

**Aligning Farm to Early Care and
Education (ECE)
with the
National Association for the
Education of Young Children
(NAEYC)**

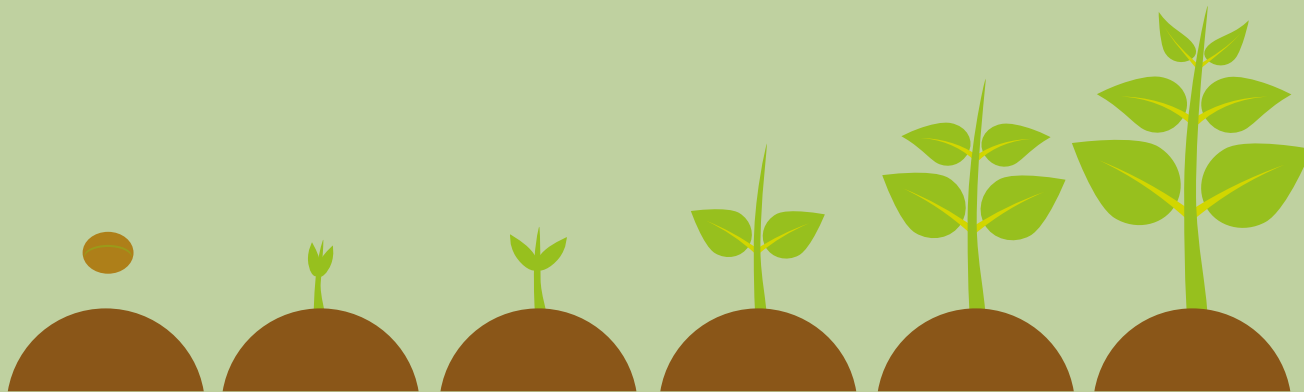


DISCLAIMER: This resource is intended to function as a series of *suggested* methods to link Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) to NAEYC standards. Hyperlinks, suggestions, references or other information provided within this guide do not constitute or imply endorsement or recommendation by NAEYC.

NAEYC Context

NAEYC has been the national voice for early childhood education since its establishment in 1926. The professional membership organization has approximately 60,000 members and is the largest nonprofit early childhood organization in the US.

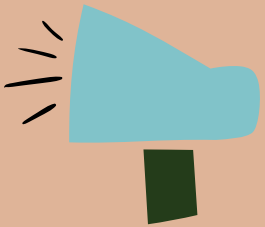
NAEYC's audience includes programs and providers, educators, higher education programs and staff, and families. NAEYC provides the early childhood field with directions for the field to take in several areas: developmentally appropriate practice, professional standards and competencies for early childhood educators, early childhood professional code of ethics, standards for early learning programs, equity promotion, and accreditation opportunities.



In addition to being a professional membership, NAEYC major activities include the following:



Resources: NAEYC offers several research-informed digital and print resources for practitioners and families (e.g., blogs, articles, books) as well as opportunities for networking and shared learning via two annual conferences and an online members-only discussion platform.



Advocacy: Its advocacy work directly engages with legislators, keeps membership informed of legislation relevant to early learning, and hosts awareness campaigns, such as the annual Week of the Young Child. A major push by NAEYC in the last few years has been for professionalization of the early learning workforce (see Power to the Profession). In addition to its national work, NAEYC's 52 affiliate member organizations engage in local-level advocacy, professional development, conferences, and resources.

Broad Opportunities for Farm to ECE to Align with NAEYC-Accredited Programs

Farm to ECE initiatives can broadly appeal to NAEYC-accredited programs when they demonstrate how activities achieve the following:



Align with Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)



Center equity



Align with NAEYC Accreditation Standards

Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)

To promote evidence-informed, child-centered, playful learning

NAEYC is widely known for its work in defining and advocating for developmentally appropriate practices (DAP). DAP continues to be influential in the field and Farm to ECE initiatives should be familiar with how Farm to ECE could support programs in implementing DAP; this could include any opportunity for sustained learning through playful, joyous experiences such as a classroom garden, field trips to farms or farmers markets, and engagement with families.

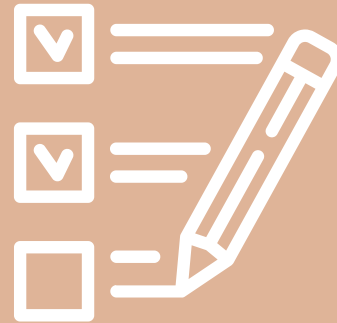


Center Equity



NAEYC has recently made coordinated efforts to advocate and promote equity in early childhood education. In 2019 it issued a set of recommendations: Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Position Statement. Additionally, the association has issued books, articles, and other resources to provide guidance to the field on equity and anti-bias education. Showing how Farm to ECE activities relate to equity goals (e.g., supporting just and equitable food systems) can be a connector in building relationships with NAEYC and NAEYC-accredited programs. There are also opportunities for joint engagement in action to support racial equity. For example, Iowa AEYC, as part of the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition, recently received grant funding to promote racial equity in Iowa Farm to School and Early Outcomes. The project will create and adopt a racial equity framework for the coalition, invest in a Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) incentive pilot to support investment in buying local food, and initiate “Choose Iowa” campaign for virtual trainings for providers to participate in Farm to ECE.

