HOW CAN YOUR CENTER OR DAY CARE HOME PARTICIPATE?

The Farm to Preschool Program is designed to be low-cost, flexible, and user-friendly. Childcare facilities do not need to sign up for the Farm to Preschool Program to participate. Each site can choose how they would like to implement Farm to Preschool, how often to purchase local foods, and what types of enrichment and educational activities suit its needs. Here are a few basic steps you can take if you are interested in starting a Farm to Preschool Program.

1 Learn which foods can be purchased locally, where they can be purchased, and when they are in season.

2 Review your menus and determine which foods you are already serving that could come from a local source.

3 Build relationships with local farmers and farmers markets and identify which stores and/or distributors carry local products.

4 Provide children with one local food enrichment activity each month (farm visits, taste tests, growing food, ect.).

EXAMPLES OF FARM TO PRESCHOOL TAKING PLACE IN IDAHO

LITTLE PEOPLE'S ACADEMY, IDAHO FALLS

Little People's Academy held "Taste Test Tuesdays" throughout the summer and the school year. The children loved "cooking" and taste testing the local foods in the classroom. Each child kept a record of what they tried and their opinion of the food so they could take that information home. Several parents were very surprised by some of the foods their child not only tried, but liked.

Parents were invited to a "Cooking with Your Child" night where they were offered a choice of different apple dishes to make with their child. It was encouraging to watch children and their parents talking and working together to make nutritious, good, homemade food. The parents who participated were very grateful for the opportunity.

Little Peoples Academy also held a "Harvest Party" to encourage parents and children to eat the healthy food from the center's garden. Families had a great time and really appreciated the event. Children and adults alike were surprised when they tried and liked spaghetti squash with pasta sauce. Many folks said they had never tried it, and some of them had held the belief that they did not like any squash. Parents were encouraged to try new foods by their children who were so proud to have grown the food themselves.

CREATIVE LEARNING CENTER, POCATELLO

Creative Learning Center was able to make garden boxes that fit the small space they had for their children to grow vegetables. The children watered, weeded, and cared for the garden alongside their teachers and were able to grow and eat zucchini, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, banana peppers, jalapeno peppers, and green bell peppers. The children loved making homemade salsa with the hand crank salsa maker! They even made enough to take some home to share with their families.

The center provided the children with several opportunities to taste locally grown foods beyond its own garden. It held several events that combined taste testings with nutrition lessons. The children also took a fieldtrip to Swore Farms, where they had a great time going through all the greenhouses and fields. It was an exciting experience filled with strawberry, onion, and corn picking, and gathering eggs.

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF ADA COUNTY, BOISE

During the summer months, the Boys and Girls Club of Ada County implemented a garden program called "Green Thumb Thursdays." Children helped plant and maintain the program's garden, which featured several different kinds of tomatoes and a variety of peppers, corn, beans, cilantro, basil, oregano, squash, and cucumbers.

The site also conducted taste tests of new healthy recipes that used some of the fresh produce available in the spring and fall. A strawberry rhubarb crisp, made with local strawberries, was a hit with the children. The site also tested a turkey, berry, and cucumber spring roll. The kids had some questions about the spring roll, but they really enjoyed the new food.

FINGERPRINTS CHILDREN'S CENTER, LEWISTON

Fingerprints Children's Center took several field trips to see where food is grown, where it can be purchased, and how it is prepared. The children visited Wilson Banner Ranch, where they got to explore the farm and pick peaches; the Washington State University Creamery, where they saw where and how the creamery makes cheese and ice cream; and "Pilli's Farm," where they picked fruit and vegetables and had a great time.

Fingerprints Children's Center also hosted an outdoor garden, where they grew pumpkins, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, yellow squash, cantaloupe, and zucchini. The children maintained the garden by weeding, watering, fertilizing, and harvesting produce. Some kids really enjoyed picking bugs off of plants and making sure the plants were healthy. The kids picked and ate cucumbers every week from July through August. A "share table" let families take extra produce from the garden home each day.

