

Gardening in Childcare



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INDIANA
FARM TO SCHOOL
NETWORK

NOURISHING Kids and Communities

Ice Breaker Activity

Agenda

- Overview of farm to pre-school
- Discuss steps for getting started
- Share success quotes & videos
- Discuss your call to action
- Provide resources



Farm to School 101: Getting Started



What is Farm to Preschool?

Farm to Preschool's goals are multi-level and include influencing the eating habits of young children while their preferences are forming; creating healthy lifestyles through good nutrition and experiential opportunities such as **gardening**; improving healthy food access at home and within the community; and ultimately influencing policies to address the childhood obesity epidemic through a local food lens.

What is Farm to Preschool?

- Farm to Preschool is a natural expansion of the national farm to school model and encompasses a wide range of programs and activities.
- Farm to Preschool serves the full spectrum of child care delivery: preschools, Head Start, center-based, programs in K-12 school districts, nurseries and family home care facilities.



Farm to School: Gaining Momentum in Indiana

- Support for Farm to School has been gaining momentum in IN since the fall of 2012
- Indiana Farm to School Network was created to grow f2s efforts in IN



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We transform lives and livelihoods through research-based education

Start Small, Grow Slowly

Farm to Preschool programs are most successful when they start small and expand as support, awareness and resources grow. Choose one action item to incorporate as you begin your programming.

Suggestions include:

- **School Gardens**
- Chef or Farmer Visits
- Nutrition Education
- Experiential Education



Top 5 Reasons to Incorporate Farm to Preschool

Studies have shown that school gardens ...

1. encourage preference and consumption of fruits and vegetables
2. increase parental support and involvement
3. improve children's enthusiasm about preschool/child care
4. Improve teamwork skills
5. Improve self-understanding

More Reasons to Incorporate Farm to Preschool

Beyond the student population...

- **Teachers & Staff:** Positive changes in diets and lifestyles
- **Parents:**
 - Increased ability and interest in incorporating healthier foods in family diets
 - Guide children to make healthier food choices
- **Family:** Improved household food security
- **Community:** Increase awareness and interest in local foods and healthy eating

5 Basic Steps for Starting a Garden

- 1) Find a place to plant
- 2) Get seeds & tools
- 3) Prepare the soil
- 4) Start your garden
- 5) Plant
- 6) Care for your garden



1. Find a Place to Plant

Use these questions to guide your thinking, and then decide on the garden location accordingly...

- Is the site easy and safe for both students and teachers to access?
- Is there a nearby and dependable water source?
- Is the site protected from vandals, rodents or other potential threats?
- Is the area big enough to allow for future growth?
- Is the site exposed to sunlight *at least* 6 hours a day, if planting flowers, herbs and vegetables?
- Is the soil contaminated with lead or other heavy metals?

1. Find a Place to Plant

1. Think Location

- Plenty of sunlight and well-drained, level soils are important

2. Check the Soil

3. Needs Sun

- At least six hours of full sunlight daily is necessary to produce healthy, top-quality vegetables

4. Water Supply

5. Think Size

6. Map it Out

1. Where to Plant?

Here are a few ideas of where you can start to look for land for your garden...

- Your Yard (Front or Back)
- Vacant Lots
- Private Land (A Neighbor's Yard)
- School Grounds
- Hospital Grounds
- Community Parks
- Farm Land
- County Fairgrounds
- County Extension Office Grounds

2. Get Seeds & Tools

- Buy seeds early in the year
 - January - March for the best selection
- Select seeds based on time of maturity & disease tolerance
 - how long they need to grow
- To ensure germination, purchase new seeds every year
- Choose varieties marked “easy to grow”



2. Get Seeds & Tools

Tools and Other Items Needed for Your Garden...

Necessities

- Rake
- Shovel
- Garden hoe

Other Accessories

- Small hand trowels
- Watering cans
- Turning fork
- Small buckets
- Plant labels or row markers
- Garden hose
- Lawn sprinkler
- Wheelbarrow
- Gloves



3. Prepare the Soil

Ultimate garden soil is...

- Deep
- Loose
- Fertile
- Well drained
- Slightly acidic
- Has lots of organic matter
 - manure, leaves, grass clippings, compost, green manure, crop residues



3. Prepare the Soil

Have your soil tested for ...

- pH
- nutrients
- lead contamination

by a soil testing laboratory



<http://eckertfarms.blogspot.com/2010/04/simple-soil-testing-see-if-you-hit-pay.html>

Contact Local Health Dept. for soil testing

<http://www.state.in.us/isdh/24822.htm>

3. Prepare the Soil

- If your site is contaminated, the simplest solution may be to find another site or try container gardening with different soil.
- Contact your nearest Cooperative Extension office to learn how to take a soil sample & where to send it for analysis.