Farm to ECE initiatives must demonstrate alignment to NAEYC's Accreditation Standards.



NAEYC Accreditation Standards

1. Relationships
2. Curriculum
3. Teaching
4. Assessment of Child Progress
5. Health
6. Staff Competencies, Preparation, and Support
7. Families
8. Community Relationships
9. Physical Environment
10. Leadership and Management

In 1985, NAEYC introduced its accreditation system to improve quality in early learning programs and provide families with information on high quality programs. These standards are consistent across states; programs voluntarily apply for accreditation. NAEYC-accredited programs represent a plethora of philosophies and program types - Head Start, KinderCare, Bright Horizons, Montessori, state preschool, non-profits, and faith-based programs. In 2019, around 7,000 programs in the US held NAEYC accreditation. Though it is separate from state licensing or state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), 24 states have embedded NAEYC accreditation into their QRIS.

To gain and maintain accreditation, programs must follow the NAEYC Early Learning Program Accreditation Standards and Assessment Items.

The standards address classroom and program level factors and take into account interactions with children, families, and the community.

Beyond Accreditation

Farm to ECE initiatives can consider ways to engage and collaborate with NAEYC to connect with its membership base of educators, higher education staff, and families.

Collaboration or partnerships with NAEYC may offer outreach for Farm to ECE programming to a wider array of ECE communities. Fewer than 12 percent of early programs in the US hold NAEYC accreditation. However, there are many other opportunities for Farm to ECE initiatives to connect with NAEYC, whose members span the spectrum of early childhood philosophies and programs.

The following are potential ways to engage with NAEYC membership more broadly.



1. Create or co-create Farm to ECE content for NAEYC resources and present at NAEYC conference.

NAEYC publishes the journals *Young Children* and *Teaching Young Children* and features digital content such as blogs. It also frequently produces books on topics of interest (e.g., Tinkering, Anti-Bias Curriculum, Learning Stories and Teacher Inquiry). Farm to ECE information, activities, and examples could also be publicized through these channels that reach educators, higher education programs, and families. For example, Farm to ECE has been featured in *Young Children* (see "Growing Health Eaters") and has played a part in two past NAEYC annual conferences (2017, 2019).



2. Host a Farm to ECE Community on HELLO.



NAEYC hosts an online discussion forum, HELLO, for members to post and discuss items of interest. In addition to its Open Discussion Forum for all members, HELLO hosts several individual interest forum communities (e.g., Diversity and Equity Education for Adults Interest Forum, Early Math Interest Forum). A Farm to ECE Forum may be of interest to NAEYC members to grow a community and have a platform to share resources, ask questions to tap into collective experience and insights of peers, and network.

3. Engage in joint advocacy.



Farm to ECE initiatives should consider ways to promote Farm to ECE as part of NAEYC's advocacy work. A position statement on Farm to ECE could incorporate NAEYC's standards and practices on nutrition with Farm to ECE strategies. Another potential advocacy connection is NAEYC's Annual Week of the Young Child. For instance, the National Farm to School Network produced an article highlighting ways to celebrate the Week of the Young Child with Farm to ECE practices.

4. Connect and collaborate with AEYC affiliates.



In addition to NAEYC, it is valuable to explore local affiliates to find ways to connect and collaborate. The affiliates, mostly state-level associations, are non-profit organizations that vary in size and function. In some states, affiliates work closely with governmental agencies or partner with them. Affiliates have close connections with programs in their region and access to many programs and providers. Iowa AEYC shares information about Farm to ECE on its website, is part of the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition, and offers mini grants for programs to develop or expand edible gardens.

Standards & Best Practices

This section details assessment items and best practices for each NAEYC standard.

0.0 Standard Topic Area

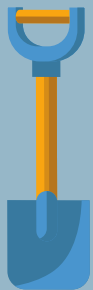
This section details the associated NAEYC accreditation criteria.

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- *This section offers examples of Farm to ECE activities that will satisfy the appropriate NAEYC standard.*

NAEYC Resources

- *This section offers links to NAEYC resources related to each standard.*



Standards & Best Practices

2A.1 The class's learning spaces offer learning experiences related to all these cognitive content areas: literacy; mathematics; science; technology; creative expression and the arts; health and safety; social studies.

2A.4 Highlight and label two weeks of lesson plans to show where they include each of these content areas: literacy, mathematics, science, technology, creative expression and the arts, health and safety, social studies.

2A.6 Show two examples of how your written curriculum or curriculum framework can be modified to reflect the values, beliefs, and experiences of families in your program.

2A.7 Show one example of how your written curriculum or curriculum framework can be modified to reflect the languages spoken by families in the program.

