

# *OSPI CNS Farm to CACFP Guide*

## **Washington Farm to CACFP: What is it?**

Farm to CACFP means the inclusion of locally produced food and food-related education in CACFP. It's an optional best practice that can have a big impact on kids' and adult health, provide experiential learning opportunities, increase the quality of CACFP meals, and support local economies!

## **How do I participate in Farm to CACFP?**

CACFP provides a daily opportunity to serve local foods and engage participants in highly impactful educational activities. Any of the following "counts" as a Farm to CACFP activity:

- ✓ Serve local foods as part of your CACFP meal service
- ✓ Include food, nutrition, or agriculture enrichment activities as part of your programming
- ✓ Incorporate garden-based learning and activities, where possible

Starting Farm to CACFP can be done at no or very low cost with simple activities such as reading a food-related book, doing a taste test with garden-harvested or locally purchased food item, going on a field trip to a farm (or watching a video of a farmer!), and sprouting seeds in the classroom.

## **What are the advantages of Farm to CACFP?**

Lots! Doing so has been shown to have the following benefits:

- ✓ Increases meal quality
- ✓ Increases willingness to try new foods
- ✓ Increased preference for fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Long-term impact on health behaviors
- ✓ Improves academic achievement (grades and test scores)
- ✓ Increases parent engagement
- ✓ Builds community, supports local economy
- ✓ Opportunity to incorporate culturally relevant foods

Check out ["The Benefits of Farm to School"](#) at the bottom of this guide for a full list of evidenced benefits.



## **Farm to CACFP Week**

OSPI encourages sponsors to serve local food and include food-related educational activities in their program throughout the year, but especially during Farm to CACFP Week! Occurring each October, Farm to CACFP Week is an opportunity to taste, teach, and connect about food grown in your community. Look for more details in the OSPI Child Nutrition Services newsletter each fall to learn dates and more information about participating in Farm to CACFP Week.

## **Information and Resources**

Visit OSPI's website for several resources to support your Farm to CACFP efforts, including a resource list of nutrition and agriculture activities and sample outreach language to promote your great work. It's applicable to all sponsors and Child Nutrition Programs, not just schools!

[The Benefits of Farm to School](#), National Farm to School Network

[WSDA's Farm to School Toolkit](#) has great information about buying local and working with farmers. Not just for schools!