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Farm to School



Nourishing Kids and Communities



WHAT IS FARM TO SCHOOL?

Farm to School enables every child to have access to nutritious food while simultaneously benefiting communities and local farmers. In addition to supplying nourishing, locally grown and produced food in schools, Farm to School programs offer nutrition and agriculture education through taste tests, school gardens, composting programs, and farm tours. Such experiences help children understand where their food comes from and how their food choices affect their bodies, environment, and community.

More than 30 million children eat school food five days a week, 180 days a year. If school food can improve the health of kids, develop new marketing opportunities for farmers, and support the local economy, it's a win-win for everyone.

The National Farm to School Network sprouted from the desire to support community-based food systems, strengthen family farms, and improve student health by reducing childhood obesity. The Network is a collaborative of the Center for Food & Justice, Occidental College and the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC). With funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Network coordinates, promotes and expands the farm to school movement at the state, regional and national levels. Eight regional lead agencies and national staff provide free training and technical assistance, information services, networking, and support for policy, media and marketing activities.



WHY FARM TO SCHOOL?

- One-third of U.S. children are obese and overweight.
- The typical food item in the U.S. travels 1,500 to 2,400 miles from farm to plate.
- With only 2.2 million farmers, the U.S. has more prisoners than farmers.

BENEFITS OF FARM TO SCHOOL

- The choice of healthier options in the cafeteria through Farm to School meals results in consumption of more fruits and vegetables with an average increase of 0.99 to 1.3 servings per day, including at home.
- Schools report a 3 to 16 percent increase in school meal participation when farm-fresh food is served through farm to school programs.

The major aims of the Farm to School approach are healthy children, healthy farms, and healthy communities. Farm to School programs are based on the premise that students will choose healthier foods, including more fruits and vegetables, if products are fresh, locally grown, and picked at the peak of their flavor and if those choices are reinforced with educational activities.



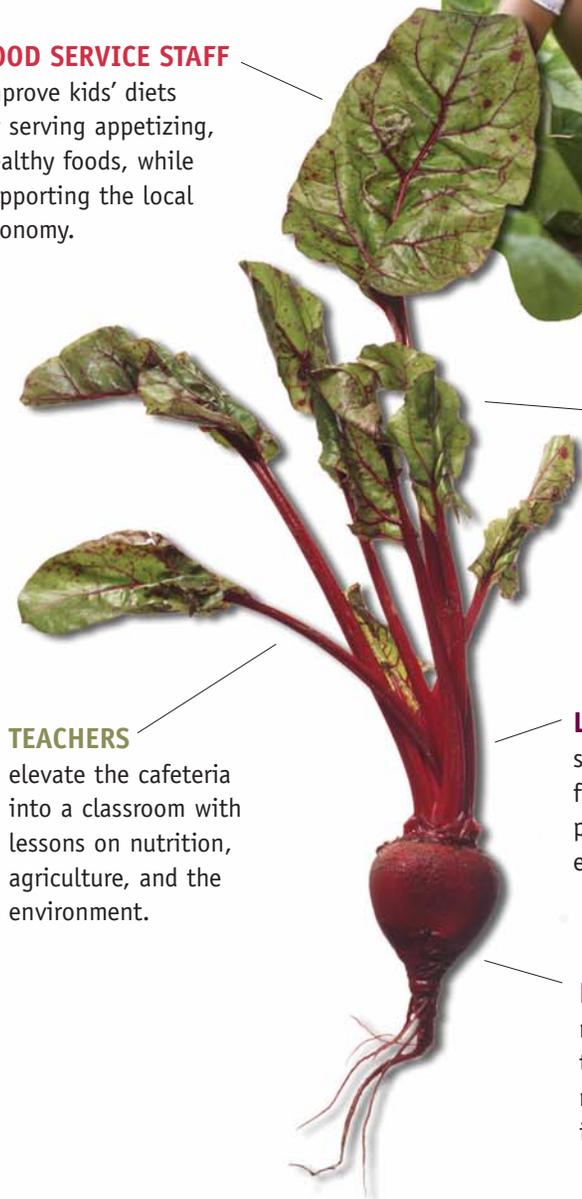
Farm to School programs provide benefits to the entire community: children, farmers, food service staff, parents, and teachers.