2.A Curriculum: Essential Characteristics

Clear philosophy and educational goals; uses groupings, settings, and schedules; materials reflect real life

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Extended learning projects with accompanying education materials: class gardens, field trips to farms, orchards, ranches, or local food vendors; and/or procurement of local food
- Child-initiated activities (e.g., choosing what to plant, preparing meals with garden products)
- Project-based learning centered on the garden provides opportunity for learning experiences across cognitive content areas (2A.1, 2A.4).
- With input from families, the garden could reflect values, languages, beliefs, and experiences of families in the program (2A.6, 2A.7).
- Include traditional foods and foodways in meals, snacks, and taste tests in programs & utilize gardens to grow traditional foods to support connection to and preservation of tribal language, culture, and community (2A.6).

NAEYC Resources

- [Tacos Anyone? Preschoolers Investigate a Taco Truck](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)
- [Grow a Salad! Preschoolers Plant and Prepare Their Food \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)
- [Breaking Down STEAM for Young Children. Part 2: Teacher-Child Interactions: Inspiring Conversations* \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)
- [Prepare the Garden \(Tips for Gardening with Children\)](#)
- [Example from Early Learning Center for Research and Practice, University of Tennessee, Knoxville](#)



Standards & Best Practices

2B.3 Children have chances to learn how to resolve conflicts in constructive ways.

2B.4 Children have chances to understand that other people may have different thoughts and opinions than theirs.

2B.5 Children have chances to learn that other people may have different feelings than they do.

2.B Social and Emotional Development

The development of friendships, self-regulation, empathy, and the ability to resolve conflict

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Provide opportunities for children to work together cooperatively and engage in joint decision in the gardening process: this may include planning, developing, and maintaining the garden, as well as harvesting and preparing meals using crops. Gardening processes naturally contain potential for situations in which children may experience conflict (e.g., what to plant, how to maintain the garden) in which they can practice conflict resolution (2B.3), understand others have different thoughts and feelings (2B.4, 2B.5), and engage in positive attitudes around gardening.
 - Despite planning, gardening often offers unexpected challenges and frustration (e.g., plants not growing, insects eating plants, or wanting a task someone else is engaged in). These moments offer opportunities for children to practice their self-regulation skills.

NAEYC Resources

- [Nature-Based Mindfulness for More Calm and Peaceful Kids](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities*](#) (Young Children).



Standards & Best Practices

Fine motor development (e.g., controlled twisting or turning of the wrists, pouring liquids, fastening clothing, writing) proceeds when young children have many different developmentally appropriate opportunities to use their hands and fingers to act on their environment.

2.C Physical Development

Program plans, materials, and equipment for the support of children's large motor development

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Practice fine and gross motor skills as they prepare the land or garden plot, plant seeds, and maintain the garden (e.g., picking up seeds and placing them in a hole, pinching basil leaves off a plant).
- Use motor skills to weed, dig, or wheelbarrow in the garden on a variety of surfaces ranging from dirt to concrete, while also discussing the importance of maintaining a garden.

NAEYC Resources

- [Engaging Toddlers in Nature Play](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities*](#) (Young Children).



Standards & Best Practices

2D.1 Children have discussions with each other or with staff to solve problems related to the physical world.

2D.2 Teachers use words that children may not understand and provide explanations or examples of these words.

2D.3 Show or describe two examples of how you teach children to have discussions with each other to resolve interpersonal problems.

2D.4 Show or describe two examples of how you teach children to have discussions with each other to solve problems related to the physical world.

2D.5 Show or describe how you incorporate family language preferences into the curriculum.

2D.6 Show or describe how your curriculum related to language acquisition considers community perspectives.

2.D Language Development

Program plans and materials to support verbal and nonverbal communication rooted in ethnic and community traditions

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Arrange field trips to farms or grocery stores in the community that include available local foods. Follow the field trip with gardening activities that demonstrate how food grows and discuss them to guide children in better understanding the sources of their food and build their vocabulary (2D.2; 2D.5; 2D.6).
- Use moments in gardening that prompt children to have questions that can lead to meaningful conversations. Gardens can facilitate problem-solving related to the physical world, as inevitably there will be issues when growing (e.g., bugs, not enough water, exploring why things grow differently). Educators will have opportunities to engage in discussions as interpersonal problems arise between children as garden decisions are made (2D.1, 2D.3, 2D.4).
- Give educators plentiful moments to provide explanations and words for new experiences and materials children encounter in the garden (2D.2).
- Use food models or flash cards with prompting and support of teachers for children to learn about new foods, e.g., “Which picture is the red apple?” (2D.1, 2D.4).
- Encourage children to use all of their senses to explore a new and unfamiliar food. As age appropriate, prompt descriptive responses (e.g., “What does the beet smell like? How does the spinach feel between your fingers? What does the carrot sound like when you chew it?”) (2D.1, 2D.4).
- Incorporate language related to gardens and engage with families to bring family language preferences into conversations (2D.5).

NAEYC Resources

- [Tacos Anyone? Preschoolers Investigate a Taco Truck](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities*](#) (Young Children).
- [Breaking Down STEAM for Young Children. Part 2: Teacher-Child Interactions: Inspiring Conversations*](#) (Teaching Young Children).



