
Shawn Linehan

GETTING STARTED WITH FARM TO PRESCHOOL

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NATIONAL FARM to SCHOOL NETWORK

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER
The National Farm to School Network is an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food and agriculture education into school systems and preschools.

What is farm to preschool?

Farm to preschool is a natural extension of the farm to school model, and works to connect early care and education settings (preschools, Head Start, center-based, programs in K-12 school districts, and family child care programs) to local food producers with the objectives of serving locally-grown, healthy foods to young children, improving child nutrition, and providing related educational opportunities.

Getting started

Farm to preschool offers multiple strategies to improve the health of children and communities. This list provides some easy first steps to develop a lasting farm to preschool program in your community:

1 **Assess where you are and where you'd like to be.**
Are your goals centered on:

- Purchasing local foods to be served in meals or snacks?
- Establishing a garden?
- Implementing other farm to preschool activities (field trips to farms or farmers' markets, cooking lessons, etc.)?
- Engaging families in local food access and education?
- All of the above?

2 **Form a team and collaborate:** Teachers and administrators, parents, Child Care Resource and Referral staff, local farmers, community organizations, and even local colleges/universities can play important roles in establishing a sustainable farm to preschool program.

3 **Establish one or two attainable goals to get started.** Some ideas include:

- Create a planning team that includes potential collaborators such as parents and teachers.
- Identify snack or meal items that you would like to transition to local.
- Find a farmer, farmers' market, grocery store, or wholesaler to connect you to local foods. Ask your local Cooperative Extension (http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/) for help making these connections!
- Plan a local foods meal, snack, day, or event.
- Reach out to a local nursery or hardware store for donations or other support for starting an edible garden.

FARM TO PRESCHOOL IN ACTION

Many programs exist across the country—here are two examples:

In-home providers create farm to preschool through a backyard garden
In Los Angeles, Ethan and Friends Family Child Care owner Shaunte Taylor has transformed her modest inner-city backyard to include raised beds, a compost bin, multiple fruit trees, and a chicken coop. Now, children plant seeds, amend the soil while investigating worms and insects, water plants, and harvest and prepare simple recipes using their garden produce.

Continued on other side....

WHY FARM TO PRESCHOOL?

KIDS WIN

Farm to school provides all kids access to nutritious, high quality, local food so they are ready to learn and grow. Farm to school activities enhance classroom education through hands-on learning related to food, health, agriculture and nutrition.

FARMERS WIN

Farm to school can serve as a significant financial opportunity for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers by opening the doors to an institutional market worth billions of dollars.

COMMUNITIES WIN

Buying from local producers and processors reduces the carbon footprint of food transportation while stimulating the local economy. Educational activities such as school gardens and composting programs help to create a healthy environment around the school community.

The National Farm to School Network has compiled resources on this topic and others as well as contact information for people in your state and region who are working on farm to school programs. Find more information and join our network: www.farmtoschool.org

- Identify curricula, activities, or books related to farm to preschool.
- Plan a farm or farmers' market field trip, a farmer visit to the classroom, or host a tasting of local produce.
- Plan a simple food preparation activity that can be done with children.

4 **Learn from others.** If you are running into an obstacle, it is likely that there is someone out there who has run into it before! Some places to connect and learn from others include:

- The farm to preschool website (farmtopreschool.org). Find information and case studies that are specific to early care settings, and sign up for an e-newsletter to receive regular communication about news and resources.
- The National Farm to School Network (farmtoschool.org). Find abundant resources and contact information for people in your state and region who are working on farm to school and farm to preschool.
- Your county or state's Child Care Resource and Referral agency. Many of these agencies can provide ways to learn about and connect with other early care programs that are implementing farm to preschool activities. Find local agencies at usa.childcareaware.org
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) staff in your state. Learn how CACFP can help you make local food more economical and free up resources for other farm to preschool activities. CACFP state agency contacts can be found at www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/contacts/statedirectory.htm

FARM TO PRESCHOOL IN ACTION

Oregon Child Development Coalition works directly with local farmers to procure food for meals

Early care centers have proven to be an ideal market for La Esperanza Farm, an incubator farm for local organic and sustainable Latino farmers in Forest Grove, Oregon. Working closely with the Oregon Child Development Coalition's USDA Food Services Specialist, Head Start centers now receive deliveries of local produce for meals, nourishing both children and their community.

5 **Promote farm to preschool in your community.** Ideas include sharing information and recipes in parent newsletters, posting garden or field trip photos to a web or social media site, or inviting local media to your activities.

School districts versus early care settings

There are a few important distinctions between school districts and early care settings:

- Local foods procurement: Preschools and family child care programs tend to purchase at smaller volume and generally do not offer a la carte choices or multiple meal options. Small purchasing volumes can be a good fit for small farmers who may not have enough volume to work with an entire school district.
- Class size: Preschools and family child care programs tend to have smaller numbers of children, and their schedules can vary (child care might be for only a few hours, or it could be up to half or full days). Smaller groups of children provide greater flexibility, while shorter days can limit some activities.
- Curriculum: Common Core is the standard for K-12, while experiential education is highly encouraged in preschool. This is a great fit with many farm to preschool activities such as gardening, cooking, and taste tests.
- Parental involvement: parental involvement tends to be strong during the preschool years, which can be a huge asset for farm to preschool programming.

USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

FARM TO PRESCHOOL

Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings

FARM TO SCHOOL isn't just for K-12 institutions; an increasing number of early child care and education providers are engaging in farm to preschool activities. The term "farm to preschool" encompasses efforts to serve local or regionally produced foods in early child care and education settings; provide hands-on learning activities such as gardening, farm visits, and culinary activities; and integrate food-related education into the curriculum.

Why Farm to Preschool?

Serving local foods and offering related hands-on activities can increase children's willingness to try new foods. In fact, farm to preschool is recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as an opportunity to increase access to healthy environments for improved early eating habits and obesity prevention in early care and education. With daily opportunities to serve local products through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), farm to preschool benefits local and regional farmers, ranchers, and fisherman, as well as food processors, manufacturers, and distributors by providing another market for their products.

Buying Local in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Institution versus facility

When buying food for CACFP, the federal procurement rules differ for "institutions" versus "facilities." "Institutions" must follow federal procurement rules; whereas "facilities" do not enter into a direct agreement with a state agency and thus are not required to follow federal procurement regulations. If unsure whether your program operates as an institution or a facility, check with your administering state agency.

What is the Child and Adult Care Food Program?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program is a federally-funded program that provides aid to child care institutions and facilities for the provision of nutritious meals and snacks that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children.

