



Farm to Preschool: Family Engagement

Insert Name of Presenters
Peer Leadership Network



National Farm to School Network - Nourishing Kids and Communities

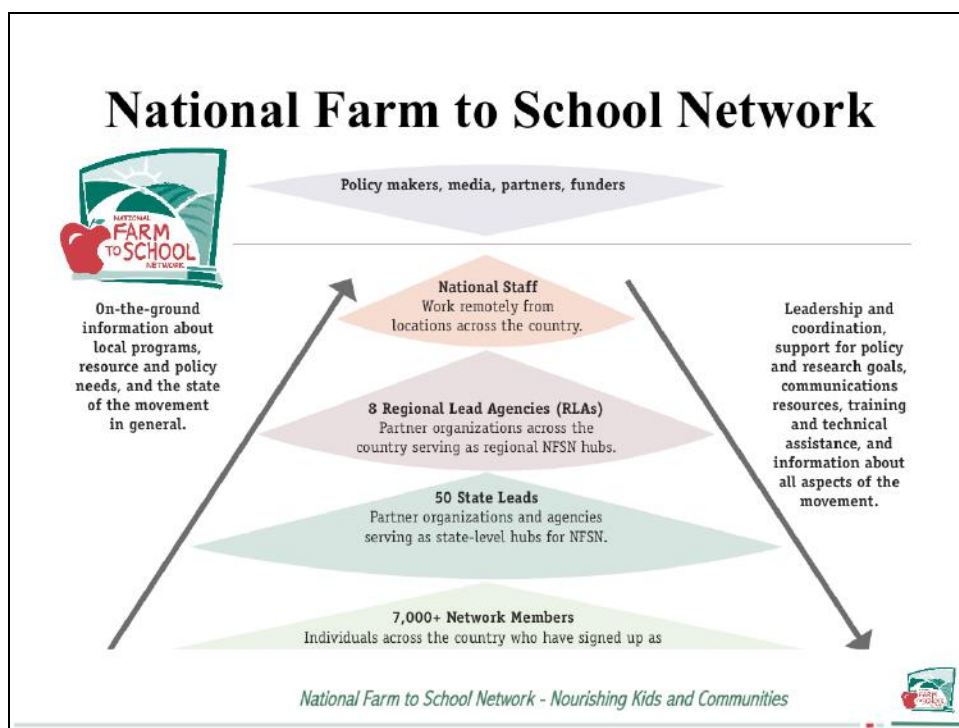


Notes to Presenter:

Introduce yourself

- Who are you?
- Where are you from?
- What is your background?

Who is the target audience of this training?- explain if the audience is not already aware



Note to Presenter: Please read the full description below while on this slide:

- This training is brought to you with support from the National Farm to School Network.
- Established in 2007, National Farm to School Network seeks to create strong and just local food systems that ensure the health of children, farms, the environment, the economy and communities. NFSN provides vision, leadership and support to connect and strengthen the Farm to School movement, which now includes more than 12,500 schools spanning all 50 states.
- National Farm to School Network (NFSN) provides vision, leadership and support to connect and strengthen the Farm to School movement across the country. NFSN sets national priorities and policy goals, generates a research agenda, creates and aggregates resources, provides technical assistance, convenes gatherings and promotes the movement. NFSN includes national staff, eight Regional Lead Agencies, 50 State Leads, a 16-member Advisory Board and thousands of on the ground Farm to School supporters.

Farm to School Peer Leadership Network

Goal: Strengthen farm to school training and technical assistance for stakeholders through peer learning.