Standards & Best Practices

2E.2 Teachers help children connect print to spoken word.

2E.3 Some of the books available to children relate to current learning topics, themes, or activities.

2E.5 Teachers help children write the words and messages they are trying to communicate.

2E.7 Teachers model the process of print writing.

2E.8 Teachers talk about the many ways writing is used in daily life.

2E.12 Show picture books, wordless books, and rhyming books (two or more of each) that are available to infants, toddlers, or twos every day.

2E.14 Show or describe two examples of ways you help toddlers or twos understand that pictures (in books, on screen, or elsewhere) can represent real things in the environment.

2E.15 Show or describe two examples of ways you help children connect print to spoken word.

2E.17 Show two examples of lesson plans that link books to current learning topics, themes, or activities.

2E.20 Show or describe how you help children write the words and messages they are trying to communicate.

2E.23 Show one example of a lesson plan about how writing is used in daily life.

2.E Early Literacy

Supporting early literacy through reading, learning letters and sounds, writing, and immersion in a print-rich environment

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Select books that tie into different phases of gardening or what children discover in the garden, on field trips to farms, or through local food sources. For instance, when planning to garden, educators can bring in different books to prompt discussions about what to plant. Later, books can be read about harvesting or ones about the relationship between insects and gardens (2E.3, 2E.12, 2E.17). For younger children, picture books can help them make the connection between what is represented in the book and what is in their garden environments (2E.14).
- Write out names of plants in the garden and write out plans for the garden (2E.23). For project-based work, students can create a class or individual log or documentation of their garden. Educators can write down what children communicate to them about the garden (2E.20).
- Demonstrate how to write out a recipe. Children can create a “visual recipe” by drawing the steps of a cooking activity completed in class (2E.23).

NAEYC Resources

- [Tacos Anyone? Preschoolers Investigate a Taco Truck](#)
- [A Jungle Gym for Snails: Joyful Learning in the Kindergarten Classroom](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)
- [Breaking Down STEAM for Young Children. Part 2: Teacher-Child Interactions: Inspiring Conversations* \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)



Standards & Best Practices

2F.5 Children have chances to see and learn about number concepts.

2F.6 There are toys and other objects in the learning environment that children can categorize by shape, size, and color.

2F.8 Children have chances to recognize and name repeating patterns.

2F.9 Kindergartners and school-agers have chances to make and record measurements of things.

2F.10 There are toys and other materials in the learning environment that allow kindergartners and school-agers to create or explore repeating and growing patterns.

2F.11 Kindergartners and school-agers have chances to do addition, subtraction, and other numerical operations in the classroom environment.

2F.12 Show examples of toys and other materials of different shapes, sizes, colors, and visual patterns (two examples of each).

2F.13 Show or describe two examples of experiences or materials you provide that help children learn about number concepts.

2F.14 Show two lesson plans in which children learn to understand basic concepts of geometry.

2F.15 Show two lesson plans in which children learn to understand repeating patterns.

2F.16 Show two lesson plans in which kindergartners and school-agers make and record measurements of things.

2F.17 Show two lesson plans in which kindergartners and school-agers create, represent, discuss and/or extend repeating and growing patterns.

2.F Early Mathematics

Supporting the development of mathematics (numbers, operations, attributes, geometry, measurement, time, patterns, and vocabulary)

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Count vegetables or seeds and talk about how many in the set (e.g., How many seeds do we have? How many cucumbers do we have?) (2F.5, 2F.13).
- Use calendars to count days until harvest (2F.5, 2F.13).
- Talk about recipes and add/subtract to see how much you have and how much you need (2F.5, 2F.11).
- Categorize vegetables, herbs, fruits, and sub-categorize where possible (e.g., colors, size, way it grows). Ask children to count the number of objects that are picked from the garden, then make comparison charts that relate the different items in terms of height, weight, and time it takes to grow (2F.5, 2F.6).
- Discuss using patterns while deciding where to plant seeds. Once harvested, children can create patterns to display their fruit (2F.8, 2F.10, 2F.12, 2F.15, 2F.17).
- Provide children with a variety of materials (e.g., scales, measuring tapes) to explore measuring and weighing vegetables and fruits. (2F.9, 2F.16).
- Use timers for cooking activities (2F.5, 2F.13).
- Discuss spatial concepts and use spatial words while planting (e.g., up/down, rotate, to the left, inside) (2F.14).

NAEYC Resources

- [Baking with Math for Families and Young Children](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)
- [Breaking Down STEAM for Young Children. Part 2: Teacher-Child Interactions: Inspiring Conversations* \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)



Standards & Best Practices

2G.1 Infants, toddlers, and twos have access to toys and other things they can play with to make things happen.

2G.3 There are at least two representations of data collection (e.g., through drawing or graphing) included in classroom displays.

2G.4 Children have chances to do activities that encourage them to think, ask questions, and make predictions about natural and physical phenomena.

2G.6 Show two toys, materials, or activities designed for infants, toddlers, or twos to play with to make things happen.

2G.8 Show two lesson plans that teach children about the structure and properties of matter.