Sourcing local foods

Local foods span the entire meal tray, from produce to dairy, grains, meat, eggs, and beans. CACFP providers can define "local" however they choose. Definitions vary widely depending on the unique geography and climate, as well as the abundance of local food producers, in the region. CACFP operators can find local products through the same sources that K-12 schools use to source locally: directly from producers, or through food hubs, distributors or a food service management company. In many preschool settings, purchasing volumes are small, opening the door to purchasing seasonally from farmers' markets, community supported agriculture programs, or local producers that may not have the volume to meet the needs of a typical school district. Preschools may also be able to grow enough in a garden to meet some of their food needs.

THE FARM to SCHOOL PROGRAM

Tips for Growing Your Program

Start small

Special events are a great way to start serving local foods. Consider starting with one local item each month and grow from there. Create a monthly newsletter to celebrate the harvest and share with children, parents, and caregivers.

Tap into parents

With robust parental involvement during the early child care years, tap into parents to help model healthy eating at meal time, lead an activity, or organize a garden to enhance your farm to preschool program.

Invest in an edible garden

CACFP funds can be used to purchase items for gardens such as seeds, fertilizer, watering cans, rakes, and more as long as the produce grown in the garden will be used as part of the reimbursable meal and for nutrition education activities. Centers using garden produce in their CACFP reimbursable meals should document the weight and/or volume of the produce.

Dig into menu planning

Find out what grows in your region and allow flexibility in the regular menu cycle to spotlight seasonal items and incorporate them into healthy recipes. When you serve local foods, be sure to highlight them on your menu for parents to see! Reach out to your local cooperative extension agency or department of agriculture for help with synching your menu with seasonal availability.

Learn More

We're here to help! The USDA Farm to School Program is operated by the Department's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Visit USDA's Farm to Preschool page to learn more about farm to preschool policies and FNS and partner resources that will help you bring the farm to preschool: http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-preschool.

The National Farm to School Network (NFSN) supports the work of local farm to preschool programs all over the country by providing free training and technical assistance, information services, networking, and support for policy, media and marketing activities. NFSN's Farm to Preschool page features facts sheets and links to farm to preschool e-news and archives. http://www.farmtopreschool.org/.

For federal procurement regulations and guidance on local purchasing and allowable costs in CACFP, check out the following resources:

- CACFP Financial Management Instruction (www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/796-2%20Rev%204.pdf)
- CACFP Policy Memo 11-2015 Local Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program with Questions and Answers (http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/f2s/CACFP11_2015_Local%20Foods%20in%20CACFP_03%2013%202015.pdf)
- USDA's guide, Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs (www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_Procuring_Local_Foods_Child_Nutrition_Prog_Guide.pdf)

* *

For more information, and to sign up to receive USDA's bi-weekly Farm to School E-letter, please visit www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool. Questions? Email us at farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov.

THE FARM to SCHOOL PROGRAM

United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302-1500

DATE: March 13, 2015

MEMO CODE: CACFP 11-2015

SUBJECT: Local Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program with Questions and Answers

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance on the incorporation of local foods and agriculture-based curriculum in early childhood education and care settings. The memorandum also clarifies policies in the recently published *FNS Instruction 796-2, Revision 4, Financial Management in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* (CACFP) relevant to local food production and procurement. Finally, this memorandum includes questions and answers regarding procuring local food for use in the CACFP, growing food for use in CACFP, and donations.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010 amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to expand the purpose of the CACFP to "provide aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled persons" [42 USC 1766(a)(1)(A)(ii)]. Further, Section 243 of the HHFKA established a Farm to School Program at the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to increase the availability of local foods in schools and institutions. FNS continues to provide grants and technical assistance to implement Farm to School programs that improve access to local foods in the Child Nutrition Programs, including CACFP.

The incorporation of local food and agricultural education into CACFP can play an important role in creating and promoting a healthy environment. There is a well-established and growing public interest in supporting local and regional food systems by purchasing these foods and incorporating agricultural-based curriculum and activities into early childhood education and care. Program administrators and partners are therefore encouraged to use local food as a means to enhance CACFP operations.

The recently issued *FNS Instruction 796-2, Revision 4, Financial Management of the CACFP*, now categorizes costs associated with growing food that will be used in the CACFP, either as part of the meal service or for activities related to nutrition education to

food service staff, as allowable. These costs may include seeds, fertilizer, labor, plot rental, etc. Institutions are subject to 7 CFR Part 226.22 and therefore must conduct all procurements in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200.317-326. These procurement standards must be followed regardless of dollar amount, meal served or purchasing frequency. Facilities, such as day care homes and sponsored centers are encouraged to purchase in a way that promotes open and fair competition. For more information, see http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/796-4.pdf.

State agencies are reminded to distribute this information to Program operators immediately. Program operators should direct any questions regarding this memorandum to the appropriate State agency. State agency contact information is available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm. State agencies should direct questions to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

Original Signed

Angela Kline
Director
Policy and Program Development Division
Child Nutrition Programs

Attachment

Questions and Answers Related to Use of Local Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

A. General

1. What is Farm to School/Farm to Preschool?

The term "Farm to School" encompasses efforts that bring local or regionally produced foods into cafeterias along with hands-on learning activities and the integration of food-related education into the regular, standards-based classroom curriculum. Farm to Preschool, the incorporation of these activities in early childcare and education settings, is a great way to introduce young children to where their food comes from, and help them develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

Farm to Preschool encompasses a variety of efforts that might include:

- Purchasing local and regional foods for reimbursable meals;
- Incorporating agricultural education programs into early childcare settings, such as Grow It, Try It, Like It, (http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-try-it-it);
- Taste testing with locally-produced foods;
- Participating in a Harvest of the Month program;
- Starting and maintaining preschool gardens; and
- Taking field trips to local farmers markets and farms.

2. How and where can CACFP institutions purchase local foods?

There are many ways in which institutions can incorporate local foods into their meals programs, including competitively purchasing directly from a producer, through a distributor or food service management company, or from food hubs, farmers' markets, and gardens. See USDA's Guide to Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs for a detailed description of each (http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_Procuring_Local_Foods_Child_Nutrition_Prog_Guide.pdf).

A logical starting point may be for an institution to start asking about the source of the food they are currently purchasing. Some institutions may already be using local foods and not yet know it. Institutions can also communicate to current vendors and suppliers regarding their preference for local products.

Also, vendor solicitations may be written with characteristics of products from local sources in mind; for instance specifying a particular variety of apple that is native to your region, or that a product be delivered within 24 or 48 hours of harvest. Products from local sources may be expressed as a *preference*, but may not be *required* as a product specification.

Geographic preference may be used by institutions to procure locally grown or raised unprocessed foods. The institution making the purchase has the discretion to determine the local area to which the geographic preference option will be applied (7 CFR 226.22(n)(1)). Local area

is not defined by the USDA. Additional guidance on Geographic Preference can be found in CACFP 02-2013, *Procurement Geographic Preference Q&As – Part II*, October 9, 2012 (http://www.fns.usda.gov/procurement-geographic-preference-qas-%E2%80%93-part-ii).

