

## FAQ Farm to Plate

### 1. What is Farm to plate?

Farm to plate is a movement that is focusing on increasing farm fresh food to get on the plates of children. The phrase can also be Farm to ECE, Farm to school, Farm to fork or Farm to table. Whatever the phrase is, the meaning behind it is the same—Fresh food for our bodies. Farm to plate can be a relationship with a local farmer or could be eating food the children help grow in the garden. It could range from gaining one fresh food item a week to incorporating many aspect of meal planning around locally sourced food. “Knowing exactly where our food originates allows us to support sustainable growing practices and reduce the environmental impacts of transporting goods long distances” [Fresh on Your Plate: The Farm-to-Table Path \(thefarminginsider.com\)](https://thefarminginsider.com)

### 2. Why is Farm to plate important?

The importance of this movement is beneficial for serval different people involved. First off, the children. “**Children** benefit from Farm to ECE activities, such as gardening, farm visits, and taste-testing fresh food from local farms. These types of activities teach children about healthy food and engage all five senses. Additionally, Farm to ECE can increase children's fruit and vegetable intake and willingness to try new fruits and vegetables. This can improve children's diet and wellness. In addition, Farm to ECE activities can provide children with opportunities to play outside. Increasing physical activity is also an obesity prevention best practice.” [About Farm to Early Care and Education \(farmtoschool.org\)](https://farmtoschool.org)

The more that children connect the dots between the food they eat and where it comes from, the more they are excited to try new foods and develop taste buds. According to the 2021 National Farm to Early Care and Education Survey, Participants reported improving children’s health, providing children with experiential learning, Teaching children about where food comes from and how it is grown, providing fresher or higher-quality food to children, Supporting local farmers and local economy as the highest benefits they saw in their programs. It was also mentioned that motivations behind supporting Farm to ECE was include lower meal cost, engaging and motivating staff, engaging parents and

families, meeting learning and programmatic standards, and appeal to new/potential families.

For more information about the Survey, visit:

[62d832850bdc0c6a19497c80\\_2021\\_ECE\\_Survey\\_Factsheet.pdf \(website-files.com\)](#) or [Farm to ECE Survey State Results.xlsx \(dropbox.com\)](#)

### **3. How can I start implementing Farm to plate within my program?**

Whether you are already supporting Farm to ECE or just starting out, everyone worries about how to make it successful. Vermont FEED states that the best way to create a strong foundation is to focus on 3 areas: Classroom, Cafeteria, Community.

Classroom could be the best place to start if you are a beginner. This would be implementing curriculum around farming and gardening topics. Start a small garden (herbs are the best place to start even for the most inexperienced grower!). By starting to work with the children about how their food is grown and learning the process along the way, the more excited they are to talk to their parents about it, which is where Community comes in.

Communities are everywhere the children are their families, neighbors, extended family and friends. By involving and sharing what you are doing within your program, you are helping lay the foundation for others in the child's life to be involved. There might be relationships forged within spreading the word of what you are doing that can help support you. You might learn of a community garden that is already happening you can help with. Communities benefit from by providing opportunities to build family and community engagement through gardening, gathering food, and visiting farms or food producers' events.

**C**afeteria can be a simple part, getting the food on the child's plate. In ECE setting, you may have more control over this without policy changes. If you are working within a school system, this could be challenging. Sometimes policies must change and a budget to work

with. This is where community involvement could be beneficial as you build relationships.

For a step by step approach to getting started, check out [61104640f0a95ecc63f8ea9b\\_Getting Started with Farm to ECE.pdf \(website-files.com\)](#)

#### **4. Available resources to help**

[Farm To Preschool Local Food And Learning Early Child Care And Education Settings \(azureedge.us\)](#)

[Natural Learning Initiative Gardening Activity Guide | NC State Extension PDF viewer \(ncsu.edu\)](#)

[MyPlate | U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)

[5 Healthy Goals | Healthy Kids, Healthy Future \(healthykidshealthyfuture.org\)](#)

[Eating Well - Sesame Workshop](#)

[GoNAPSACC](#)