

Field to table – Living our values and expanding children’s food horizons through practical experience

Where did we start?

We started with three values that are important to us:

- our love of the natural world and our efforts to reflect it in all aspects of our program,
- our belief that a strong connection to nature is necessary for a healthful life,
- and our desire to build community through efforts that nurture physical, social, and emotional growth

What did we ask ourselves?

We started with these questions:

1. How could we improve the quality of the meals we serve?
2. Who needs to be involved?
3. How could we add nutritious foods and get the children to eat them?
4. How could we positively influence children’s attitudes toward food?
5. How could we participate in supplying foods to our program?
6. How could we build a stronger connection to our community?

Follow our story... <http://youtu.be/rRF7MHJdXH4>

What did we do?

⌘ We involved everybody in the conversation:

- All of the staff
- Tribal elders
- Community members
- Local growers
- Local state university nutrition students
- Families
- Maintenance department

⌘ We sought out resources that helped us with ideas. Here are a few. Check them out.

<http://www.farmpreschool.org/>

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.

<http://www.iatp.org/blog/201206/the-freshest-for-the-youngest>

Take a look at IATP's new research report, *Farm to Child Care: Opportunities and Challenges for Connecting Young Children with Local Foods and Farmers*

<http://www.eatright.org/kids/>

Kids Eat Right is the first joint initiative from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation, that supports the efforts of the White House to end the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation.

Kids Eat Right is a two-tiered campaign — with components for the general public and for Academy member registered dietitians — with the goal of educating families, communities, and policy makers about the importance of quality nutrition. The Kids Eat Right campaign will also provide with resources to help Academy members become recognized leaders in childhood obesity prevention.

Kids Eat Right focuses on three main objectives:

- EDUCATE children, families, communities and policy makers on the importance of high-quality, nutritional foods in childhood obesity prevention efforts.
- ADVOCATE on behalf of a quality nutrition approach to promote growth and development.
- DEMONSTRATE the food and nutrition expertise of registered dietitians through educational programming and advocacy.

⌘ We started a kitchen garden



⌘ We made spring garden planting an all-community event



⌘ We met with local growers and suppliers to discuss our needs and wants



⌘ We involved nutrition interns from the local university

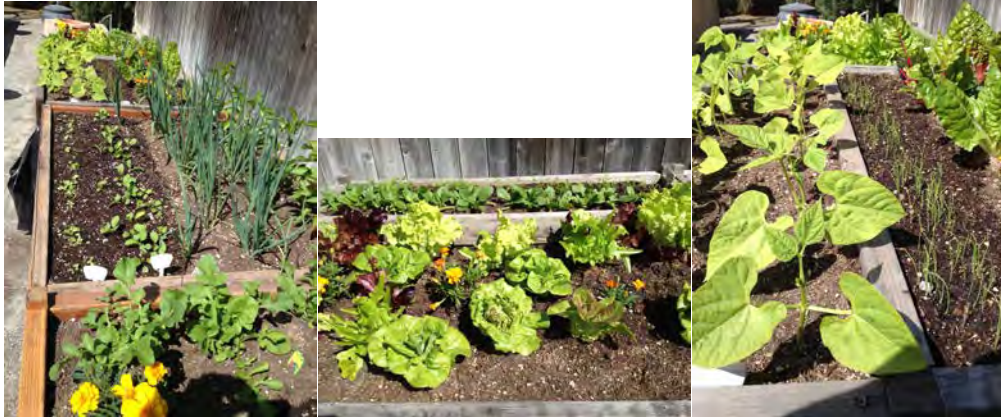


⌘ We talked to parents



Here's what happened...

We transformed our nutrition program! The children, families, and staff became more aware of food as nutrition. We started experimenting with new ingredients and flavors. We started growing our own food! Now we cook what's fresh and in season – and the children's food horizons – and ours – have really grown.



Vegetables growing in raised beds.