

FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Georgia's Early Care and Education (ECE) programs serve more than 330,000 children, many of whom consume 1-3 meals and 2 snacks a day onsite. ^{1, 2}

WHY FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION?



Research shows Farm to School initiatives improve children's health and nutrition. Most of these programs start in K-12 schools, but children can be reached earlier with Farm to Early Care and Education (FTECE). ³

TOP REASONS PROVIDERS CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN FTECE



- Teach children where food comes from and how it is grown
- Improve child health
- Provide children with experiential learning

STRATEGIES THAT WORK



Parent education and engagement ^{4, 5}



Meal planning and preparation ^{6, 7}



Curriculum where kids touch and taste food ^{8, 9}



Gardening with kids ^{10, 11}



Fruit and vegetable boxes for home consumption ¹²

HOW FTECE SUPPORTS HEALTHY HABITS AND LIFELONG SKILLS

- Increased fruit and vegetable consumption, some of which may increase vitamins A, C, and E intake ¹³
- Improved healthy food consumption at home ¹⁴
- Encouraged willingness to try new foods ¹⁵
- Improved development of motor skills ¹⁶
- Improved life skills, social skills, and self-esteem ¹⁷
- Increased physical activity ¹⁸
- Reduced diet-related diseases among children ¹⁹
- Reduced food waste



FTECE AND AGRICULTURE

FTECE benefits children, as well as supports Georgia farmers. FTECE encourages childcare providers to:

- Purchase and serve fresh, nutritious, local foods for their children
- Host on-site farmers markets for parents and staff
- Partner with local farmers and impact Georgia's multi-billion dollar agriculture economy ²⁰

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GEORGIA SUPPORTS FARM-TO-ACADEMIA



Georgia's Farm-to-Early Care and Education (FTECE) Coalition²¹

- Supports children **ages 0 to 5**
- During the 2022-2023 school year:
 - **55+** FTECE Coalition members
 - **83** farm-to-academia professional development or activities (e.g., presentations, trainings, technical assistance, etc.)
- Members funded **53+** positions and contributed **29,000** hours of work supporting FTS and FTECE programs.



Farm-to-School (FTS) Alliance²²

- Serves **K-12 students** in increasing knowledge, experiences, and exposures with local foods
- During the 2021-2022 school year:
 - **30+** FTS Alliance members
- FTS Alliance provided approximately **35** grants, trained **1,200** practitioners, and purchased more than **\$11 million** from local farmers.



Eat, Learn, Grow Georgia, powered by [Quality Care for Children](#), is a comprehensive hub for FTECE resources. It features a Farm to ECE map connecting providers with local food sources, Georgia's Harvest of the Month curriculum and materials, and a [searchable library](#) with menus, gardening tips, and more.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Explore models which allocate funding to support local food purchasing in ECE and K-12 settings.
- ✓ Develop and fund a pilot for ECE providers to purchase larger quantities of food from local farmers.

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FACTSHEET CITATIONS



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- 4 Ibid.
- 5 National Farm to School Network, Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems. 2021 National Farm to Early Care and Education Survey: Farm to Early Care and Education Continues to Foster Bright Futures for Children and Communities. Retrieved June 27, 2025 from https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/5b88339c86d6045260c7ad87/631026ffd3b76b3e0bde026b_ECE_Survey_Brief_ParticipationandPractices.pdf.
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