Note that CACFP institutions must procure all goods and services using the procurement regulations found in 7 CFR 226.22 and 2 CFR Part 200.317-326. Additional guidance on procurement can be found in FNS Instruction 796-2 Rev. 4 (www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/796-2%20Rev%204.pdf).

3. How can CACFP facilities, such as day care homes and sponsored centers, purchase local foods?

CACFP facilities can purchase local foods from any source, such as distributors, farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and food hubs, and are not required but are encouraged to purchase in a way that promotes open and fair competition. Additional guidance on procurement can be found in FNS Instruction 796-2 Rev. 4 (www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/796-2%20Rev%204.pdf).

4. When an institution purchases from a farm stand, farmer's market, CSA, or directly from a farm, are handwritten receipts acceptable forms of documentation of purchase?

Yes. Handwritten receipts for items purchased are acceptable documentation as long as the receipt includes the date of purchase, name of vendor/farmer, item cost, amount, and total cost.

5. Can food that was donated from local gardens or farms be used as part of the reimbursable meal?

Yes. While the full reimbursement for CACFP meals must be spent on allowable Child Nutrition Program costs, there is no Federal requirement that all of the food components be purchased with Program funds or that a specific percentage of the reimbursement be spent on food. It is an allowable practice for non-program resources to cover food expenses provided that an excessive balance is not present as determined by the State agency (Refer to *FNS Instruction 796-2, Revision 4, Financial Management of the CACFP, Section VI, D).* CACFP institutions must maintain records of the types and quantities of donated foods received, which will be assessed as part of their food service records during an administrative review.

6. Can State agencies use their State Administrative Expense (SAE) Funds to provide training and technical assistance on this topic?

Yes. FNS Instruction 781-2 includes providing technical assistance, nutrition education, and training as an allowable use of SAE provided that the funds are used to support State-level administrative activities. For more information on utilizing SAE funds to support state-level staff and training activities, see SP 28-2015 (correct number will be provided when memorandum is posted), *Questions and Answers Regarding the Use of State Administrative Expense (SAE) Funds and State Administrative Funds (SAF) for Farm to School Related Expenses*, March 13, 2015, (website will be updated when memorandum is posted to the public web).

B. Gardens and Growing Food

This guidance for growing food for use in the CACFP meal service is consistent with the guidance provided to schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and operating school gardens. For more information, see SP 32-2009, *School Garden Q&As*, July 29, 2009, (http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP_32-2009_os.pdf) and SP 06- 2015, *Farm to School and School Garden Expenses*, November 12, 2014, (http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP06-2015os.pdf).

1. **Can an institution or facility use funds from the nonprofit food service account to purchase items for gardens such as seeds, fertilizer, watering cans, rakes, etc, to grow food that will be used in the food service?**

Yes. As long as the produce grown in the garden will be used as part of the reimbursable meal – and for nutritional education activities. Centers using garden produce in their CACFP reimbursable meals should document the weight and/or volume of the produce.

2. **Can an institution sell food grown in their CACFP garden that was funded using the nonprofit food service account?**

Yes. As long as the revenue from the sale of the food accrues to the nonprofit food service account. Institutions or facilities may serve the produce as part of a reimbursable meal or sell it a la carte to parents, at a roadside stand, etc.

3. **Can an institution or facility purchase produce from another institution or facility that is maintaining and managing the garden, such as Future Farmers of America (FFA), which is an agricultural education program for students?**

Yes. An institution or facility may purchase produce from a garden run by a school organization such as FFA as long as documentation includes the date of purchase, name of organization, item cost, amount, and total cost.

4. **May funds received for serving At-Risk Afterschool meals be used to purchase seeds/tools/equipment for a garden?**

Yes. The At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program is a component of CACFP and is subject to the same rules as other CACFP components with regard to foods from local sources.

5. **How may excess produce from the garden be used?**

The institution or facility should first see if the excess food can be used to benefit another program such as the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or NSLP. If that is not possible, the food may be sold or donated in accordance with State and local health/safety regulations. As always, any profits must accrue back to the nonprofit food service account. Please refer to SP 11-

2012, SFSP 07-2012, *Guidance on the Food Donation Program in Child Nutrition Programs*, February 3, 2012, for more information on donating food.

C. Food Safety

1. Are there resources for handling produce safely in kitchens?

National Food Service Management Institute's (NFSMI) publication *Ready, Set, Go! Creating and Maintaining a Wellness Environment in Child Care Centers Participating in the CACFP* (http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=376) provides best practices and assessment tools for the safe handling of food in child care facilities.

In addition, a produce-specific publication has been created for the school environment, and the best practices apply to many child care centers. NFSMI's publication *Best Practices: Handling Fresh Produce in Schools* (http://nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=351), developed for FNS, outlines recommendations for handling fresh produce at all steps in the food production process. Best practices address purchasing and receiving, washing and preparation, hand hygiene, serving, storage, and training, and general food safety practices. Specific recommendations for handling melons, tomatoes, leafy greens, and sprouts are also included.

FNS' Produce Safety University also identifies best practices for selecting, handling, and preparing produce for use in Child Nutrition Programs (http://www.fns.usda.gov/food-safety/produce-safety-university).

2. Is Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and/or Good Handling Practices (GHP) going to be a requirement for producers who sell to CACFP institutions?

No. GAP/GHP certifications are required when selling fresh fruits and vegetables directly to USDA and if State and local governments require it. Local distributors, retailers, institutions, or facilities may have individual GAP/GHP related policies. However, including GAP/GHP certification as part of the terms and conditions in the solicitation process is encouraged.

3. Is there a specific amount of liability coverage that farmers or others providing local foods products for CACFP must carry?

No. There is no specific amount of liability coverage required of farmers by USDA to sell to CACFP institutions or facilities. Institutions, facilities, States, distributors, retailers and food service management companies may all have different liability coverage requirements provided the requirements are not excessive which may potentially restrict competition. It is best to contact these entities for further information.

4. What other rules or regulations must farmers meet in order to sell to institutions or facilities?

Farmers must meet all Federal, State and local regulations to sell their products within the Child Nutrition Programs. Local distributors may have additional requirements, such as third party audits or product liability insurance limits. Farmers and purchasers should check with their local health departments to ensure that local and State requirements are met.

How To Apply
- Become a TN School

Popular Topics
- HealthierUS Schools
- Local Wellness Policy
- Training Grants
- Resource Library
- Graphics Library
- MyPlate
- Resource Order Form

Other Useful Links
- Healthy Meals Resource System
- Healthy Access Locator
- Best Practices Sharing Center
- School Day Just Got Healthier

Team Nutrition Garden Resources

Print

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Team Nutrition provides a number of free materials that connect nutrition education to school and child care gardens. We also offer evidenced-based curricula that educators can use to integrate garden-based nutrition education lessons into core educational subjects, such as Math, English Language Arts, and Science. From small pots and container gardens to full garden plots, we have materials that can fit your needs and resources. Schools, summer sites, and child care (centers, homes and sponsors) that participate in USDA's Child Nutrition Programs may request free printed copies of many of these materials.