- 20 Peer Leaders selected in 4 stakeholder groups:
 - Farmers
 - Child Nutrition Directors
 - Educators / Teachers
 - Early Child Education Providers
- 12 peer trainings developed and shared nationally
- Peer leaders available to provide one-on-one assistance
- The Peer Leadership Network is a project of the National Farm to School Network
- The project is supported by Newman's Own Foundation

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Note to Presenter: Please read the full description below while on this slide:

- This training is part of the Peer Leadership Network supported by the National Farm to School Network

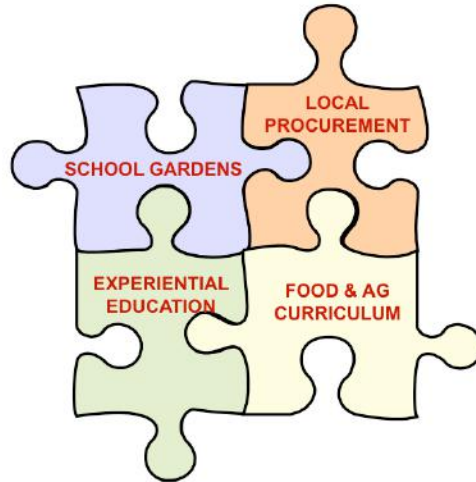
Presentation Overview

- Introduction to Farm to Preschool
- Benefits of Farm to Preschool
- Importance of Engaging Families
- Activities that Involve Families
- How to Get Started
- Resources
- National Farm to School Network and Farm to Preschool Subcommittee

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Farm to Preschool: A Holistic Approach



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Note to Presenter: Please read the full description below while on this slide:

Farm to Preschool is about connecting young children with local foods. It includes any type of childcare setting serving children ages 0-6 and connecting them with local foods through: meals and snacks, taste tests, lessons, farmer visits, cooking, field trips, growing food, or community and parent engagement.

Broadly, Farm to School initiatives connect schools, local farms, and communities as part of the movement to strengthen local food systems and reinvigorate local economies. A subset of initiatives called “farm to preschool” conduct similar activities in preschools, early care centers, head start programs.

F2S has 4 distinct components – Local or regional procurement (also known as the purchase of local foods), School gardens, food and ag curriculum, and experiential education such as farm tours, cooking demonstrations, taste tests.

The Farm to School approach – when taken in its entirety is the **HOLISTIC APPROACH WE NEEDED TO PROMOTE**. Not just one of these **STRATEGIES**, BUT **ALL OF THEM TOGETHER** to enable lasting change.

Farm to Preschool



- Farm to Preschool programs connect young children (0-6) with local foods through:
 - Local procurement
 - Nutrition / garden based education
 - School gardening
 - Student engagement activities such as field trips to farms, and taste-testing

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Note to Presenter: Read the definition of farm to preschool (below) as audience reads the slide.

Farm to Preschool Definition: *Insert Here*

From the National Farm to Preschool website: <http://www.farmtopreschool.org/whatisfarmtopreschool.html>

Farm to Preschool is a natural expansion of the national farm to school model and encompasses a wide range of programs and activities. Farm to Preschool serves the full spectrum of child care delivery: preschools, Head Start, center-based, programs in K-12 school districts, nurseries and family home care facilities. Its goals are multi-level and include: influencing the eating habits of young children while their preferences are forming; creating healthy lifestyles through good nutrition and experiential opportunities such as gardening; improving healthy food access at home and within the community; and ultimately influencing policies to address the childhood obesity epidemic through a local food lens. Program activities can take an environmental and systems change approach by serving preschoolers, teachers and child care providers, parents and family members, as well as communities.

Program components can include the following: sourcing local foods in school snacks and meals; promoting and increasing access to local foods for providers and families; offering nutrition and/or garden-based curricula; school gardening; in-class food preparation and taste testing; field trips to farms, farmers' markets and community gardens; parent workshops; implementing preschool wellness policies which address Farm to Preschool principles; and influencing policies at the local, state or national level.

Farm to Preschool Continued...



Farm to Preschool Goals

- Positively influence eating habits of young children
- Create healthy lifestyles through good nutrition and experiential learning
- Improve healthy food access at home
- Influence policy to address childhood obesity

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From <http://www.farmtopreschool.org/whatisfarmtopreschool.html>

Why Farm to Preschool?

- Address dramatic increase in obesity among preschool-age children
- Children consume the majority of their daily nutrients in childcare
- Early patterns are a determinant of later eating habits
- Children can be agents of change for family behavior



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Influence of Farm to Preschool



After helping plant a garden and learning where her food came from, Bella decided she liked vegetables after all!