4. Start your Garden

- Growing season can vary
- Seeds requiring longer growing seasons may be started indoors
- May see better results with purchasing vegetable plants that have already been started



4. Start your Garden

1. Timeline for Your garden
2. Getting ready to plant in the garden
3. Planting in the garden

Use the table to help you decide the best time to plant your garden (handout)

http://www.in.gov/isda/files/Harvest_Calander.pdf

4. Start your Garden

Cool season crops can be planted when the ground temperature is **50 degrees**

- beets
- **carrots**
- peas
- lettuce
- chard
- mustard
- greens
- cabbage
- broccoli
- brussels sprouts



Warm season crops are planted when the ground is at **60 degrees**

- corn
- beans
- Squash
- **tomatoes**
- pumpkins
- peppers
- eggplant
- melons
- **cucumbers**



5. Planting

1. Straight-Row Furrows
2. Wide Row Planting
3. Square-Foot Gardening



quick tip

"Keep in mind that a garden cannot be planted in one day. Some fruits and vegetables grow best in cooler temperatures, while others require warm soil or hot air."

— Iowa State University Extension

6. Care for your Garden

- Weeding
 - a layer of leaf mulch did a great job of keeping the weeds down
- Watering
 - best time to water is in the early morning or early afternoon.
- Adding Organic Matter
 - provides nutrients for plants

How often should you water your garden?

- Most gardeners use the 1 inch of water per week rule
- Too much water will leach out the much needed fertilizer
- Excessive water could suffocate the plants by depriving the roots of oxygen



How to Engage the Youth?

- Provide a safe location, a hand trowel, some seeds and plants, and a volunteer to show them what to do—kids love learning how to grow things
- Start small, either with a container garden or a small raised bed no larger than 4 x 4 feet
- Square foot gardening is a technique that works well with kids

How to Engage the Youth?

- Have them choose which plants they want & where
- Have them plant
- Caring for their garden and watching it grow will be a delight



How to Engage the Youth?

Resources from Fruits & Veggies More Matters

- Kids in the garden

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/kids-in-the-garden>

- DIY Gardening Projects

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/5-do-it-yourself-gardening-projects-for-home-or-school>

Tips for Gardeners Working With Young Kids

- Young children have very short attention spans
 - Digging holes seems to hold endless fascination
- Kids need instant gratification
- A picture is worth a thousand words
 - Never tell kids something that you could show them instead

Tips for Gardeners Working With Young Kids

- When giving out supplies to kids, try to keep seeds, tools, and watering cans as similar as possible to avoid squabbles (i.e. purchase all red watering cans, not pink and blue ones.)



Engaging the Youth Activity



Making the Butterflies

1. Gather supplies
2. Play around with clothespin (fine motor development)
3. Paint clothespin (optional)
4. Add tissue paper wings
 1. Cut tissue paper into 12 x 8 rectangles (may cut smaller rectangles)
 2. Gather tissue paper by clinching it in the middle
 3. Can use 2-3 sheets of the same color or a few different colors
 4. Clamp clothespin around the clinched part of the tissue paper
 5. Fluff the wings up
5. Decorate wings (optional)
6. Add pipe cleaner antennae

From the Classroom...

“Start small -- indoor plants on your window sill, one raised bed in the schoolyard, food tasting in your classroom or a field trip to a local farm -- and watch how the excitement grows. Students talk to other students, to their parents, to their other teachers and pretty soon others want to get involved. And don't forget to take lots of pictures. No one can resist a child having fun!”



Lindsey Arenberg
Fresh from the Farm Program Manager
Seven Generations Ahead
Oak Park, Illinois



From the Classroom...

On starting small...



Lindsey Arenberg
Fresh from the Farm Program Manager
Seven Generations Ahead
Oak Park, Illinois

Your Call to Action

- Encourage students to share their ideas and include them in the building and planting of the garden
- Get their hands in the soil every step of the way
 - Their participation will instill a sense of ownership, pride, and responsibility among students.

Your Call to Action

- Use the garden to connect students to the source of their food



<http://www.centronia.org/>

- Plant herbs, fruits, & vegetables that are easy to grow, pick, and cook and you'll succeed at introducing a greater variety of fruits & vegetables to youth

Resources

- [USDA's People's Garden website](#) has how-to videos and databases filled with garden-based learning curricula, free seed and funding sources, and healthy gardening practices.
- You can call on an [Extension Master Gardener](#) volunteer in your area to help with your garden.

Resources

- Farm to Preschool

www.farmtopreschool.org/preschoolgardens.html

- Farm to Childcare

<http://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/farm-childcare>

- Got Dirt? (Gardening Toolkit)

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P4/p40112.pdf>

Resources

- Food & Nutrition Fun for Preschoolers
http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/growit_fun.pdf
- Grow it, Try it, Like it
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-try-it-it>

Resources

- Team Nutrition's Nibbles for Health: Grow a Family Garden
www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/Nibbles/grow_garden.pdf
- Growing Vegetables in Containers
http://www.kiddiegardens.com/growing_vegetables_in_containers.html
- Two Bite Club
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/TwoBiteClub.pdf>

Thank you



<http://www.shelburnefarms.org/>

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