Materials available in print are on the Resource Order Form.

We would like to hear from you! Please share how you are using these materials by emailing us at TeamNutrition@fns.usda.gov.

Lessons and Activities

- Grow It, Try It, Like It! Nutrition Education Kit Featuring MyPlate (Preschool)
- Discover MyPlate, Lesson 4 Planting the Seeds for Healthier Eating (Kindergarten)
- The Great Garden Detective Adventure (Grades 3-4)
- Dig In! Standards-Based Nutrition Education from the Ground Up (Grades 5-6)
- Plant It, Grow It, Eat It!; Healthy Habits Take Root (Grades K-8)

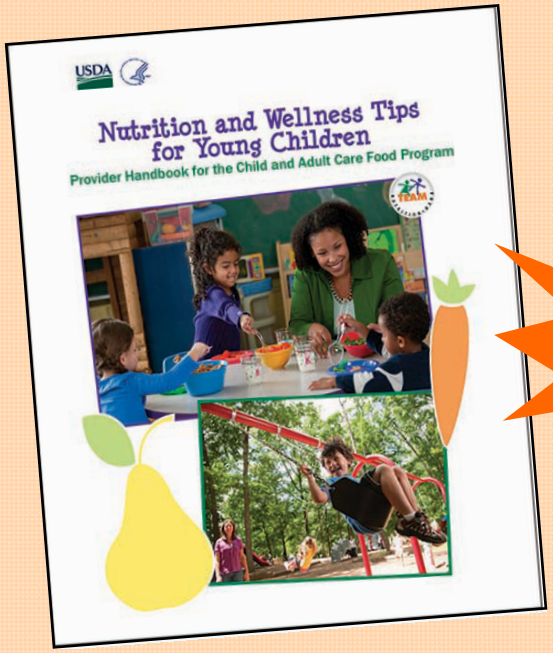
Posters

- Dig In! Posters

Last Published: 08/03/2015

Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children:

Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program



Available Now!

What is the handbook?

It is a series of tip sheets to help child care providers meet current wellness recommendations* for children ages 2 through 5 years old. By using the tip sheets when planning meals and activities for children, providers can incorporate key recommendations and best practices into their menus and daily schedules.

How can the handbook help child care providers?

- Ideas for meal planning, shopping, and food preparation
- Tips for creative menus
- Hints for meeting meal pattern requirements
- Practices in serving food safely
- Activities for hands-on learning
- Suggestions for active play
- Success stories from providers
- Links to additional resources

Handbook topics include:

- **Build a Healthy Plate With:**
  - **Fruits**
  - **Vegetables**
  - **Dry Beans and Peas**
  - **Protein**
  - **Whole Grains**
  - **Milk**
  - **Less Salt and Sodium**
  - **Options Low in Solid Fats**
  - **Less Added Sugars**
- **Make Water Available**
- **Practice Food Safety**
- **Promote Active Play**
- **Limit Screen Time**
- **Practice Choking Prevention**
- **Handle Food Allergies**

Where can I find the handbook?

FREE!

Available on the Team Nutrition Web site's Resource Library:
TeamNutrition.usda.gov

* From the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* and *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education, 3rd Edition.*

U.S. Department of Agriculture ■ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html

HARVEST for HEALTHY KIDS

It's never been easier to help children develop healthy eating habits. Harvest for Healthy Kids gives you everything you need to inspire children with fresh food grown close to home. Download our free activity kits developed by teachers and childcare providers, and join us in helping a new generation thrive.

A VARIETY OF FEATURED FOODS: Download activities for Beets, Asparagus, Cabbage, Berries, Carrots and many more..

EACH KIT INCLUDES:

- Activity Plan
- Picture Cards
- Teacher Bites Newsletter
- Family Newsletter
- Recipes

PREVIEW KIT CONTENTS BELOW

ACTIVITY PLANS

BOOK LIST

THE VEGETABLES WE EAT
By: Gail Gibbons

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: lettuce, cabbage, spinach, brussel sprouts, onion, leeks, cauliflower, artichoke, broccoli, beets, parsnips, carrots, radishes, turnips, potatoes, celery, asparagus, rhubarb, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, hot peppers, yellow squash, winter squash, sweet peppers, zucchini, peas, corn, soybeans

A informative book all about vegetables, how they are grown, and parts we eat. A great book to show kids the difference between vegetables, "bulbs," "flower buds," and more. Different sections of the book could be read to highlight different themes: how vegetables grow, what parts of vegetables we eat, how to grow your own vegetable garden, etc.

TOPS & BOTTOMS
By: Janet Stevens

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: carrots, radishes, beets, lettuce, broccoli, celery, corn

A story about a lazy bear and a clever hare who join together as business partners in farming. Each year, Bear chooses "tops" or "bottoms" while Hare does all the work – but Hare makes sure to plant the best vegetables on his side of the dirt!

VEGETABLES
By: Sara Anderson

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: celery, rhubarb, cucumbers, beans, potatoes, tomatoes, artichoke, turnips, carrots, peas, onion, eggplant, pumpkins, asparagus, lettuce, zucchini, beets, broccoli, spinach, corn, green beans, radishes, sweet potatoes, cauliflower, cabbage

Rhyming text features illustrations of brightly colored vegetables.

UP, DOWN, AND AROUND
By: Katherine Ayres, Illustrator: Nadine Bernard Westcott

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: beets, pumpkins, broccoli, tomatoes, corn, green beans, cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, okra, onions, carrots

This fun, rhyming story tells the tale of how vegetables grow (broccoli grows up/beets grow down/green beans climb around and around). Children will love the bright, realistic illustrations, and the lilting rhymes.

CREATIVE ARTS
Watch our Garden Grow

OBJECTIVES:
1. Children learn that we can grow beets in a garden.
2. Children review how beets grow.
3. Children make their own beet to display in the classroom "garden."

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:
Small paper plates
Colored paper, yarn, paint, or other art supplies
Scissors
Glue

WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:
- Make a beet using a paper plate and colored paper. Create the beet root on the paper plate, and paste green strips to the plate as the beet greens. Use this plate as a sample.
- Tell children we can grow beets in a garden. Ask children if anyone has ever grown beets in a garden.
- Ask children to remember how beets grow (the roots grow underground, the leaves grow above the ground).
- Show children example plate and tell children, today we will be making beets for our "class garden."
- Provide children with plates, colored paper, scissors, and glue.
- Invite children to make their own beet for the "class garden."
- Designate a space on a wall in the classroom for the class garden.
- Add to the wall each month with children's colorful creations of the and vegetables in the Harvest for Healthy Kids program.