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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide is dedicated for a concrete example of how farm to preschool initiatives have changed the behavior of a child. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the information and photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

Farm to Preschool activities have a profound impact on children and help establish healthy, life-long habits.

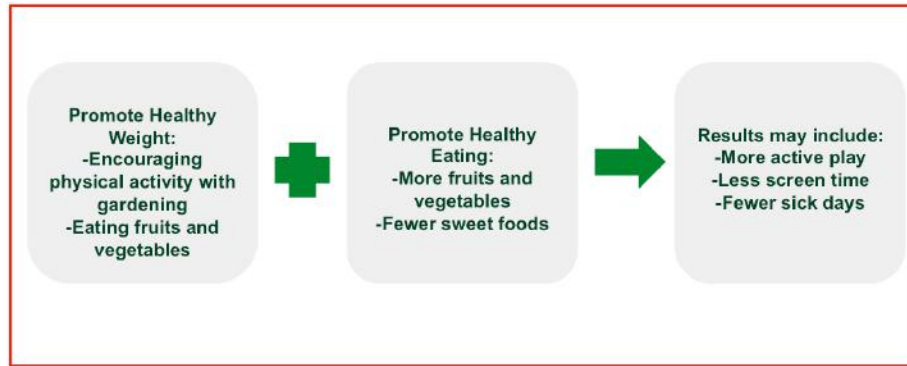
Discuss example included on slide.

For a long time, Katie's daughter Bella refused to try vegetables

After Bella helped plant a container garden in her child care home, Katie noticed that Bella started to eat all of her spinach off her sandwich first!

Facilitator can add own slides if there are other personal or local examples of farm to preschool success

Farm to Preschool Helps Establish Healthy Habits in Children



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Notes to Training Facilitator: If you have a longer presentation time, feel free to include this slide. If you have a shorter presentation time, you may skip this slide as it covers similar materials to the slide before and after.

Message to Training Participants

Farm to Preschool activities help establish healthy habits that can help prevent childhood obesity. As you can see, collectively farm to preschool promotes healthy eating habits and healthy weight through several different activities. These activities result in more active play, less screen time and fewer sick days for children.

Promoting Healthy Weight

- Encouraging physical activity with gardening
- Eating fruits and vegetables

Promoting Healthy Eating

- More fruits and vegetables
- Fewer sweet foods

The activities result in:

- More active play
- Less screen time
- Fewer sick days

Benefits of Farm to Preschool



- Increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables
- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Boost physical activity
- Provide local and seasonal food products
- Teach food and environmental literacy
- Build additional skills for staff
- Support viability of local agriculture
- Decrease screen time
- Reduces consumption of high-energy dense foods

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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide pertains to the importance of farm to preschool efforts, as it relates to preventing childhood obesity. Although statistics are not presented during the training, if you are able to access national or regional obesity statistics and feel comfortable discussing the information, you may want to have the data handy in case someone asks you about current statistics.

Message to training participants:

Research shows that parents and families are much more responsive to words such as healthy weight, active play (gardening), eating fruits and vegetables and less sick days. Parents cannot relate diseases such as diabetes, cancer and hypertension to their preschool child. When talking to parents about the importance of farm to preschool efforts and their involvement in activities, focus on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s measures for reducing childhood obesity without actually using the term obesity. These measures are evidence-based, used nationally in health prevention programs and mirror messaging included in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate.

Strategies for preventing childhood obesity include:

- increasing physical activity
- reducing screen time
- increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables
- reducing consumption of high-energy-dense foods

Child Care Setting: A Crucial Link

- Families are actively engaged with their young children
- Healthy food habits are formed by age 5
- Families rely on child care providers for guidance
- Child care providers and families are role models



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Message to training participants:

Child care settings are crucial environments for connecting with families because they are more likely to be engaged with their children. You are connected with families at least twice each day and this provides the perfect opportunity to talk to family members about the learning opportunities you are providing.

