

Special Edition: Spotlight on Farm to Preschool

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Wisconsin Farm to School

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

October 27, 2015 | Spotlight on Farm to Preschool

In today's Wisconsin Farm to School newsletter, you will find:

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Children at First Lutheran Church Childcare plant seeds for their indoor garden.

Farm to Preschool and Early Care Settings is Taking Off in Wisconsin!

Excitement and momentum surrounding the farm to preschool movement is growing in Wisconsin! 'Farm to preschool' includes all early care settings, such as: preschools, Head Start, center-based programs, programs in K-12 school districts, and family based programs. The state has a strong history in both farm to school and the early childhood setting, but that work has been somewhat separated for many years. The Wisconsin Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative (WECOPI) was created in 2008 and focuses on supporting healthy eating and physical activity in child care settings. The Wisconsin Farm to School Leadership group, comprised of stakeholders from state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations, began meeting in 2009. A Farm to Preschool subgroup that includes representation from WECOPI and the Farm to School Leadership Group formed in 2015 in recognition of the importance of this movement. Members of the Farm to Preschool subgroup include individuals from the University of Wisconsin-Madison; UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agriculture Systems; Winnebago County Health Department; Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; Wisconsin Department of Health Services; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Wisconsin Early Childhood Association; healthTIDE; Community GroundWorks; and independent

fundraising and grant consultants. If you would like to participate in this group, please contact Beth Hanna at beth@communitygroundworks.org.

Tell the National Farm to School Network how YOU are engaging in farm to preschool!



The National Farm to School Network (NFSN) applauds your dedication and commitment to engaging and educating our next generation! NFSN would greatly appreciate your participation in a brief (10-15 minute) research survey that focuses on farm to preschool/farm to early care activities.

We seek responses from staff in all early care and education settings (e.g. preschools, Head Start, center-based programs, programs in K-12 school districts, and family based programs). Even if you feel you are not currently involved in farm to preschool activities, we would value your feedback.

Follow this link to complete the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NFSNfarmtopreschool>

Please complete the survey by **Friday, November 20**. By completing the survey, you will qualify for a drawing to win one of 5 framed prints of artwork created collaboratively by attendees of the 2012 National Farm to Cafeteria conference and designed by Vermont artist Bonnie Acker. Your involvement in this national survey is voluntary. Your name, site name or any identifying information will not be in publications or reports; however, we will be able to gain valuable knowledge about activities in Wisconsin!

Your feedback and contributions are very important to our future work! NFSN serves as a hub for information, networking and advocacy for communities working to bring local food

sourcing and food and farm education to schools and preschools. Learn more at www.farmtoschool.org.

Wisconsin Farm to Preschool Success Stories



Outdoor garden activities at UW-Stout's Children and Family Study Center in Menomonie, WI

Team Nutrition Garden Grant Success Stories

In 2014, [Wisconsin Team Nutrition](#) at the Department of Public Instruction offered an indoor garden subgrant to child care centers who participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Subgrant recipients were allotted funding to purchase gardening supplies for an indoor classroom garden; garden-based educational materials, as well as printed lesson handouts and accompanying materials; and food for classroom tasting and demonstration. Grant recipients were required to implement lessons from the Team Nutrition gardening curriculum ([Grow It, Try It, Like it!](#)) and completed a post-program evaluation. The evaluation analyzed the participants' favorite lessons to implement and measured if the children benefited from participating in the educational opportunity.

The following are a sample of comments from child care centers who participated in the Wisconsin Team Nutrition Indoor Garden Subgrant:

- Do you feel your students benefited from participating in this educational opportunity?

Yes, it was amazing to see how much more likely the students were to try a new food if they learned about it first. Previously, when a new food was presented at snack, most of the children wouldn't try it. But after seeing the whole food, touching it, smelling it, and cooking with it, they were excited to taste it! **–Maggie Keenan, 4K Teacher, and Allison Freeman, Nutritionist, Child and Family Study Center, University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menomonie, WI**

- The Team Nutrition indoor garden sub-grant was successful and very well-received by the children and adults involved! We've actually gardened for a number of years, and have had vermicomposting going, too. But this was the first year with indoor gardening, as well. What a fun learning experience! **-Judy Gifford, Director, Child and Family Study Center, University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menomonie, WI**



Children participate in the Sweet Potato lesson from Grow it, Try it, Like it! in Book 4: Sweet Potato Hill at UW-Stout's Child and Family Study Center.

Farm to Preschool Resources



[Farm to Child Care Presentation](#) and [handout](#) from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and Community GroundWorks.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has an updated [Farm to Preschool](#) webpage with many great resources for child care and early care and education (ECE) settings.



The National Farm to School Network has compiled great resources to help you get started, including: [Getting Started with Farm to Preschool](#); [Local Procurement for Childcare Centers](#); [Local Procurement for Family Childcare Providers](#); and a [Farm to Preschool newsletter](#)!

Michigan Farm to Early Childcare Guide

New! [Farm to Early Childhood Programs: A Step-By-Step Guide](#) is now available! Freely downloadable, this new guide provides tools and resources to help early childhood program providers of all types and sizes purchase and use local foods in their meals and snacks.



Are you a Preschool or Early Care Provider?



The Registry, Wisconsin's Recognition System for the Childhood Care and Education Profession, acknowledges and highlights the training, experience and professionalism that are vital to quality care.

[The Registry](#) has options to help you bring farm to preschool to your center! There are several options, including:

- [Grandma's Garden Return's](#) provides an opportunity for staff, parents and community members to develop a vision statement about gardening with children in their outdoor space. The course is set up in three sessions-1st session is vision work and community building 2nd session focuses the vision work into a project and 3rd session is an on-site workday. The intent of the course is to establish a community that can continue to meet on its own and bring their vision to reality on a time frame suitable to the group.
- [Cultivating Childhood Wellness through Gardening](#) - This online video training was developed by the [Wisconsin Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Program](#) and [Community GroundWorks \(link is external\)](#) in partnership with UW-Extension, Life Lab, Wisconsin Obesity Prevention Network, UW-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health, and UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems.

This training has been approved for continuing education hours for child care providers, with 1.5 hours of Registry credit awarded for this training (see final training video for details).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact DATCP's Sarah Elliott at 608-224-5046 or sarah.elliott@wisconsin.gov.