MORE IDEAS

"B" IS FOR BEETS
Talk with children about how beet starts with the letter "B." Beet roots grow under the ground. Beet leaves grow above the ground. Ask children to come up with other words that start with "B," and record their ideas on a large piece of butcher paper or construction paper. Hang the chart in the classroom for the month.

TASTE AND TELL
Gather children in circle time and offer tastes of raw and cooked beet. Ask questions like: What do beets taste like? How do the vegetables taste the same or different? Are raw vegetables different than cooked vegetables? Do the children like the taste? Offer tastes of different colors of beets (red, orange, striped). Ask children to predict what each color will taste like. Record children's responses on a chart, and hang it in the classroom.

PAPER BAG GUESSING GAME OR SURPRISE BOX
Place a beet or a handful of beets in a paper bag. Invite children to reach their hands in the bag and describe the feel and shape of the beet. Pull out the vegetables and ask children to describe their size, shape and color. Alternatively, use a cardboard box for this activity (or a small shoebox). Cut out a hole large enough to fit small and big arms through.

PICTURE CARDS
The Harvest for Healthy Kids picture cards can be used any time during the month in which the fruit/vegetable is featured. Picture cards come in three categories: Fruit and Veggie Photo Cards, How does it Grow? (botanical illustrations of fruit and vegetables), and Same but Different (vegetables/fruits in different colors, or different varieties of a vegetable/fruit). Find ideas for how to use these cards in the Harvest for Healthy Kids Teachers Guide, and on the back of each picture card.

Traditional Foods in Alaska's Head Starts

Head Start centers may wish to serve donated traditional Alaska Native foods to address the cultural food preference of their community and students. In 2005, almost 60% of Alaska Head Start students enrolled reported their ethnicity as Alaska Native or American Indian (Figure 8a). Serving traditional Native foods in the Head Start classroom provides good nutrition and addresses the cultural and ethnic food preferences of many of the children.

SLIDE 2 MODULE EIGHT

This module will provide a brief overview of the nutritional benefits of Alaska traditional foods, how to determine if the Head Start center has the capacity to prepare traditional foods, ways to involve the community in the donation of Alaska traditional foods to the Head Start, and the Alaska Department of Conservation (DEC) Alaska Food Code regulations surrounding the use of Alaska traditional foods.

SLIDE 3 MODULE EIGHT

The Head Start Performance Standards and Other Regulations support serving cultural and ethnic foods. Performance Standard 1304.23 (b) Nutritional services (1) states:

"Grantee and delegate agencies…. nutrition program must serve a variety of foods which consider cultural and ethnic preferences and which broaden the child's food experience."

Serving traditional foods will support the cultural and ethnic food preferences of many Alaskan Head Start children.

Examples of common traditional wild game are seal, whale, venison, moose, caribou, duck, goose, salmon, halibut, and all other fish. Examples of harvested foods include blueberries, huckleberries, salmonberries, cranberries, beach asparagus, seaweed, fiddlehead ferns, young fireweed leaves, young sourdock leaves, and wild rhubarb. Many of these foods are of superior nutritional quality to similar store bought foods.

SLIDE 4 MODULE EIGHT

The Alaska DEC and the Department of Education and Early Development allow the use of traditional foods in Head Start when Alaska Food Code regulations are followed. Before serving any donated traditional foods, food service staff need to be familiar with and strictly follow the Alaska Food Code regulations. Donated traditional wild game meat, fish, sea mammals, plants and other food can be served at the Head Start.

Due to the food safety risk, Alaska Food Code regulations restrict the use of some traditional foods as explained in slide #22 of this module.

Head Starts interested in serving traditional foods will want to work with Head Start parents, food service staff, local fisherman, hunters, and gathers to achieve regular service of traditional foods. To help achieve regular food service of traditional foods, the Head Start staff and specifically the food service staff will want to enlist community support and learn the Alaska Food Code regulations.

SLIDE 5 MODULE EIGHT

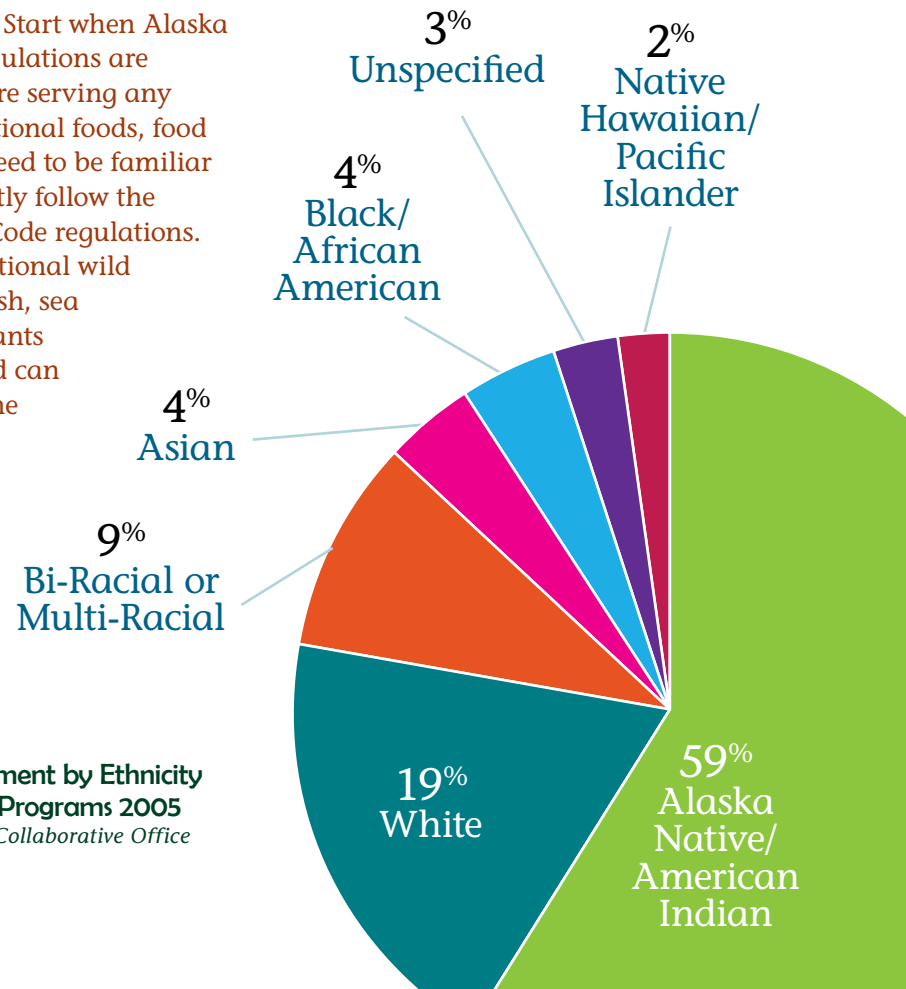


FIGURE **8a: Total Enrollment by Ethnicity in Alaska Head Start Programs 2005**
Source: Alaska Head Start Collaborative Office