2G.9 Show two lesson plans in which children collect data, then represent their findings (for example, drawing or graphing).

2G.10 Show two lesson plans in which you encourage children to ask questions or make predictions about natural and physical phenomena.

2G.11 Show or describe two ways you teach children to learn and use science-related vocabulary.

2.G Science

Supporting children's scientific inquiry and knowledge through observation, the use of simple tools, representation of findings, and the use of scientific terminology and vocabulary

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Incorporate books that discuss changes in crops and food products, growth in crops over time, and promote food knowledge, awareness, and acceptance (2G.4, 2G.10, 2G.11).
- Explore the garden and identify living (plants, bugs, etc.) vs. non-living (rocks, garden tools, etc.) things (2G.4, 2G.10, 2G.11).
- Plant seeds in the garden and have students keep a journal recording the different stages of growth, from seed to fruiting, of the plant to observe and document changes (2G.8, 2G.11).
- Use a calendar to track the different stages of the garden, from planting to harvest, to putting the garden to bed in the winter (2G.4, 2G.10, 2G.11).
- Hold a taste tests of a new food and use a graph to show who liked and didn't like the new food (2G.3, 2G.11).
- Provide children with a variety of materials (e.g., scales, measuring tapes) to explore and measure vegetables harvested from the garden (2G1, 2G.6, 2G.11).
- Ask children to count the number of objects that are picked from the garden, then make comparison charts that relate the different items in terms of height, weight, and time it takes to grow (2G.3, 2G.9, 2G.11).
- Grow plants in different conditions (inside vs. outside, in shade vs. in light, in cold conditions vs. warm conditions) and discuss how the different conditions impact how plants grow. Allow children to predict what will happen if a plant does not get water or does not get sunlight. Use small seedlings to conduct an experiment to find out if children's predictions are correct (2G.4, 2G.9, 2G.11).
- Make a recipe with children that demonstrates change in matter (fruit puree popsicles, applesauce, whole grain muffins) (2G.8, 2G.11).
- Ask questions regarding how plants and flowers grow. Demonstrate the process by adding food coloring to the water of a cut white carnation. Allow the child to predict what will happen (2G.4, 2G.10, 2G.11).
- Facilitate moments for children to engage in self-initiated sensory table play with a variety of kitchen tools (e.g., measuring cups and spoons, colanders, sifters) and plant and earth materials (e.g., seeds, dirt, sand, water) (2G1, 2G.6, 2G.11).
- Discuss as a group the weather each day and use simple pictures and graphics (e.g., sun, cloud, rain drops, snow) to chart the weather. Teacher guides discussion on how weather and season relate to our garden. What weather helps our plants grow? In what season do we plant our garden? (2G.4, 2G.10, 2G.11)



Standards & Best Practices

2G.1 Infants, toddlers, and twos have access to toys and other things they can play with to make things happen.

2G.3 There are at least two representations of data collection (e.g., through drawing or graphing) included in classroom displays.

2G.4 Children have chances to do activities that encourage them to think, ask questions, and make predictions about natural and physical phenomena.

2G.6 Show two toys, materials, or activities designed for infants, toddlers, or twos to play with to make things happen.

2G.8 Show two lesson plans that teach children about the structure and properties of matter.

2G.9 Show two lesson plans in which children collect data, then represent their findings (for example, drawing or graphing).

2G.10 Show two lesson plans in which you encourage children to ask questions or make predictions about natural and physical phenomena.

2G.11 Show or describe two ways you teach children to learn and use science-related vocabulary.

2.G Science (Cont.)

Supporting children's scientific inquiry and knowledge through observation, the use of simple tools, representation of findings, and the use of scientific terminology and vocabulary



NAEYC Resources

- [Have it Both Ways: Using Children's Science Apps to Support Hands-On and Digital Learning](#)
- [Engaging Toddlers in Nature Play](#)
- [Make STEM Social to Motivate Preschoolers](#)
- [A Jungle Gym for Snails: Joyful Learning in the Kindergarten Classroom](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)
- [Grow a Salad! Preschoolers Plant and Prepare Their Food \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)
- [Breaking Down STEAM for Young Children. Part 2: Teacher-Child Interactions: Inspiring Conversations* \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)
- [Planting the Seeds for Research Skills: Introducing Hypotheses in Preschool](#)
- [Worm farm that can be incorporated into class garden](#)
- [Position Statement of the National Science Teaching Association \(NSTA\), Early Childhood Science Education](#)



Standards & Best Practices

2H.1 Show two lesson plans in which you use technology to enrich your curriculum.

2.H Technology

Supporting children's use of technology that extends learning in the classroom as well as integrates and enriches the curriculum

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Use the internet to look up information and answer questions about fruits, herbs, and vegetables (e.g., looking up different types of produce, looking up seeds or root systems, digitally logging plant growth) (2H.1).
- Connect virtually with another program in a different climate to talk about and compare/contrast gardens in the context of environment and climates (2H.1).

