



Getting Started with Farm to ECE

Creating Your Farm to ECE Program

1. Consider your resources
2. Decide on your broad goals
3. Choose a focus area
4. Develop measurable goals
5. Create your action plan
6. Address your challenges

Step 1: Consider Your Resources

Using the information you learned during this training, determine what resources you have available and how you can best use them.

Questions To Consider	Examples	Notes
Your Community		
Do you have administrator support?		
What will be the roles of each of the following? How will you gain, strengthen, or maintain their support – or address their concerns? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers ● Parents ● Donors ● Volunteers ● Cook/kitchen staff ● Custodial staff and groundskeepers Others?		
Who are your Farm to ECE Champions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrators ● Providers ● Parents 	
What unique knowledge does your community have to offer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local farmers ● Local chefs ● Botanists/herbalists 	
What relationships can you build with local organizations and institutions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master gardeners ● College gardening clubs/programs ● Community centers 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service groups 	
Your Space		
What space do you have available for Farm to ECE activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large room with tables • Kitchen area • Covered outdoor area • Picnic tables 	
Are there community spaces that could be used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers market • Local farm • Community park • Community garden 	
Your Supplies		
What supplies do you already have that could be used for Farm to ECE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardening tools • Food related books • Kitchen equipment • Farm/food related toys and props 	
Your Funding		
What funding do you have available or could work towards receiving on your site and in your community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available grants • In-kind donations from local grocers and businesses • Fundraisers 	

Step 2: Decide On Your Broad Goals

With your resources in mind, figure out **what you want to accomplish** with your program. Take into your consideration what will be most beneficial for your center's:

- Children
- Parents
- Community

I want to expose children to more fruits and vegetables

I want to support local producers and incorporate more local foods

I want to use garden based learning

I want to engage families more

I want to _____

I want to _____

Step 3: Choose a Focus Area

Now that you know what you'd like to accomplish with your program, start small and choose one aspect of Farm to ECE to focus on. You can come back to this handout when you feel ready to add on another area to your program.

- Building a Garden
- Garden Experiential Education
- Classroom Experiential Education
- Taste Tests
- Cooking Activities
- Farmer Visits and/or Field Trips
- Local food in Snacks/Meals

Step 4: Develop Measurable Goals

Write down 1-2 specific, measurable goals that contain a **what** and **when** that address your focus area.

We will incorporate **2 classroom activities** per week for the **rest of the year**

We will create a **raised bed** by **Spring**

We will offer **locally grown fruit as snacks** this **Fall**

We will go on one **farm field trip** before the **end of the year**

We will _____(what) by _____ (when)

Step 5: Create Your Action Plan

Now that you've established a specific goal and timeline, it's time to figure out how to take action. You can do this by breaking your goal into as many small steps as you need, making sure they contain a specific **what**, **when** and **who**.

Rachel will **research local farms** that offer visits and **send suggestions and possible dates** to the team by the **end of the month**

_____ (who) will _____ (what) by _____ (when)

_____ (who) will _____ (what) by _____ (when)

_____ (who) will _____ (what) by _____ (when)

Step 6: Address Your Challenges

Your Farm to ECE goals are more likely to be accomplished if the unique setting of your early care program is considered. Consider any gaps in your resources such as space, financial support, and staff capacity or interest.

What challenges do you foresee? What are strategies to overcome them?