The CD enclosed with this report offers slides that match the text below. Throughout the following module, you'll see numbered slide icons like this 1 *that correspond with slide numbers in the CD Power Point presentation. Activities suggested often support specific performance standards and are noted as "(PS 1305.23(c)(6))."*

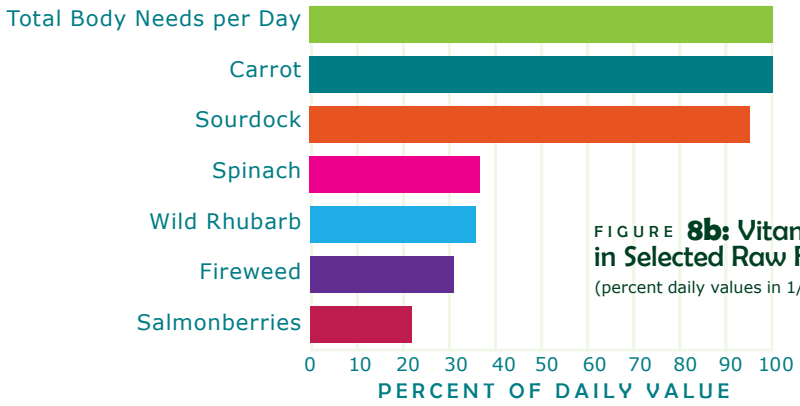


FIGURE **8b: Vitamin A in Selected Raw Food**
(percent daily values in 1/2 cup)

YOUR DAILY VALUES

OUR SOURCE FOR THIS CHART

Nutritional Benefits of Traditional Foods

SLIDE 6 MODULE EIGHT

The Alaska Native people have lived off the land by hunting and gathering for centuries. These activities provide good nutrition, exercise, affordable food, and preserve cultural heritage. Traditional foods are natural, do not contain additives or preservatives and are a good source of nutrients. Traditional foods in Native culture are believed to nourish not only the body, but the spirit and community as well. Science has clearly demonstrated that many traditional foods are nutritionally superior to store-bought foods.

SLIDE 7 MODULE EIGHT

Healthy children need protein to build muscles, calcium for strong bones and teeth, and Vitamin A to help fight infections, promote vision health, and keep healthy skin. Children benefit from Vitamin C which helps fight infection, improves the body's ability to use iron, helps heal wounds, and plays a role in cancer prevention. Dietary iron helps prevent iron deficiency anemia so that children have energy and are mentally alert for learning. Traditional Alaska foods are a rich food source of these nutrients.

SLIDE 8 MODULE EIGHT

Many traditional Native foods such as sourdock, wild rhubarb, fireweed and salmonberries are a good source of vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for night vision, to help prevent skin infections, and to keep skin healthy. As shown in Figure 8b, a half cup of sourdock provides more than 90% of the Daily Value for Vitamin A. A half cup of wild rhubarb or fireweed leaves provides more than 30% and ½ cup of salmonberries provides more than 20% of the Daily Value for Vitamin A.[1]

SLIDE 9 MODULE EIGHT

Many traditional Native foods such as lowbush salmonberries, willow leaves, sourdock, and lowbush cranberries are a good source of Vitamin C. Vitamin C helps to keep teeth and gums healthy, keep skin elastic, fight infection, and heal wounds.

Jensen PG, Nobmann ED. What's in Alaskan Foods, Chart Series, Alaska Area Native Health Service, Anchorage 1994.

Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,ooo calorie diet. Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your caloric needs .

Institutions and non-profit programs for Alaska Food Code purposes are defined as residential child care facilities licensed by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, school lunch programs and senior meal programs. Head Start centers are classified as residential child care facilities.

As shown in Figure 8c, a half cup of lowbush salmonberries provide 100% of the Daily Value for Vitamin C. A half cup of willow leaves provides more than 80% and ½ cup of sourdock provides more than 40% of the Daily Value for Vitamin C. Berries are also low in sugar, high in cancer preventing antioxidants and Vitamin A.[1]

Traditional Alaska fish are rich in heart healthy nutrients.

SLIDE 10 MODULE EIGHT

Alaska fish is high in Omega-3 fatty acids, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat. Omega-3 fatty acids have been linked to a wide range of health benefits including improved heart health, good development of a baby during pregnancy, healthy joints, improved behavior and mood, and prevention of certain cancers.[2]

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are good for heart health. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 suggest eating fish as a food source of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.[3] The American Heart Association recommends adults eat two servings of fish a week to help prevent heart disease.[4]

Fish is an important part of a healthy diet for everyone, including young children.

Many parents have heard about high mercury levels in fish and are cautious about serving it to their children. The state of Alaska will soon publish up-to-date consumption guidelines for young children and women of childbearing age.

SLIDE 11 MODULE EIGHT

These guidelines offer suggestions specific to each type and size of fish. Good news! All five species of Alaska wild salmon have very low mercury levels.

Parents will be able to access the new guidelines on the State of Alaska, Division of Public Health Web site or by calling 907-269-8000.

SLIDE 12 MODULE EIGHT

Traditional Alaska fish and meats have nutritional benefits that make them superior to many store bought foods. Fish, seal, moose and caribou are typically lower in fat and saturated fat than meat purchased from the store. Sea mammals, moose, caribou and venison are also excellent sources of protein and higher in iron than store bought beef.

SLIDE 13 MODULE EIGHT

Seal, ptarmigan, and moose provide more iron per 3 ounce serving than lean beef or chicken. Iron carries oxygen to muscles and body parts, helps children learn better, and provides the body with energy. Three ounces of seal provides almost 100% of the Daily Value for iron. Three ounces of moose or ptarmigan provides more than 20% the Daily Value for iron whereas the same portion of lean beef provides 15% the Daily Value and chicken less than 10% the Daily Value (Figure 8d).

SLIDE 14 MODULE EIGHT

Three ounces of seal meat provides more iron than three ounces of caribou, hamburger or hotdogs. To get the same amount of iron as three ounces of seal one would need to eat 6 ounces of caribou meat, 6 three-ounce hamburgers (or 18 ounces of hamburger), or 56 hot dogs. The iron content of seal meat and caribou is superior to store bought hamburger and hotdogs.