Introducing healthy habits to young children is important because studies show that most children develop food habits by age 5. Families depend on child care centers to help introduce new foods to their children and to act as role models.

Importance of Engaging Families

- Connection and consistency
 - Connect families with activities and local foods children are experiencing at the child care center
 - Health intervention at preschool and home are most effective



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Message to training participants:

Studies show that the most effective health intervention connects preschool and home activities. Connect families with their child's activities by inviting them to participate in farm to preschool projects. Help parents connect to local foods in the community by providing copies of preschool menus or recipes featuring local products. Young children respond when a consistent message is shared at preschool and home.

This training will focus on the importance of parent engagement in farm to preschool, along with opportunities for engaging families

Next we will share a variety of ways to engage children and families in farm to school activities

Family Dinners

- Connect with parents in a relaxed environment
- Showcase locally-sourced menu items
- Perfect activity for any time of year

"We are lucky to partner with our local food co-op, City Market, who agreed to fund 6 dinners during the year. We have been able to schedule one every other month"

-Burlington Children's Space, Vermont



BURLINGTON
CHILDREN'S SPACE



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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide provides a quote from a center that regularly hosts family dinners. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the information and photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

Family dinners offer parents the opportunity to spend time with their children in a comfortable atmosphere. They also give you an opportunity to interact with parents and showcase the food options you make available to children. Family dinners can be seasonally themed or focus on a specific food that children have learned about during classroom lessons.

The keys to the success of family dinners are simple:

- schedule them at a time when parents are picking kids up and everyone's hungry
- if possible, make the dinner free for everyone
- let parents know they don't need to bring anything
- keep the atmosphere informal and relaxed
- serve one or two seasonal dishes straight from your lunch menu
- use as many local ingredients as we can and point out the local ingredients to parents
- hand out recipes
- have containers on hand to send leftovers home

Family Taste Tests

- Provide seasonal fruits and vegetables
- Make sure samples are child size!
- Be a role model
- Provide info to parents
- Children vote on the food



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Notes to training facilitator: This slide provides an example of a family taste testing event. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the information and photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

Taste tests offer a great opportunity to engage parents in the process of introducing children to new food items. Taste tests can be scheduled as often as you would like and provides an opportunity for a parent to try something new, alongside their child. The key to a successful taste test is making sure samples are kid friendly and that you are acting as a role model. Giving the families and children the option to vote is **a fun activity and may provide insight on new menu items**

You can invite participants to vote on each item you sample. Results will help you see how popular the event is with parents and children and provide insight for potential new menu items.

Cooking Classes

- Cooking classes can involve parents and children
- Classes show families how to use local foods
 - Create simple, delicious, and healthy meals!
- Utilize community resources when possible



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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide provides an example of a cooking class. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the information and photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

You may choose to offer a cooking class for parents, children or entire families. This environment offers a great opportunity to family members to learn about purchasing and preparing meals with local ingredients. An important thing to remember — children are MUCH more likely to taste a food they helped prepare.

Story Time

- Introduce new books about food or gardens to children
- Invite parents to participate in story time
- Include show and tell time

A child care center in Texas asked parents to serve at least one fruit or vegetable at dinner and talk to their child about the item. The children were then asked to bring a sample of their fruit or vegetable for show-and-tell.



Photo courtesy Sustainable Food Center

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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide provides an example of a story time. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the information and photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

We all know that children love story time. And it offers a great chance to teach children about staying active through gardening and eating healthy fruits and vegetables. Story times also provide an opportunity for parents to get involved and attend or lead story time.

You may also choose to incorporate show-and-tell time, in conjunction with story time. A child care center in Texas sent home a note with families, asking them to serve their child a fruit or vegetable at dinner that evening and send some of the fruit or vegetable with their child the next day. Then, all of the children had a show-and-tell about the fruit or vegetable they ate at dinner with their family.

