

Farm to Early Care and Education

Georgia's Early Care and Education (ECE) programs serve more than **330,000 children**, many of whom consume **1-3 meals** and **2 snacks** a day onsite.^{1 2}

Why Farm to Early Care and Education?



Research shows Farm to School initiatives improve children's health and nutrition.³ Most of these programs start in K-12 schools, but children can be reached earlier with Farm to Early Care and Education (FTECE).

Top Reasons Providers Choose to Participate in FTECE



- Teach children where food comes from and how it is grown
- Improve child health
- Provide children with experiential learning

Strategies that Work



Parent education and engagement⁴



Curriculum where kids touch and taste food⁶

Gardening with kids⁷



Meal planning and preparation⁵



Fruit and vegetable boxes for home consumption⁸

What FTECE Supports

- Fruit and vegetable consumption, some of which may increase vitamins A, C, and E intake⁹
- Healthy food consumption at home¹⁰
- Willingness to try new foods¹¹
- Development of motor skills¹²
- Life skills, social skills, and self-esteem¹³
- Increased physical activity¹⁴
- Reduced diet-related diseases among children¹⁵
- Reduced food waste

FTECE and Agriculture



FTECE benefits children, as well as supports Georgia farmers. FTECE encourages childcare providers to:

- Purchase and serve fresh, nutritious, local foods for their children
- Host on-site farmers markets for parents and staff
- Develop partnerships with local farms for experiential learning

Georgia Supports Farm-to-Academia



Georgia's Farm-to-Early Care and Education (FTECE) Coalition¹⁶

Supports children **ages 0 to 5**

During the 2021-2022 school year:

55+ FTECE Coalition members

83 farm-to-academia professional development or activities (e.g., presentations, trainings, technical assistance, etc.)

FTECE Coalition provided **130** ECE sites with support



Farm-to-School (FTS) Alliance¹⁷

Serves **K-12 students** in increasing knowledge, experiences, and exposures with local foods

During the 2021-2022 school year:

30+ FTS Alliance members

83 farm-to-academia professional development or activities (e.g., presentations, trainings, technical assistance, etc.)

FTS Alliance provided approximately **35** awards to support local, regional, and statewide efforts and purchased **\$11 million** purchased from local farmers among the member organizations.

Policy Recommendations

- ✓ Allocate funding to reimburse ECE programs when meals incorporate local foods.
- ✓ Develop and fund a pilot for ECE providers to purchase larger quantities of food from local farmers.



References for Farm to Early Care and Education

Suggested citation: Voices for Georgia's Children. (2023). Fact Sheet: Farm to Early Care and Education. Voices for Georgia's Children. <https://adobe.ly/47yGbGz>.

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- 17 Ibid.