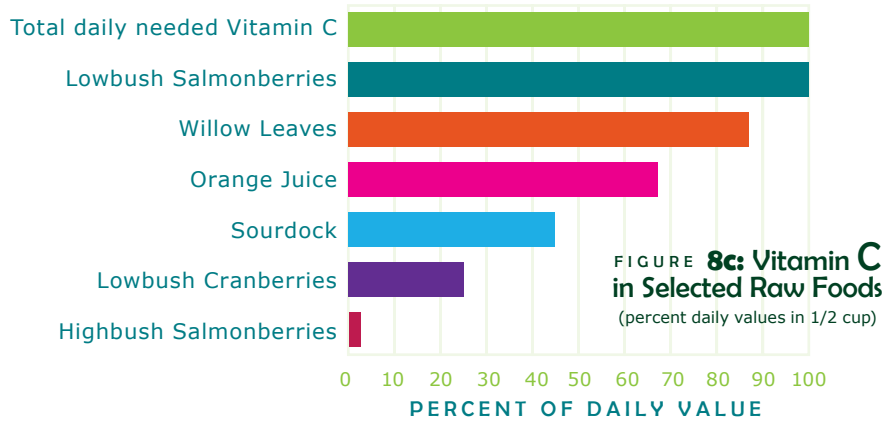


FIGURE **8c: Vitamin C in Selected Raw Foods**
(percent daily values in 1/2 cup)

OUR SOURCE FOR THIS CHART

Jensen PG, Nobmann ED. What's in Alaskan Foods, Chart Series, Alaska Area Native Health Service, Anchorage 1994.

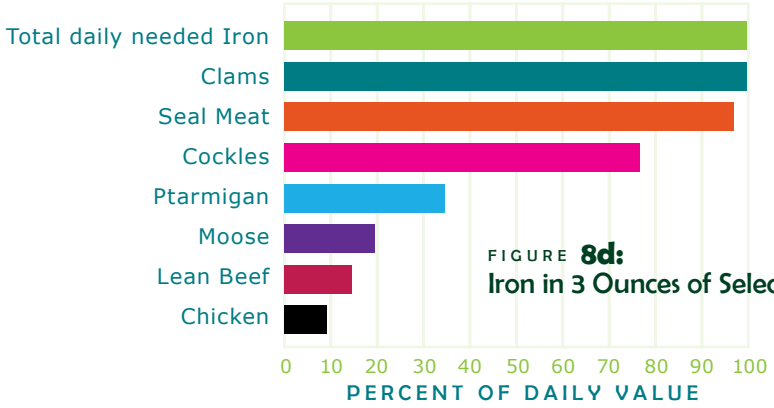


FIGURE **8d:**
Iron in 3 Ounces of Selected Meat

OUR SOURCE FOR THIS CHART

Jensen PG, Nobmann ED. What's in Alaskan Foods, Chart Series, Alaska Area Native Health Service, Anchorage 1994.

SLIDE 15 MODULE EIGHT

These are just a few of the nutritional benefits of traditional Alaska foods. Clearly, traditional Alaska foods are a rich source of nutrients and Head Start children would benefit nutritionally from eating more traditional foods.

Community Involvement

SLIDE 16 MODULE EIGHT

Head Starts wanting to incorporate more traditional foods in the daily menu will want to assess the capacity of their food service staff and kitchen. Head Starts can only serve donated traditional food if the kitchen is designed for cooking from scratch versus "heat and serve." The Head Start will want to determine if the food service staff have enough time allotted to cook from scratch. Cooking from scratch takes more time than serving prepared "heat and serve" foods.

Once the Head Start determines if the kitchen and food service staff are able to prepare donated traditional foods, the Head Start should enlist community support by holding a community meeting.

The community meeting should provide background information on the nutritional and cultural benefits of serving traditional foods and the Alaska Food Code regulations. Guidance should be clear about the harvest of the animal including sanitation and butchering. Expectations regarding the transportation, refrigeration, and sanitation of the donation need be addressed. The goal of this meeting would be to increase interest and knowledge about donating traditional foods to Head Start.

SLIDE 17 MODULE EIGHT

SLIDE 18 MODULE EIGHT

Providing parents, community members, hunters, fisherman, and gathers with information about the donation of traditional foods to the Head Start center will help donations become more regular and ensure products donated meet Alaska Food Code regulations.

The following information can be used for food service staff to become more familiar with the donation of traditional foods and can also be used during the community meeting to help explain the Alaska Food Code regulations.

SLIDE 19 MODULE EIGHT

Donation of Traditional Foods

The following information regarding Alaska DEC Alaska Food Code regulations is current as of December 2006. New regulations are periodically issued. Head Starts are responsible to know and follow the most current regulations.

The Alaska Food Code regulations must be followed before serving any donated food. Head Start staff, especially food service staff, need to know which foods can and cannot be served and ensure that donations are received, prepared and processed properly.

The following information, based on the Alaska Food Code regulations, will be presented: what can be donated; what cannot be donated and why; expectation for harvest, transportation, and dressing of animal; receipt and storage; preparation and processing. This information can be used by food service staff for accepting and preparing donations and to educate community donors.

SLIDE 20 MODULE EIGHT

MORE ON THE ALASKA DEC
www.dec.state.ak.us/regulations/pdfs/31mas.pdf

GUIDANCE ON ALASKA'S EDIBLE PLANTS
www.ankn.uaf.edu/NPE/CulturalAtlases/Yupiaq/Marshall/edibleplants/
loc.gov/rr/scitech/tracer-bullets/edibleplantstb.html

HOME COOKED MEALS

The Alaska Food Code regulations only apply to regulated food service establishments. Regulations do not apply to food prepared at home for individual consumption.

The edible nontoxic berries, roots, and leaves of plants that are harvested can be accepted as donations and served to Head Start children. It is critical to properly identify plants. If there is any doubt regarding the plant name do not serve. Examples of some plants are cranberries, blueberries, fireweed, rose hip, dandelions, wild currants and salmonberries.

Most traditional wild game meat, fish, and sea mammals can be accepted as donations. For example the meat from hare, duck, goose, moose, beaver, muskrat, reindeer, caribou, fish, seal, stellar sea lions, and whale are acceptable. The meat needs to be accepted in portions no smaller than quarters or roasts; no ground meat can be accepted. Head Start can grind the meat themselves or take it to a permitted facility for grinding. Food establishments, including Head Starts, are prohibited by the Alaska Food Code regulations from serving some seafood, game meats, fermented or smoked products because of the potential for human illness.

SLIDE 21 MODULE EIGHT

The following foods cannot be served at Head Start:

- Shellfish that is not from a permitted facility. Shellfish that is not monitored is at increased risk for Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP), Vibrio parahaemolyticus, and bacteria.
- Fox meat is prohibited because of rabies.

SLIDE 22 MODULE EIGHT

- Polar bear, bear, and walrus meat, which are prohibited because meat not cooked to a proper temperature may contain Trichinellosis.
- Seal or whale oil, with or without meat (such as oil with dried meat), fermented game meat (such as beaver tail, whale flipper, seal flipper and muktuk), and fermented seafood products (such as stink eggs or stink fish) are prohibited because they may harbor Botulism.
- Home canned products or canned products from an un-permitted processor are prohibited because of the risk of Botulism.
- Vacuumed sealed, reduced-oxygen packages are prohibited because of the risk of Botulism.
- Smoked or dried seafood products are prohibited due to the risk of Botulism and Listeria.