GABBY GOOSE PRESCHOOL & CHILD CARE, BONNERS FERRY

Every Thursday during the summer, a local farmer would deliver food to Gabby Goose. After explaining how the food was grown and what foods were growing on the farm that week, the farmer would let the children taste test the variety of fresh vegetables he had brought to share.

The children were also involved in growing a garden at the site, from which they harvested fresh veggies to make vegetable soup and zucchini cake. To keep everyone posted on Gabby Goose activities and their garden, the children authored a bi-weekly newsletter. At the end of August, families were invited to come to a harvest dinner at the site and tour the garden. The dinner had a huge turnout and was a great success.

WHAT FOODS ARE LOCAL?

ALTHOUGH THERE IS NOT A SPECIFIC DEFINITION OF "LOCAL," TRY TO THINK OF CROPS THAT GROW IN YOUR COMMUNITY, COUNTY OR STATE. OVER 180 CROPS ARE GROWN IN IDAHO, SO WE HAVE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO INCORPORATE LOCALLY GROWN FOODS—FROM ALL OF THE FOOD GROUPS— INTO MEAL AND SNACK MENUS. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

1. **FRUITS:** Apples, apricots, berries, cherries, grapes, melons, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums and pluots.
2. **VEGETABLES:** Asparagus, green beans, carrots, corn, cucumbers, lettuce, potatoes, spinach and squash.
3. **GRAINS:** Idaho wheat is used in breads, tortillas, crackers, noodles and cereal. Choose Idaho flour for scratch cooking and baking along with Idaho sugar or honey. Consider incorporating barley, flax, spelt, or other grains to add flavor and fiber to your meals.
4. **MEATS:** Idaho produces a wide variety of meats, including beef, pork, lamb, turkey, and trout. You can also add Idaho grown eggs, beans, and lentils to your menus for kid-friendly protein options.
5. **DAIRY:** Almost all fluid milk that is sold in Idaho is produced in Idaho. In addition, look for Idaho cheese and yogurt.

Please see the Local Foods Calendar on the back of this handout for a month-to-month reference of when these foods are in season and available in Idaho.

WHERE CAN WE PURCHASE LOCAL FOODS?

LOCALLY GROWN FOODS CAN BE FOUND IN MANY LOCATIONS, INCLUDING:

- Grocery Stores
- Farmers Markets
- Fruit Stands
- Foodservice Distributors

If you cannot find or cannot identify local products, just ask! Most stores and distributors are happy to help you find local products, and, if they do not currently offer local products, your request will encourage them to seek out local producers and products.

FUN FACT: WHAT IS A PLUOT?

A PLUOT IS A CROSS BETWEEN A PLUM AND AN APRICOT, RESULTING IN A VERY SWEET FRUIT THAT CHILDREN ENJOY. THE SKIN IS SOMETIMES SPECKLED PURPLE OR RED– CHILDREN LIKE TO REFER TO THIS FRUIT AS DINOSAUR EGGS.

EDUCATION IDEAS AND RESOURCES

HERE ARE A SOME EXAMPLES OF THE VARIETY OF AVAILABLE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT FARM TO PRESCHOOL EFFORTS.

INCREDIBLE EDIBLE IDAHO FOOD POSTERS
www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cnp/farmToSchool/fom.htm

- Centers or day care homes can sign up for the monthly Incredible Edible Idaho poster program.
- Each month's poster features a different local food, with agriculture and nutrition facts, a picture of the food in the field, and a map showing where the food grows in Idaho.
- Smaller 8 ½" x 11" posters can be printed from the website for take-home handouts.

GROW IT, TRY IT, LIKE IT
http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/growit.html

- Garden-themed nutrition education kit for child care center staff that introduces children to fruits and vegetables.
- The kit includes seven booklets, each which of which features three fruits and vegetables. The booklets are filled with fun activities set in the imaginary garden of Tasty Acres Farm and can be used to introduce any fruit or vegetable! It also has a CD-ROM with Supplemental Information and a DVD with Cool Puppy Pup's Picnic and Lunch Parties.
- Available to print for free from the USDA's Team Nutrition website.
- Food featured in the book that can be grown and purchased in Idaho: peaches, strawberries, and cantaloupe, spinach, sweet potatoes, and crookneck squash.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative – Farm to Preschool
www.ourcommunityourkids.org/domains--committees/early-childhood/farm-to-preschool-.aspx

- Promotes awareness and understanding through children's literature.
- Teacher's guide includes in-class activities for each book and a food experience for each harvest item.
- Available free online.

