

Michigan's Farm to Early Care and Education

Increasing access to healthy and affordable local foods

The **Michigan Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE)** Network works to ensure children ages birth to 5 have access to nutritious local foods in early care settings through local food sourcing, nutrition education, and gardening. By connecting community partners, farmers, and ECE providers, the network aligns with state goals like *Michigan's Great Start to Quality* and the *Michigan Good Food Charter*.²

Collaborative Partners: National Kidney Foundation of Michigan, Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, Michigan Department of Education, and Michigan State University Extension.

Investing in Farm to ECE fosters long-term, sustainable changes in policies, systems, and environments. For more information, please contact bbianchini@kfm.org.



PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGE

According to the 2021 National Survey of Children's Health¹:



More than **2 in 5 children** in Michigan did not eat a daily vegetable



Almost **1 in 3 children** in Michigan did not eat a daily fruit

WHY FARM TO ECE?

Farm to ECE connects young children to fresh, locally sourced foods, promoting healthy eating habits and helping them understand where food comes from. By incorporating local food sourcing, gardens, and food, nutrition, and agriculture education, this approach enhances the quality of early childhood education while benefiting children, families and communities. It supports nutrition education, encourages hands-on learning, and strengthens connections to local farmers and sustainable food systems. Ultimately, Farm to ECE helps establish lifelong healthy eating behaviors, providing children with high-quality educational opportunities and improving health outcomes for communities.

APPROACH



MI Farm to ECE Network: State Agency Workgroup

State agencies and subject matter experts collaborate to expand Farm to ECE statewide, offering providers learning opportunities through MIRegistry webinars, site visits, and connections to local farmers.



Everything in Good Season

A resource guide for ECE providers with sourcing tips, seasonal CACFP recipes, and engaging activities.³



Garden Resources

Resources and materials to help ECE settings establish gardens, including garden beds, greenhouses, containers, tools, soil, and more.



CSA Boxes

Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, are promoted to support local farmers and ensure sites have access to the best seasonal produce.



MI Farm to ECE Network: ECE Provider Workgroup

Group of ECE providers will convene to promote ECE provider advocacy, collaboration, and sharing resource needs.



MI Growing Healthy Eaters Facebook Group

Statewide [Farm to ECE Facebook group](#) for childcare providers to connect with others in the Farm to ECE community, including local farmers, market managers, vendors, and other providers.



Technical Assistance

State agencies and subject matter experts provide ECE providers with technical assistance on Farm to ECE initiatives and activities, as well as programs like 10 Cents a Meal, CACFP, and Go NAPSACC.

References

1. Hamner, H. C., Dooyema, C. A., Blanck, H. M., Flores-Ayala, R., Jones, J. R., Ghannouchi, R. M., & Petersen, R. (2023). Fruit, Vegetable, and Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Intake Among Young Children, by State — United States, 2021. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 72(7), 165–170. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7207a1>

2. Michigan Farm to ECE Network. (n.d.). Michigan Farm to Early Care and Education Network. Michigan State University. Retrieved February 18, 2025, from <http://www.farmtoECEnetwork.org>

3. Shedd, M.K., Holowski, H., Distler, M., & Neumaier, M. (2023). Everything in good season: Growing farm to early care and education. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems. <http://foodsystems.msu.edu/everything-in-good-season>