting**
  - Nutrition education and physical activity curriculum
- **Color Me Healthy**
  - Nutrition education and physical activity curriculum
- **Harvest for Healthy Kids**
  - Nutrition kits with lesson plans and family newsletters
- **Farm to Childcare Curriculum Package**
  - Nutrition curriculum, sample menus, lesson plans





# Improve the Menu

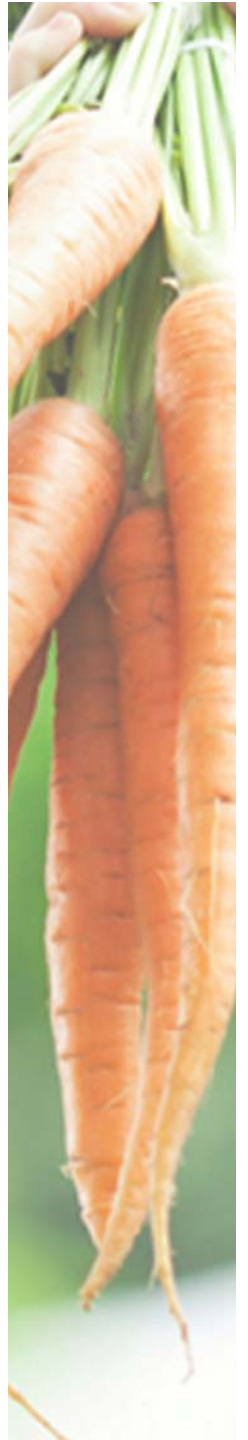
- **What's Cooking?** [USDA Mixing Bowl](#)
  - Sort recipes by:
    - Program
    - Course
    - Food group
    - Nutrient
    - Cooking equipment
    - Cuisine
    - Quantity
- **Food Safety from Farm & Garden to Preschool**
  - Free [online training](#) for ECE providers, food service staff, volunteers, and parents
    - Receive certificate of completion





# Next Steps

1. Read the following documents:
  - Growing Farm to Preschool in Your State
  - Farm to Preschool Initiative Toolkit
  - Farm to Childcare: Opportunities and Challenges for Connecting Young Children with Local Foods and Farmers
2. Review the Farm to Preschool [website](#)
3. Contact your [Farm to School Network](#) state or regional lead
  - Ask about local and state Farm to Preschool efforts
  - Discuss opportunities for expansion
4. Identify ECE programs who are interested in participating in the Farm to Preschool movement
5. Get started!



# Questions?



# Contact Information

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