NAEYC Resources

- [14-Day Salad: Using Project-Based Learning to Grow Microgreens](#)
- [Have it Both Ways: Using Children's Science Apps to Support Hands-On and Digital Learning](#)
- [Breaking Down STEAM for Young Children. Part 2: Teacher-Child Interactions: Inspiring Conversations* \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)
- [Tacos Anyone? Preschoolers Investigate a Taco Truck](#)
- [Make STEM Social to Motivate Preschoolers](#)



Standards & Best Practices

2J.4 Children have chances to develop and practice art skills.

Curriculum for toddlers and older children must introduce new concepts and vocabulary related to visual art (e.g., texture, sculpture, collage, media), music (e.g., tempo, musician, rhythm, drum), dance (e.g., movement, jump, wiggle, ballet, float), and drama (e.g., pretend, imagine, emotions, make believe).

2.J Creative Expression & Appreciation for the Arts

Supporting children’s expression of and engagement in art, music, dance, and drama

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Use arts as part of project-based learning to enhance gardening and farming experiences. For example, children can dance and move to show growth from seed to ripe vegetable (2J.4).
- Guide children in creating a “visual recipe” by drawing the steps of a cooking activity completed in class (2J.4).
- Engage in acting out and singing food and farm songs and rhymes such as “Old MacDonald had a Farm” (2J.4).
- Create a food collage based on the MyPlate framework using pictures that they find and cut out of magazines. Use the opportunity to talk about how foods from the different food groups grow or are raised (2J.4).
- Offer opportunities for children to create art that displays their experiences in the garden (using scissors, glue, and other materials). Educators can display actual photographs of the children engaging in the garden as a prompt to enhance the art curriculum (2J.4).



Standards & Best Practices

The curriculum and daily routines of a classroom can provide toddlers and older children with many opportunities to establish and practice habits to promote good health (e.g., feeding self, nutrition).

Lesson plans, play experiences, and classroom materials should help children learn about nutrition. Children should be taught to identify sources of food. They can learn to recognize, prepare, eat, and value healthy foods.

There should be classroom experiences and materials that increase children's awareness of safety rules in their classroom, home, and community.

2.K Health and Safety

Supporting children's understanding and practice of sound health, nutrition, and safety practices

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Practice hand washing before cooking or gardening - wash fruit and vegetables for snacks.

NAEYC Resources

- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)
- [14-Day Salad: Using Project-Based Learning to Grow Microgreens \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)
- [Grow a Salad! Preschoolers Plant and Prepare Their Food \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)



Standards & Best Practices

With the program environment as a microcosm, children can learn how people affect their environment in positive ways (e.g., recycling) and negative ways (e.g., polluting).

Environmentally responsible practices are reinforced when the program creates opportunities to educate families as well as children on eco-healthy practices (e.g., washing fruits and vegetables before eating them, monitoring outdoor air quality).

Preschool and kindergarten children can begin to learn about geography and economics. They should be provided experiences and materials to learn about physical characteristics of their local environment such as nearby rivers, gardens, parks, and buildings. A foundational understanding of economic concepts (e.g., money, buying and selling, wants vs. needs, the value of things) can begin with such activities as playing restaurant, managing a store, and identifying and exchanging money.

2.L Social Studies

Supporting children’s understanding of social roles and rules, the local community, their own contributions to the well-being of the social and physical environments in which they live, and diversity not only within their classroom but also in the larger world

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Engage with local farmers by visiting farms, orchards, or ranches or having them visit the class so that children can learn about physical and geographic characteristics of the local environment and how it relates to gardening and food growth. This also exposes children to the jobs adults engage in, (2L.2, 2L.3, 2L.7, 2L.9)
- Engage with families on eco-healthy practices through regular communication channels (e.g., class newsletters) or special events (2L.11).
- Practice concepts of costs, buying, and selling through field trips or dramatic play. For instance, children use blocks and manipulatives to “build” gardens and mimic plant growth after a visit to the garden, then move the plants to a grocery store or kitchen set up in the play area (2L.4, 2L.10).
- Offer family gardening workshops to encourage families to try growing edible plants at home (2L.11).
- Discuss the role physical location and geographic environment play in gardening. For instance, how children’s location factors into decisions on what gets planted locally, how it will grow, and when to harvest (2L.3).

NAEYC Resources

- [Tacos Anyone? Preschoolers Investigate a Taco Truck](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities*](#) (Young Children).



Standards & Best Practices

3B.1 Show or describe two activities or lesson plans that encourage children to share their ideas or experiences.

3.B Creating Caring Communities for Learning Topic

The development of a responsive and predictable community in which teachers use their knowledge of children's home and classroom lives to inform their teaching and to ensure that children are protected from bias and discrimination

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Plan time for children to discuss their ideas and experiences for a class garden or to reflect on field trips to farms, farmers markets, or food vendors. Discussions can be enhanced with prompts that allow children to share their family's food traditions from home (3B.1).

NAEYC Resources

- [Tacos Anyone? Preschoolers Investigate a Taco Truck](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)



Standards & Best Practices

3D.3 Show two examples of lesson plans in which children learn how the passage of time across several days can create changes in living or non-living things.

