

Farm to Child Care

Childcarealive!

Farm-to-Child Care 2015

Getting children to try new foods can be a challenge. But with the support of a unique Farm to Child Care initiative, children and their child care providers are getting an up close experience with fresh fruits and vegetables. This has led to children developing new healthy eating habits.

During the summer of 2015, 20 child care programs across Clay, Becker, Wilkin, and Otter Tail County participated in a Farm-to-Child Care Program, offered through a collaboration between PartnerSHIP 4 Health and Child Care Aware® of Minnesota Northwest. In Farm-to-Child Care, each participating child care program was encouraged to offer local, fresh veggies to young children by conducting taste tests. In addition, providers were also encouraged to incorporate farm-to-child care and gardening themes into their routines and curriculum. To help in their efforts, each provider received CSA shares from Blue Bird Gardens as well as a Nutrition Education Kit, which included recipes, storage and handling tips, activity suggestions, and tips for offering new foods. Participating child care providers connected with each other through a private Facebook Group, sharing ideas, recipes, and pictures with each other.



The goals of the Farm-to-Child Care initiative were to: 1) Expose young children (primarily 5 years and younger) to more local foods, and to: 2) Encourage child care providers and teachers to offer new foods AND local foods more often. Data collected at the end of this initiative suggests that we were successful in meeting our goals. Approximately 296 children were impacted, and an average of 4 new veggies were offered at each child care program. Furthermore, 19 out of 20 participating providers stated they were more likely to offer farm fresh and new foods after participating in Farm-to-Child Care program.

Child care providers also had lots of positive responses. Here are a few quotes from providers:

"Thank you for letting me participate in this program; it will build better vegetable eaters no doubt in my daycare children down the road."

Vegetable	Number of Children Who Liked It
Turnip	11
Radish	13
Salsify	10
Cucumber	13
Zucchini	11
Carrots	16
Peas	11
String beans	16

"Thank you for this wonderful, learning opportunity! We enjoyed every aspect of it, and so did the kids!"

"It was a great experience for my daycare. The kids love the variety and really seemed to enjoy learning about the vegetables. It was interesting to see how many ways to prepare a vegetable."

Loved it....Thank you for allowing my daycare to participate in this program."



Children participated in washing, prepping, and tasting local veggies. Pictures from Cobber Kids Child Care Center in Moorhead, MN