Farm to Childcare

Kelli Stader, MPH, RD, CLS
Department of Health Services

Beth Hanna
Community GroundWorks

May 21, 2014
What is Farm to Childcare?

- Connects young children with local foods
- Holistic approach:
  - 4 distinct components
Why Farm to Childcare?

- Kids consume as much as 80% of daily nutrients in childcare = captive audience
- Low fruit and vegetable consumption
- High rates of childhood obesity
- Early experiences help determine later eating habits
Benefits of Farm to Childcare

- Increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables
- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Reduce consumption of high-energy dense foods
- Provide local and seasonal foods
- Support viability of local agriculture
- Teach food and environmental literacy
- Build skills for staff
- Encourage physical activity
- Decrease screen time
Benefits of Farm to Childcare

- Children
- Educators and Support Staff
- Producers
- Families
- Communities
2012 Farm to Preschool Survey

- 494 ECE programs serving 163,450 children
- Most common activities:
  - 87% teach about where food comes from
  - 79% serve local food in meals or snacks
  - 78% garden
  - >50% give families information
- 33% see cost as a great concern, but
  >50% did not receive external funding for activities
Getting Started

- Start small
- Connect with partners
- Incorporate into current activities
- Utilize existing resources
- Be flexible
Potential Partners

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Community members
- Local K-12 schools
- Healthcare organizations
- Local organizations or nonprofits
  - YMCA or other youth groups
- Local farmers
  - Farmers’ markets, CSAs, etc.
- UW-Extension and Master Gardener programs
- Local chefs
Potential Activities

- Organize field trips to local farms or farmers' markets
- Invite a local farmer to visit
- Provide child engagement activities
- Include local fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks
- Introduce children to gardening
- Taste tests
- Food demonstrations
Increasing Local Procurement

- Review current menus
- Swap out individual menu items with local/seasonal foods

Models:
- Buy directly from farmers
- Work with farmer cooperatives or CSA farms
- Buy from farmers’ markets
- Childcare/school gardens
- Work with traditional distributors
Engaging Parents and Community Members

- Parent newsletters
- Activity updates
- Call for volunteers
- Recipes
- Activities for at home
- Host community events
- Cooking classes
- Garden work days
Wellness Policies

- Provide opportunity to strategically plan goals and activities
- Sustain activities and nutrition standards
- Emphasize nutrition priorities to parents
Healthy Bites

- Focus on nutrition to support a healthier environment for children in the early care and education setting

[Image]

Curriculum Resources


- **Growing Up Wild** - resource for early childhood educators with a broad focus on nature-based education, including garden activities and healthy recipes. [http://www.projectwild.org/growingupwild.htm](http://www.projectwild.org/growingupwild.htm)

- **Early Sprouts** - preschool gardening and nutrition curriculum. [http://www.earlysprouts.org/](http://www.earlysprouts.org/)

- **Color Me Healthy** - resources to get kids excited about eating smart and moving more, including teacher’s guide, parent newsletters, posters, and recipes. [http://www.colormehealthy.com/](http://www.colormehealthy.com/)

- **Harvest for Healthy Kids** - free activity kits developed by teachers and childcare providers. [http://www.harvestforhealthykids.com/](http://www.harvestforhealthykids.com/)
Support for Farm to Childcare

- CACFP staff
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Farm to Preschool website www.farmtopreschool.org
- National Farm to School Network www.farmtoschool.org
- Let’s Move! Child Care www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org
Wisconsin School Garden Initiative

- Supports youth garden programs at schools, after-school sites, and regulated group and family childcare centers
- Offers trainings, technical assistance, and resource dissemination
- Contact: Beth Hanna at beth@communitygroundworks.org

www.WISchoolGardens.org
Why Youth Gardens?
Where do we start?
Garden Considerations

- Sunlight
- Water
- Soil
- Garden size
- Surrounding environment
- Access
- Shade/shelter
- Tool storage
- Security
Identify Assets and Challenges

- Time
- Money
- Space
- Interest
- Knowledge
- Partnerships
Design Inspiration
Dirt Made My Lunch
By “Solar” Steve Van Zandt of the Banana Slug String Band

Dirt made my lunch, dirt made my lunch
Thank you dirt, thanks a bunch,
For my salad, my sandwich, my milk, and
my munch

Dirt made my lunch
A garden toolkit for implementing youth gardens


A youth garden-based nutrition education curriculum

http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P0/P00228.pdf
Cultivating Childhood Wellness through Gardening

- Free online training
- Early childhood educators and after-school staff can earn 1.5 CEUs through The Registry
- Includes garden-based nutrition education lesson plans, activities, recipes, and more

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Planning and Establishing Your Youth Garden
Chapter 3: Growing Food with Kids
Chapter 4: The Color Harvest – A Comparative Tasting Lesson
Chapter 5: Roots Lesson Plan
Chapter 6: Garden-Based Activities
Chapter 7: Culinary Arts in the Garden

Developed by Community GroundWorks and WI Nutrition Physical Activity and Obesity Program in partnership with UW-Extension, Life Lab, Wisconsin Obesity Prevention Network, UW School of Medicine and Public Health, and UW Center Integrated Agricultural Systems
Thank You!

- Questions?
- Experiences to share?
- Ideas for how you can incorporate Farm to Childcare in your centers?