Garden Work Days

- Involve families at every step

- Planning
- Tilling
- Planting
- Watering
- Harvesting

- Provide refreshments
- Make the environment fun

Ask families to commit to helping water the garden once each weekend. Invite them to include their children in the experience. This offers parents an opportunity to be involved, no matter how busy their schedule.



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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide provides an example of a garden work day. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the information and photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

Garden work days are a great opportunity to get families physically active and engaged in their child's projects. They also offer you the perfect chance to get help tending your center's garden.

Families can be involved in every aspect of tending the garden. It is important to remember to provide refreshments, especially on a warm or muggy day, and keep the environment fun. Families and children will stay engaged in fun activities.

Field Trips

- Trips to local farms, farmers markets, grocers or restaurants



- Engage children, showing them first hand where their food comes from



"During a farm tour, children visit our flock hens, honey bee hives, orchard, compost bins, and 10-acre wetland. We also have a special children's learning garden."

-Zenger Farm, Oregon

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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide provides a quote from a farm that regularly hosts field trips. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the quote and photos with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

Learning experiences don't have to be limited to in the classroom and in the garden. A field trip to a local farm or farmers market provides children the opportunity to interact with farmers and an experiential learning opportunity to find out first-hand about where their food comes from.

Communicating With Parents

- Consistent communication is key
- Meet your parents where they are
- Communicate through many channels



Engaging and visually appealing newsletters keep parents informed and inspired. Remember to offer information in a variety of ways to make sure that all of your parents stay connected to your center's activities.

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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide features an example of a parent newsletter. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

Consistent communication to parents is important. — opening a conversation to ask questions, gather feedback and share ideas. When talking to your parents, you have to meet them where they are. In some communities that might be in person conversations and a take-home newsletter, while in others it might mean regular email newsletters and Facebook posts.

Social media offers an opportunity to have an ongoing conversation with groups of parents (and community members). Social media outlets include Facebook and Twitter. Although social media may never reach everyone, it is becoming more popular and offers a unique way to connect with your parents. If you and your staff feel comfortable, this is a great communication outlet to explore and take advantage of.

Take-Home Activities

- Can be incorporated into newsletters or stand alone piece
- Feature a farm to preschool activity
 - Scavenger hunt at a farmers market
 - Fruit and vegetable word search
- Take-home activities encourage parents to engage in their child's learning experience. They also offer an additional avenue to communicate what farm to preschool activities you have underway



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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide provides an example of a take-home activity. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

Take-home activities invite families to participate in a child's learning experiences and offers the opportunity to share information about your Farm to Preschool projects. Activities can be included in your regular newsletter or be a stand alone piece. Examples of take-home activities include a local foods scavenger hunt at a farmers market or the supermarket or a fruit and vegetable word search.

Community Supported Agriculture

- CSAs provide opportunities for families to purchase from local producers
 - Families are connected to the local food system
 - Families build relationships with local farmers



CSAs at child care centers give families convenient access to local food. Farmers can also consider becoming SNAP recipients so families can use their benefit cards to purchase their CSA share

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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide provides an example of a family dinner. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the information and photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

Community Supported Agriculture baskets are also known as CSA shares. A farmer or group of farmers offers a certain number of "shares" to the public. Typically the share consists of a box of vegetables. Interested consumers purchase a share and in return receive a box, bag or basket of seasonal produce each week throughout the farming season. Your strong connections with community members make your child care center the perfect location to offer a CSA pick up. If you feel ready to take on a project that can connect families directly with local producers, with a convenient way to purchase fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables, this might be a project you would be interested in starting.

Community Gardens

- Look at what community gardens are in your area, and how you can be involved



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Notes to training facilitator:

This slide provides an example of a community garden. You are welcome to use the example provided or replace the information and photo with a local or regional example.

Message to training participants:

Your Example Here

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Notes to training facilitator:

If you have another local or regional example, please use it here!

Message to training participants:

Engaging Families: Share Your Examples

- How have you engaged families?
- What worked and what didn't?
- What can you learn from this?
- Build on what you already do



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Message to training participants:

Ask participants to share examples of how they currently engage with families.