3D.4 Show or describe two examples of how you organize time or space so children can play or work alone.

3D.5 Show two lesson plans that provide children with opportunities to engage in group projects.

3D.6 Show two lesson plans that provide children with opportunities to learn from one another.

3D.7 Show two examples of lesson plans in which children learn how the passage of time across several weeks can create changes in living or non-living things.

3D.8 Show two examples of lesson plans in which children learn how the passage of time across months can create changes in living or non-living things.

3D.9 Show or describe two examples of lesson plans in which infants and toddlers revisit experiences and materials across periods of days or weeks.

3.D Using Time, Grouping, and Routines to Achieve Learning Goals

Effective use of time, grouping, and routines to achieve program and child learning goals

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Plant seeds in the garden and have students keep a journal showing the different stages of growth, from seed to fruiting, of the plant (3D.3).
- Encourage and model table talk about where food comes from, how it grows, and what it does for our body to make each meal time a learning opportunity (family-style meals are a recommended best practice) (3D.6).
- Plan project-based learning around a class garden or local foods (3D.4, 3D.5, 3D.6).

NAEYC Resources

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- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)
- [Grow a Salad! Preschoolers Plant and Prepare Their Food \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)



Standards & Best Practices

3G.3 Educators use their knowledge of curriculum content to pose problems and ask questions that stimulate the children to think.

3G.4 Educators help children express their ideas about curriculum content and build on the meaning of their experiences.

3G.8 Show one lesson plan that extends and challenges children's current understanding of the world.

3.G Using Instruction to Deepen Children's Understanding and Build Their Skills and Knowledge

Teachers' incorporation of a broad range of approaches and diverse teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning needs of the children in their classroom

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Take a project-based approach to a class garden to provide opportunities for scaffolding as the garden grows. Children may not know where or how the food they eat grows – a garden project can extend or challenge their knowledge of food sources (3G.3, 3G.4, 3G.8).

NAEYC Resources

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- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)
- [Grow a Salad! Preschoolers Plant and Prepare Their Food \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)



Standards & Best Practices

5A.5 Both children and adults wash or sanitize their hands before meals and snacks.

5A.7 Both children and adults wash their hands after touching sand or dirt.

Unless the program participates in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), at least two times a year a registered dietitian or pediatric public health nutritionist evaluates the menus for nutritional content; portion sizes; nationally recommended limits on juice, sugar, sodium, and saturated fats; food service operations; special feeding needs to be met by the program; and procedures used for food brought from home.

5.A Promoting and Protecting Children's Health and Controlling Infectious Disease

Practices for health promotion and protection for children and adult staff in the program, including plans and policies concerning immunization, communicable disease, and CPR and first-aid training, diapering, hand washing, feeding, dispensing medication, and using health professionals

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Practice hand washing before cooking or gardening - wash fruit and vegetables for snacks (5A.5, 5A.7).
- Purchase and serve local and seasonal food to align with CACFP Best Practice recommendations.
- Create and implement wellness policies that include prioritization of healthy, local foods, experiential food and nutrition education, and utilization of gardens as outdoor classrooms.

NAEYC Resources

- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)
- [Grow a Salad! Preschoolers Plant and Prepare Their Food \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)

Standards & Best Practices

The program takes steps to ensure food safety in its provision of drinks, meals, and snacks. If the program provides food for meals and snacks (whether catered or prepared on-site), the food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines.

All fresh fruits and vegetables are thoroughly washed prior to eating, to avoid possible exposure to pesticides and bacteria. Staff discard foods with expired dates.

Staff also take steps to ensure the safety of food brought from home. They work with families to ensure that foods brought from home meet the USDA's CACFP food guidelines.

5.B Ensuring Children's Nutritional Well-being

Children's nutrition, including food-serving practices, menus, health requirements, refrigeration requirements, and food allergies

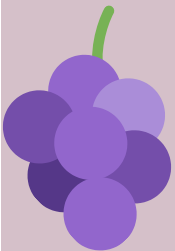


Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Purchase and serve local and seasonal food to align with CACFP Best Practice recommendations.
- Utilize CACFP funds (in compliance with CACFP regulations) to create and support gardens that produce food for meals and snacks.
- Integrate culturally relevant and traditional foods and recipes into meals and snacks.
- Utilize local and seasonal products, including fresh and minimally processed fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy products, in meals and snacks to increase nutritional value while controlling for fat, sugar, and salt as required in CACFP nutrition standards.
- Offer local fruits and vegetables to increase the variety of foods used, aiming to include dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables.
- Apply local preference options when purchasing foods for CACFP meals and snacks.
- Review the [Local Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program Memo](#) to better understand how and why “program administrators and partners are therefore encouraged to use local food as a means to enhance CACFP operations.”
- Offer children opportunities to taste and cook a variety of foods, which will encourage acceptance of diverse foods offered at meals and snacks, including whole grains, lean proteins, and a variety of fruits and vegetables.

