



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



**May 2021**

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program is committed to providing equitable and just programming, resources, funding, and technical assistance to schools, farmers, and partners in the local food system.

## Webinars and Trainings

### The Basics of Farm to School and Farm to Early Childhood Education

*June 10, 2021, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.*

Are you someone who likes to provide hands-on innovative learning opportunities for your students? Join the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Farm to School Team to learn about farm to school and farm to early childhood education opportunities related to school gardens, education, and local procurement.

The webinar will dig into the history of Arkansas Farm to School and will teach participants how to set farm to school goals. This is the foundational course for farm to school, and is recommended to those who are new to the concept or looking for a refresher.



THE BASICS OF FARM TO SCHOOL AND FARM TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

JUNE 10, 2021, ZOOM, 12:00 - 1:00 P.M.



[Register Here](#)

### Summer Professional Development Opportunities

The Farm to School Team is offering eight farm to school professional development opportunities this summer to public school teachers.

Sessions are offered through the South Central Service Cooperative and the Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative.



Educators will receive professional development credit for attending. Multiple dates and times will be offered for each session.

The sessions offered include:

- The Basics of Farm to School;
- Digging Deeper - Starting a School Garden Program;
- Planting the Seeds of Success - Integrating Farm to School Into Your Classroom (PK-5); and
- Sowing the Seeds of Success - Integrating Farm to School Into Your Classroom (6-12).

[View Schedule and Register Here](#)

## Contest Open, Apply Now!

### Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest

*Opens: April 19, 2021*

*Deadline: June 6, 2021*

*Funding: \$500 - \$1,000*

The Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest is sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture with funding provided by Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. Applicants may be public or private K-12 schools, early childhood education facilities, or alternative learning environments that had a school garden during the 2020 - 2021 school year, or any schools planning to start a garden in the 2021 - 2022 school year.



[Apply Here](#)

## Resources

The Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture are pleased to share three new resources available to schools seeking to grow their farm to school program. The Getting Started and Action Planning handout explains foundational steps for success, such as creating a team and setting goals. Then, the school garden handouts detail how to design and equip school gardens for optimal use.

## Getting Started and Action Planning

**Getting Started & Action Planning**

Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food, as well as local food producers, by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early childhood education sites. Students gain access to healthy local foods and educational opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons, and farm field trips.

Farm to school empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy, and contributing to vibrant communities.

Farm to school implementation differs by location, but always includes one or more of the following:

- School Gardens:** students engage in hands-on learning through gardening and farming.
- Education:** students participate in educational activities related to agriculture, food, health, or nutrition, and
- Procurement:** local foods are purchased, promoted, and served in the cafeteria, as a snack, or taste test.

**Types of Schools**

Farm to school activities are categorized by student type and school type.

Early Childhood Education Students aged 0-5	K-12 School Students aged 6-18	Alternative Learning Environment Students aged 6-18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Care Center</li> <li>Child Care Learning Center</li> <li>Head Start</li> <li>Head Start Program</li> <li>Head Start Pre-K Program</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary School</li> <li>Middle School</li> <li>Junior High School</li> <li>High School</li> <li>Charter School</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Education Center</li> <li>Health Center</li> <li>Health Facility</li> <li>Rehabilitation Center</li> <li>Homebased</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>

[View Resource](#)

## School Garden Layout and Structure

**School Garden Layout and Structure**

School gardens are a fantastic, educational tool and provide students with the opportunity to eat healthy foods, connect to nature, and learn about nutrition. School gardens also provide an avenue for students to engage in hands-on learning through gardening and farming. Aside from gathering your **desired vegetables and acquiring building**, learning the layout and structure of the garden is an essential step in starting a garden program at your school.

For additional help and support in school garden development, contact Hanna Davis, State School Garden Manager at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, [hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov), (501) 255-8856.

**Determining the Location of your Garden**

When choosing the location of your garden, the first decision is whether you want to plant an indoor or outdoor garden. You should consider available space and resources for your project, as well as the amount of time your team is willing to devote to the garden.

**Indoor**

If you want to start small, or do not have access to an outdoor growing space, an indoor garden is a great option. A simple way to grow indoors is windowsill gardening.

Windowsill gardens are easy to manage, take up relatively little space, and are a fantastic way to integrate convenient hands-on learning in your classroom. You may be keen to grow your plants in front of windows that receive good amounts of sunlight. Indoor gardens can also supplement natural sunlight with **grow lights**. You can learn more about [windowsill gardens here](#).

[View Resource](#)

## School Garden Tools and Materials

**School Garden Tools and Materials**

School gardens are a fantastic, educational tool and provide students with the opportunity to eat healthy foods, connect to nature, and learn about nutrition. School gardens also provide an avenue for students to engage in hands-on learning through gardening and farming.

After completing the initial steps of gathering your **garden vegetables, acquiring building, and planning the layout and structure of the garden**, it's time to start stocking your garden with tools and materials for the program to grow!

For additional help and support in school garden development, contact Hanna Davis, State School Garden Manager at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, [hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov), (501) 255-8856.

**Suggested Tools and Materials**

When shopping for your school garden be sure to choose quality, durable products. In addition, purchase a variety of child-sized tools to ensure students have suitable materials when participating in garden tasks. If you aren't sure what tools to purchase, the following will get you started:

- Hand trowels** for weeding and digging small holes to transplant seedlings.
- Hand cultivators** for weeding and loosening soil.
- Hand pruners** for cutting back plants and harvesting crops.
- Hoses, sprinklers, and watering cans** for watering your plants. Other types of irrigation, such as a drip-irrigation system, could be worth investigating, depending on the scale of your garden.

[View Resource](#)

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

### Action for Healthy Kids

*Deadline: June 4, 2021*

*Funding: \$1,000+*

Action for Healthy Kids provides schools the resources for students to eat better, stay physically active, and be better prepared to learn. Their District Partnership Grants and School Grants support physical activity and/or nutrition initiatives at schools. [Apply here.](#)



### Blue & You Foundation Grant

*Deadline: July 15, 2021*

*Funding: \$5,000+*

Blue & You Foundation's mission is to work together with others to create a state of better health for all Arkansans. They strategically focus grant funding on community-based solutions in the hopes it will nurture community health leadership, foster collaboration and innovation, and leverage financial, human, and community resources to produce measurable, positive impacts. Any program or project that positively affects the health of Arkansans can apply to receive funding. [Apply here.](#)

[Visit Our Website](#)





**ARKANSAS** FarmtoSchool