

Farm to Early Childcare Assessment

Assessment criteria / menu of tactics for:

Instructions

1. Review the assessment before beginning.
2. Check off statements that reflect your early learning site's experience at least 50% / the majority of the time.
3. Tally the score.
4. Discuss the results with your coalition / team / stakeholders.
5. Work with the Montana Food Economy Initiative mentor and your team to choose unchecked strategies to implement in your farm to ECE program.

Education and Gardening

1. In-Classroom Activities

- Children are educated about locally grown food, how food grows and/or where it comes from.
 - Children are continuously exposed to new farm to early care activities and resources that engage them in a variety of Montana's Early Learning Standards.
 - Students engage in cooking lessons with local or garden-harvested ingredients that meet Montana's Early Learning Standards.
 - Taste tests are conducted with the children using the Tried it, Liked it, or Loved it system.

2. Gardening Activities

- Our program manages an edible garden site.
- Children are provided with hands-on experiential learning in an edible garden.
- Garden harvests are used to supplement program meals.

3. Experiences (field trips, classroom visits, virtual tours)

- Children have the opportunity to connect with food system players (i.e. farmers, chefs, processors, etc.) through field trips.
- Children have the opportunity to connect with food system players through classroom visits.
- Children have the opportunity to connect with food system players through field videos and virtual tours.

Food Procurement and Preparation

4. Variety and Frequency of Local Food

- Our program purchases locally grown foods once a month.
- Our program purchases locally grown foods more than once a month.
- Children are served a wide variety of locally grown foods.

Our program participates in the HOM program by:

- Teaching one HOM lesson monthly

- Preparing one meal with HOM items
- Preparing one HOM Taste Test for students

5. Sources of Local Food

- Our program purchases local food items directly from a farmer, farmers market, or CSA share.
- Our program purchases local food items from a grocery store or broadline distributor (ex. Sysco)
- Our program collaborates with community partners to purchase local food items.

Our program is able to find local sources of HOM items:
 If not, which items are hard to source?

HOM Items:

Kale, summer squash, beets, carrots, beef, lentils, winter squash, chickpeas, dairy, cherries, leafy greens, apples, grains

- Scratch cooking, preservation, and storage capacity**
 - Our program is well equipped and knowledgeable to scratch cook with local food items or garden produce.
 - Our program is well equipped and knowledgeable to preserve and store local food items or garden produce.
 - Our program is well equipped and knowledgeable to involve children in the preparation and cooking of local food items or garden produce.

Outreach and Promotion

6. Parent/Family engagement

- Family and community members are engaged in our farm to early care efforts through posters, educational materials, and newsletter updates.
- Our program holds family and community engagement events involving farm to early care such as garden days or cooking nights.
- Our program is engaged in community partnerships, enabling us to obtain benefits such as additional funds, volunteer work, mutual aid, etc.

Tally the scores

Education & Gardening _____ of 12

Local Food Procurement and Preparation _____ of

Outreach & Promotion _____ of

What are the top 3 areas where your team would like support from the MFEI mentors?

Tell us about the resources you need: equipment, supplies, training, new systems, funds