



Growing Healthy Vermont Schools, Farms & Communities



FARM TO SCHOOL IN EVERY COMMUNITY

Please fully fund the Farm to School & Early Childhood grants program at \$500,000 to support our children getting critical nutrition and our farmers getting direct support through school purchasing.

With full funding, the majority of Vermont students will have access to fresh, local food in their school cafeterias and early childhood programs, and learning healthy habits to carry through their entire lives.”



THE IMPACT

We know that **every dollar schools spend on local food contributes \$1.60 to Vermont’s economy, and that schools spend \$15.5M on food every year.** Let’s keep more of those dollars with Vermont farmers.

90% of the brain is developed by age five. Healthy, nutritious food is vital to healthy brain development in young children.

Around half of a child’s daily calories come from school meals. Farm to School programs are an important way to improve nutrition for *all* children.



“Within weeks [of eating the produce we grew at school], it was getting easier and easier for me to walk up the hill, my mental health skyrocketed, I was happy, and I enjoyed what I was doing every day. I know exactly where my food comes from, and it makes me feel good. It makes me feel like I’m involved in it: I’ve touched it, I’ve planted it, and I know exactly where it’s going.”

– Student

Green Mountain Technical & Career Center
Lamoille North School District

“When we serve local food in our schools, all students, regardless of their home economic situation, are getting fresh, wholesome, nutritious food in the regular meals.”

– Jen Kravitz

Cornwall School Principal

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“The pandemic has brought food and schools back into focus. Now more than ever it’s important we all remain committed to a strong, vibrant food system.”

– Anson Tebbets

Vermont Secretary of Agriculture

Learn more @ vermontfarmtoschool.org



Vermont Farm to School & Early Childhood Outcomes



Strengthening Education

In schools with universal meals, nurses report improved academic performance and improved focus in class, declines in absenteeism, declines in school nurse visits as high as 72%, and at least 10% declines in behavioral referrals.

1 in 4 Vermont children face the adverse childhood experience (ACEs) of hunger. Helping more kids eat nutritious school meals is crucial to helping all children grow healthy and succeed in school.

91% of early childhood providers polled are interested in implementing Farm to Early Childhood programming, yet only 21% have been able to access Farm to Early Childhood professional development opportunities.



Fighting Hunger

The pandemic has greatly impacted food insecurity rates for Vermonters: nearly 1 in 4 people currently face food insecurity. This rate increases for households with children, people of color, and women.

Farm to School and Early Childhood programming offers concrete food support and fosters community resilience.

93% of early childhood programs offer at least one snack or meal during program hours, and 56% of early childhood providers are serving local food one or more times per week.

"Farm to Early Childhood efforts strengthen communities, contribute to resilience, and promote healthy child development... Farm to School is a wide-reaching lens that can be applied to nearly all aspects of the Early Childhood programs, including policy-making, professional development, school meal programs, feeding children, and supporting families."

—Maggie Rubick, Northshire Day School Pre-K Teacher, Manchester Center

Learn more about the Vermont Farm to School Network @ vermontfarmtoschool.org
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