COLOR ME HEALTHY
www.colormehealthy.com/order-color-me-healthy

- Kit Includes 12 circle time lessons with 4 picture cards, 3 classroom posters, music CD, 2 parent posters, and 14 reusable parent newsletters.
- Family Newsletters are already prepared in English and Spanish – a full year set of newsletters available that include menus, child nutrition facts, and tips to help parents encourage healthy choices in the home.
- Kit cost - $88, Spanish add on set, $30.

EARLY SPROUTS
www.earlysprouts.org

- This twenty-four week curriculum focuses on "seed to table" experiences for six vegetables.
- Aligns with NAEYC criteria.
- Includes class sensory exploration and cooking in the classroom activities.
- Early Sprouts: Cultivating Healthy Food Choices in Young Children, from Redleaf Press - $24.95.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE IDAHO FARM TO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM CONTACT:

Idaho State Department of Education
Child Nutrition Programs
www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cnp/farmToSchool/
208-332-6821

Idaho State Department of Agriculture
Idaho Preferred® Program
http://idahopreferred.com/
208-332-8684

IDAHO CNP CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

FARM to PRESCHOOL

THE PICK OF THE CROP FROM IDAHO

WHAT IS FARM TO PRESCHOOL?

Farm to Preschool is a program that connects Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and local food resources with the objective of serving healthy meals to children and providing nutrition education opportunities. Farm to Preschool encompasses any facility participating in CACFP including childcare, preschool, Head Start, and day care homes. The program includes:

- Increasing the procurement of locally grown and processed foods.
- Improving children's and caregivers' access to healthy food by incorporating locally grown food products in CACFP meals or snacks.
- Building relationships between childcare feeding programs and local farmers, food producers, processors, and distributors.
- Supporting the new meal pattern by encouraging a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products in meals and snacks.
- Providing opportunities for local food and farm-based educational activities that enrich the childcare program (gardens, farm field trips, cooking with locally grown food in the classroom, and taste tests).
- Providing new opportunities for parent engagement and outreach.
- Providing marketing opportunities for childcare programs.

The Farm to Preschool Program is a perfect way to establish healthy patterns in our youngest citizens and connect them to the food they eat, while supporting local food systems.

THE PICK OF THE CROP FROM IDAHO

	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY.	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
APPLES	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●
APRICOTS							●	●				
ASPARAGUS				●	●							
BLUEBERRIES								●	●			
CARROTS								●	●	●	●	
CHERRIES						●	●					
CORN							●	●	●			
CUCUMBERS							●	●	●			
DAIRY (Milk,Cheese, Yogurt)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
EGGS	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
FRESH HERBS			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
GRAINS (Breads,Tortillas, Flour)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
GRAPES									●	●		
GREEN BEANS							●	●				
LEGUMES (Beans,Dry Peas, Lentils)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
LETTUCE			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
MEATS (Beef, Pork, Poultry, Lamb)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
MELONS							●	●	●			
NECTARINES							●	●	●			
ONIONS	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
PEACHES								●	●	●	●	
PEARS									●	●	●	
PEAS						●	●	●	●			
PLUMS/PLUOTS								●	●			
POTATOES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
PUMPKINS									●	●	●	
RADISHES					●	●	●	●				
RASPBERRIES						●	●	●	●			
STRAWBERRIES						●	●	●	●			
TOMATOES							●	●	●	●	●	●
TROUT	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
WINTER SQUASH								●	●	●	●	●
ZUCCHINI							●	●	●			

*Timing and availability of crops vary due to weather, growing conditions, and by region of the state.