Examples do not have to be related to farm to preschool efforts.

Ask participants to share lessons learned from current outreach efforts.

Facilitate a group discussion on applying lessons learned and ways to piggyback on current activities to introduce Farm to Preschool.

Steps to Get Started

- Distribute a colorful flier introducing farm to preschool ideas
- Prepare a short survey of no more than 5 questions
- Tally surveys and start with the activity receiving the highest rating



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Message to training participants:

Through out this training, we've discussed the reasons it is important to connect with parents and engage families in Farm to Preschool activities. We've also discussed a few ways to engage families and you've shared great examples of your own. At this point, you may be thinking "Okay, this is great, but how do I get started?"

It is important to first introduce your families to Farm to Preschool. There is a good chance that families in your community have not heard the phrase Farm to Preschool. But once you provide activity examples and explain the importance of teaching children, many families will connect quickly.

Once you've chosen the project you want to start, plan the activity and remember to consistently communicate with parents. This will help them become and stay engaged throughout the project. You may find that you need to offer an incentive for families to participate. This could be a basket of local fruits and vegetables, garden seeds or a cookbook.

You many want to consider introducing one activity at a time. This will allow you to start slowly and evaluate how each project works for your community. Then, slowly add additional activities; remembering to evaluate each one so you know what works best.

If you haven't already picked out an activity that you want to start, consider surveying families to see gauge their interest. This feedback, early on in the process, will increase the chances that families will become engaged in projects.

More Steps for Getting Started



- Plan an activity and invite families
- Offer incentives to help families engage
- Evaluate activity from your perspective
- Offer families opportunity to give feedback

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Needs presenter notes.

Resources

Resources

- Farm to Preschool Website
 - www.farmtopreschool.org
- National Farm to School Network
 - www.farmtoschool.org
- Growing Minds
 - www.growing-minds.org
- Handout includes resources for:
 - Parent surveys
 - Parent education
 - Parent engagement toolkits
 - Gardening

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Message to training participants:

We have compiled a list of online resources that can provide additional information and implementation tips for the parent engagement tactics we've discussed today. Please pick up a handout.



Note to Presenter: Please read the full description below while on this slide:

Did you know there is a website dedicated to farm to preschool information? Visit www.farmtopreschool.org for the latest information and resources about farm to preschool. And if you are looking for farm to school resources, don't forget to visit www.farmtoschool.org too.

National Farm to School Network's website is www.farmtoschool.org
 Join the network to receive regular news and updates on farm to school
 Search the website for informational resources, webinars, events, and conferences
 Click on the map and connect with your state leads and regional lead agencies who can assist you.

National Farm to Cafeteria Conference



April 15-18, 2014 in Austin, Texas
www.farmtocafeteriaconference.org

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Note to Presenter: Please read the full description below while on this slide:

Premier conference for all things farm to school/ farm to preschool and beyond. Great opportunity to connect and network with the movers and shakers, and to learn about best practices, tools, and resources.

October is National Farm to School Month

NATIONAL
FARM to
SCHOOL
MONTH



More information at www.farmtoschoolmonth.org

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"Note to presenter: National Farm to School month occurs each October. If you are hosting a training in August, September or October (or if Farm to School Month is relevant to your audience) please include this slide. Otherwise, please delete this slide if it is untimely."

Note to Presenter: Please read the full description below while on this slide:

And we are celebrating farm to school month in October. This is a great opportunity to start your farm to school activity or highlight an existing one!

Evaluation and Future Assistance

- Complete the training evaluation form
- Future one-on-one training

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Notes to Presenter: Read below text to audience

“This training is part of the Farm to School Peer Leadership Network”

Please complete this evaluation form so we can improve the quality and effectiveness of these trainings in the future. Also, by completing the evaluation form and including your contact information, future farm to school support may be available to you.

Thank You!



Name
Title
Organization
Phone
E-mail
Website

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Note to Presenter(s):

Please customize this slide with your contact information and the logo of your organization (if applicable)