Grow healthy kids!

It takes a whole community to put nutritious foods from local farms on the menu in schools. Learn how you can get involved.

KIDS eat up this program's delicious foods, creative hands on lessons and field trips.

FOOD SERVICE STAFF improve kids' diets by serving appetizing, healthy foods, while supporting the local economy.



TEACHERS elevate the cafeteria into a classroom with lessons on nutrition, agriculture, and the environment.

PARENTS help Farm to School flourish by promoting programs, organizing field trips and volunteering in classrooms.

LEGISLATURE supports healthy community, farms and children with policies that encourage and enable schools to buy local.

FARMERS restore a connection to eaters and gain reliable new markets in schools.



HOW DOES FARM TO SCHOOL WORK?

Win-Win-Win
for children,
farmers, and
communities.



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IDEAS TO IMPLEMENT FARM TO SCHOOL IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT:

- Feature local foods in lunch, breakfast or snacks
- Offer a local foods salad bar as part of the National School Lunch Program
- Plan nutrition education activities, such as Harvest of the Month, featuring local foods
- Connect instructional school gardens and garden-based learning activities to the curriculum
- Use local foods as a healthy school fundraiser or featured at a special event
- Organize agriculture education opportunities such as farm tours or farmers' presentations

LOCAL FARMERS

SMART SCHOOLS

HEALTHY KIDS

COMMUNITY PRIDE

START NOW



Nourishing
Kids and
Communities

NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK
www.farmtoschool.org

Center for Food & Justice, Urban & Environmental Policy Institute
Occidental College
1600 Campus Road, MS M1, Los Angeles, CA 90041 • 323.341.5095

CHECK US OUT EVERYWHERE!

www.farmtoschool.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=35582164973

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/FarmToSchool

Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/uepi/sets/72157594341746884

Tumblr: <http://farmtoschool.tumblr.com>

FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE KNOWN TO:

- Promote healthy eating habits and reduce risk of obesity and other health related disorders in children.
- Provide children access to local, healthy and nourishing foods.
- Facilitate education about nutrition, food and agriculture in and out of the classroom.
- Increase school meal participation rates.
- Open up new markets and increase revenues and customer base for farmers.
- Develop community support and awareness about local food systems.



HOW TO START FARM TO SCHOOL IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

- 1. RESEARCH:** With more than 2,000 Farm to School programs across the country, you can learn from previous successes and challenges and begin to identify what you want and what would work best in your school. Visit www.farmtoschool.org to acquaint yourself with model Farm to School programs and connect with a network of experts in your area.
- 2. ORGANIZE:** Coordinate a group of cross-sector stakeholders in the community for a meeting to discuss farm to school (food service directors, parents, teachers, farmers, students, school administration, local nonprofits, etc.) Inspire potential supporters with an activity such as a farm tour or a farm-fresh taste test.
- 3. ASSESS:** Facilitate conversations with various stakeholders to determine the feasibility of the program in your area—discuss where to buy local foods, assess how to serve them at school, develop the budget, and identify staff or volunteers to support the program.
- 4. PLAN:** Create a short description of your ideal program and then list specific first steps. Successful farm to school projects are based on relationships of mutual respect and trust; taking the time to understand perspectives and capacities will ensure a sustainable program.
- 5. BEGIN:** Take small steps such as working with one or two whole products that are easy to process and popular among kids. Local apples, oranges, or strawberries are a good choice when they are in season. Get comfortable with ordering, delivery, invoicing, and food prep before you scale up.



What are you waiting for?

Plant the seeds of Farm to School!



RESEARCH ORGANIZE ASSESS

PLAN BEGIN

www.farmtoschool.org



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**FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS ...
ensure that our children eat the freshest,
highest-quality food available. As one teacher says,**

“When kids grow it and prepare it, they try it and they like it.”