NAEYC Resources

- [Let's Eat \(Well\)!](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#).
- [Grow a Salad! Preschoolers Plant and Prepare Their Food \(Teaching Young Children\)](#).



Standards & Best Practices

7A.3 Show or describe one example of how information about the families you serve has been used to adapt the program environment.

7A.5 Show or describe two examples of how educators have incorporated family members' knowledge about their children into ongoing classroom planning.

7A.7 Show or describe one example of how staff and families have worked together to plan an event.

7.A Knowing and Understanding the Program's Families

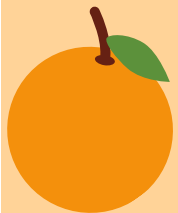
Program staff's ability to work effectively with diverse families based on their knowledge of a family's socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, and cultural background

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Invite parents and family members to be guest speakers and share their experience and expertise in farming, gardening, cooking, and other food and agriculture related activities (7A.5, 7A.7).
- Co-plan an event with families that focuses on local sources of food in the community. Identify which markets or vendors take WIC or SNAP and share with families (if applicable) (7A.5, 7A.7).
- Co-plan, with families, field trips to local farms, orchards, ranches, or farmers markets (7A.7).
- Collect family food traditions and favorite recipes from children and families to create a class cookbook (7A.5).
- Include questions about family and cultural food traditions in family interviews. Use this information to grow culturally reflective foods using traditional practices in experiential gardens and prepare traditional recipes (7A.3, 7A.5).
- Use family newsletters to share news from the garden, recipes, and information on new foods children are trying and exploring in the classroom. Ask families to share their children's experiences (7A.5).
- Host family garden work days to engage families in caring for and maintaining on-site gardens (7A.3, 7A.7).
- Utilize garden and outdoor spaces to host co-planned family picnics featuring garden-grown produce and locally procured foods (7A.7).
- Include traditional foods and foodways in meals, snacks, and taste tests in programs that serve American Indian and Alaska Native children.
- Utilize gardens to grow traditional foods to support connection to and preservation of tribal language, culture, and community (2A.7).

NAEYC Resources

- [Let's Eat \(Well\)!](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)
- [Grow a Salad! Preschoolers Plant and Prepare Their Food \(Teaching Young Children\)](#)



Standards & Best Practices

Early learning programs should always seek ways to break out of the classroom's four walls to enlarge the learning experience. Program staff should connect with and use their community's urban, suburban, rural, or tribal cultural resources as sources for curriculum enrichment.

Through newsletters, bulletin boards, and other messaging, the program should inform families about community events intended for children, such as museum exhibits, concerts, storytelling, and theater.

8.B Accessing Community Resources

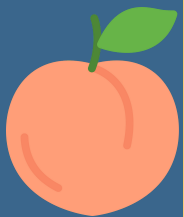
Efforts to integrate the community into the program both by inviting community members to participate in program events and by moving into the community to take advantage of opportunities that are offered

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Establish the program as an access point for families to purchase and learn about healthy, local foods by establishing on-site farmers markets or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)/food box pick-up sites (8B.1, 8B.2, 8B.3).
- Offer taste tests, cooking demonstrations, and recipe cards highlighting local food-focused menu items during pick-up and drop-off times (8B.3).

NAEYC Resources

- [Tacos Anyone? Preschoolers Investigate a Taco Truck](#)
- [Building Reciprocal Relationships with Communities](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Healthy Eaters, Classrooms, and Communities* \(Young Children\)](#)



Standards & Best Practices

8C.1 Show or describe one example of how you involve close neighbors in your program as appropriate, or cooperate with them on neighborhood interests and needs.

8.C Acting as a Citizen in the Neighborhood and the Early Childhood Community

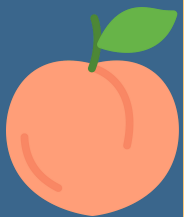
Relationships with the families and neighbors to promote working together on neighborhood needs, community improvement, and advocacy projects and staff participation in professional development opportunities

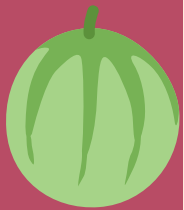
Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Establish the program as an access point for families to purchase and learn about healthy, local foods by establishing on-site farmers markets or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)/food box pick-up sites. (8C.1)

NAEYC Resources

- [Building Reciprocal Relationships with Communities](#)





Standards & Best Practices

Children need outside time and outdoor environments (e.g., playgrounds, parks, fields, gardens, woods) that support their learning and development.

The outdoor learning environment can include a variety of natural and manufactured surfaces, and it should allow for exploration of the natural environment through areas with natural materials, such as nonpoisonous plants, shrubs, and trees. The program should make adaptations so children with disabilities can fully participate in the outdoor curriculum and activities.

9.B Outdoor Environmental Design

Outdoor environmental design elements, including adaptations for children with disabilities, which provide for children's health and safety as well as support children's learning and development

Examples of Farm to ECE Activities

- Create a school or class garden to provide children with natural elements for interactions (e.g., dirt) (9B.1).

NAEYC Resources

- [Building Reciprocal Relationships with Communities](#)