The Alaska Food Code regulations state that the food service staff must make a reasonable determination that the animal was not diseased; the food was butchered, dressed, transported, and stored to prevent contamination, undesirable microbial growth, or deterioration; and the food will not cause a significant health hazard or potential for human illness.

SLIDE 23 MODULE EIGHT

SLIDE 24 MODULE EIGHT

Food service staff will want to ask questions about the transportation and storage of the animal before accepting the donation. A healthy animal does not exhibit obvious signs of illness. The animal should have been eviscerated within an hour of harvest and chilled as quickly as possible to 41° F or below. For raw meat or seafood donations, food should have been covered to protect it from contamination such as insects, dust, or dripping water during transport. It should have been kept separate from non-food items, and kept cold (41° F or below) during transport and storage.

The food service staff will want to inspect the food when it is received to assure that it is whole, gutted, gilled, and in quarters or roasts that have not been further processed. Communicating this requirement with donors ahead of time will help streamline the donation process. Food service staff will want to check for general cleanliness and quality, for any signs that the game animal was diseased, and for any signs of contamination, bacterial growth and/or deterioration.

SLIDE 25 MODULE EIGHT

FIGURE **8e: Label for Donated Caribou**

Keep Frozen

Donated Caribou Roast

Hunter: Trent Carson

NOT AN INSPECTED PRODUCT

Cook all parts of game meat to an internal temp of 165°F for 15 seconds

MORE ON FOOD BORNE ILLNESS
www.cdc.gov/foodborneoutbreaks/foodborne_az.htm

It is important to maintain records of the donation date, person donating, and the type of food. Donations should then be packaged to prevent contamination and kept at the proper temperature. Packaged foods should be labeled and stacked in an area designated for donated foods and not packed beyond the capacity of the freezer. Make sure raw wild game is stored on the refrigerator shelves below the ready to eat foods and commercially processed raw meats.

SLIDE 26 MODULE EIGHT

Food service staff need to assure that donated food is packaged and labeled individually. The label should clearly state the information shown by Figure 8e.

Preparing Donated Traditional Foods

SLIDE 27 MODULE EIGHT

In the Head Start kitchen, the preparation of donated foods should be kept completely separate from other food preparation by space and time. Food service staff will need to clean and sanitize all equipment and food preparation surfaces prior to and following processing and packaging of donated seafood or game meat to avoid cross-contamination.

SLIDE 28 MODULE EIGHT

The procedure to thaw donated food is the same as other frozen foods. Thaw seafood or game meat in a refrigerated unit or as part of the cooking process. Cook all parts of traditional wild game meat to an internal temperature of 165° F. The cooking temperature for seafood is 145° F. Temperatures may vary for seafood; check with DEC for temperature regulations. Hold cooked portions of game meat at an internal temperature of 140° F prior to service. Avoid cooling and reheating meats. After the traditional food is prepared or processed, surfaces and utensils need to be cleaned and sanitized.

SLIDE 29 MODULE EIGHT

Meal preparation and recipe ideas for traditional foods can come from a variety of sources. Recipes can be provided by community members, found in published Alaska Native Foods cook books, and food service staff can substitute traditional foods for store bought foods in recipes. For example, one pound of cubed moose meat can be used instead of one pound cubed beef. Food production will need to follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) regulations regarding amounts and components of foods served.

Wrap up

SLIDE 30 MODULE EIGHT

To help encourage Head Starts to serve traditional foods more often, this module provided a brief overview of the nutritional benefits of Alaska traditional foods. However, Head Start centers need to determine if they have the capacity to prepare traditional foods before requesting donations. Head Starts were encouraged to hold a meeting to involve parents, community members, hunters, fishermen, and gatherers in the donation of Alaska traditional foods. Lastly, this module reviewed the Department of Conservation (DEC) Food Code regulations surrounding the use of traditional foods.

Head Start centers wishing to serve traditional Alaska Native foods on a regular basis can become successful by encouraging the parents and the community to participate. Donations will become more acceptable and regular if donors and food service staff understand the Alaska DEC Food Code regulations. Serving traditional Native foods in the Head Start classroom will provide good nutrition and address the cultural and ethnic preferences of many of the children.

MODULE EIGHT REFERENCES

1 Jensen PG, Nobmann ED. What's in Alaskan Foods, Chart Series, Alaska Area Native Health Service, Anchorage 1994.

2 Ruxton CHS, Reed SC, Simpson MJA, Millington KJ. The health benefits of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids: a review of the evidence. Journal of Human Nutrition & Dietetics. 2004; 17: 5 449 - 459

3 US Department of Health and Human Services and US Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005. healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines. Accessed October 2006.

4 American Heart Association Statement 11/18/2002. New guidelines focus on fish, fish oil, omega-3 fatty acids. americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3006624. Accessed October 2006.

Expert Tips


Photo credit: A Child's Place


Adelante Mujeres


Shelly's Kids Preschool and Childcare

Note: This document summarized information gleaned from mid-point check-ins with grantees and was shared with attendees from across the state at the Oregon Farm to School Summit.

Advice from the experts: What lessons learned or advice would you share with someone else doing a similar project?

- Start small and grow or change one or two aspects of your program at a time.
- Know that this work takes time and shared responsibility.
- Build off existing relationships to create a committed team of partners.
- If you're a nonprofit partnering with early care and education (ECE) sites, the primary contact person may vary from site to site; could be a teacher, kitchen staff, a parent, etc.
- When possible, make contact with multiple people at your ECE site and cultivate relationships with them directly.
- Find the right volunteer for the right task. People want to help but often have specific skill sets or limited hours to offer. Think about what will be the best fit for both the volunteer and your program.
- Lessons that balance active gardening, quiet listening, sensory experiences, fine motor art projects, and socialization help kids to stay engaged.
- Be ready to follow the kids' lead. Know when to flex and when to stick your ground. Be open to opportunities that pop up and adapt lessons accordingly.
- Break children into teams and make sure each has a job, such as washing produce, measuring or mixing ingredients.
- When doing cooking activities, use cafeteria trays with edges so that everyone has their own contained workspace.
- Serve fresh produce in a familiar way, such as tomatoes in a homemade salsa. Maintain some degree of "comfort food" while also working to shift children's expectations to fresh vegetables and fruits as the norm.
- Presentation of food matters. It's all how you sell it to the children. Have fun with it, mix things up, and lead by example. Try new things yourself.
- If you have trouble making connections with farmers or local businesses (nurseries, hardware stores with garden supplies, etc.), ask parents. Often they have relatives and friends that are happy help.