



Growing with MO

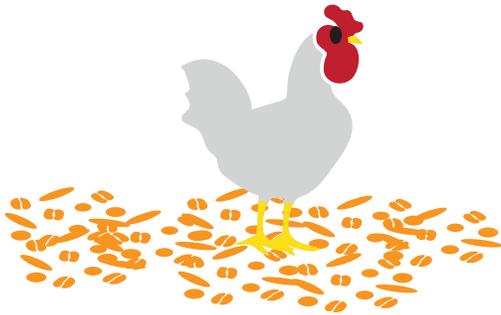
Harvest of the Season

Farm to Preschool
Toolkit



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Contents



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
 AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
 EMPLOYER Services provided on a non-discriminatory
 basis.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

June 2017

Introduction	2
Missouri Farm to Preschool Resources	4
MO's Harvest of the Season Calendar	4
Fruit and Vegetable Mini Posters	4
MO Grown Produce Kitchen Tip Sheets	6
MO's Harvest of Books	7
Newsletters	7
Culinary Skills Institute: Farm to Preschool	7
Funding and Technical Assistance	7
Program Strategies	8
Classroom Learning Experiences	8
<i>Missouri Early Learning Standards for Life</i>	
<i>Science</i>	9
<i>Farm to Preschool Curriculum Resources</i>	10
<i>Taste Testing</i>	12
<i>Cooking with Children</i>	16
Field Trips	18
Fresh Fruits/Vegetables in Child Care Meals	21
<i>Menus</i>	22
<i>Purchase of Local Fruits/Vegetables</i>	23
<i>Where to Get Local Food</i>	23
<i>How to Find a Farmer to Purchase Locally Grown</i>	
<i>Produce</i>	24
<i>Buying Direct from a Farmer</i>	24
Gardening with Young Children	28

Family Engagement	36
Use Multiple Strategies	37
Child and Adult Care Food Program.....	39
Appendices	41
Appendix A: MO Grown Produce Kitchen Tip	
Sheets	42
Appendix B: MO’s Harvest of Books.....	56
Appendix C: In-Class Lesson Plan for Pre-Field Trip	58
Appendix D: Harvest of the Season Sample Menus	60
Sources	64



Acknowledgements

Growing with MO Harvest of the Season began as a pilot project in 2016 with the following child care centers in Missouri:

- Columbia’s Finest Child Development Center in Columbia
- Kerri’s Kidsville/Babyville in Springfield
- Magic Kingdom in Oak Grove
- Ozarks Technical Community College (OTC) Early Childhood Education Center in Springfield
- University of Missouri Child Development Lab in Columbia
- Willow Woods Learning Center in Platte City

Many thanks to the staff at these centers for their creative ideas and lessons learned along the way. Their experiences and suggestions have been extremely valuable in building this program.



Introduction

Farm to preschool is a growing movement that offers increased access to healthy, local foods, gardening opportunities and food based activities to enhance the quality of the educational experience in all types of early care and education settings. Children form a healthy and informed relationship with their food when they learn where and how the food grows, meet a farmer that grows it and taste different foods in a relaxed setting. This relationship can lead to an increased interest in eating these foods and may improve their eating habits as they grow older. Farm to preschool is also good for local farmers. It boosts the local economy by keeping child care providers' "food dollars" circulating close to home and supporting more environmentally and socially sustainable farming. Missouri's farm to preschool program, *Growing with MO Harvest of the Season*, focuses on Missouri grown fruits and vegetables.



Enthusiasm from teachers, kitchen staff, center directors and other child care staff is key to getting children at your center excited about the program. Make it an adventure as you try new foods and explore your community farms!

Why farm to preschool is important:

- The prevalence of childhood obesity has more than doubled in the past 30 years, with some of the most dramatic increases occurring in preschoolers.
- Fruits and vegetables are packed with important vitamins, minerals and other nutrients, yet they are low in calories.
- Only about 1 percent of preschool aged children eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables.
- Young children may eat as much as 80 percent of their daily nutrients in child care.
- Early eating patterns can determine later eating habits.
- Increasingly, preschoolers will encounter farm to school and school garden programs as they move into the K-12 setting. Exposing children to "farm to preschool" will help to prepare them for the transition to "farm to school."

Missouri's farm to preschool program was created by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services through a 2015 USDA Team Nutrition grant. The program features Farmer MO and Chef Ginger. Farmer MO grows produce in Missouri and his friend Chef Ginger turns that produce into delicious menu items that children love. Together, MO and Ginger help children learn what vegetables and fruits are grown in Missouri and when the produce is ready for harvest or "in season."

All *Growing with MO* resources are available at <http://health.mo.gov/growingwithmo>.

Why choose locally grown produce?

Fruits and vegetables are allowed to remain on the plant until they are ripe. They are picked when nutrients and taste are at their peak. Think about the taste of a fresh, homegrown tomato in August compared to a tomato bought in the store in January.

There are many seasonal foods to choose from, but *Growing with MO* focuses on 14 fruits and vegetables that are commonly grown and readily available in Missouri.



Spring	 Strawberries	 Broccoli	 Lettuce
Summer	 Summer Squash	 Bell Pepper	 Cantaloupe
	 Peaches	 Cucumbers	 Green Beans
Fall	 Tomatoes	 Spinach	 Apples
Winter	 Winter Squash	 Sweet Potatoes	

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services • Team Nutrition • health.mo.gov/teamnutrition



Missouri Farm to Preschool Resources

The following resources are available to help implement *Growing with MO*.

Fruit and Vegetable Mini Posters

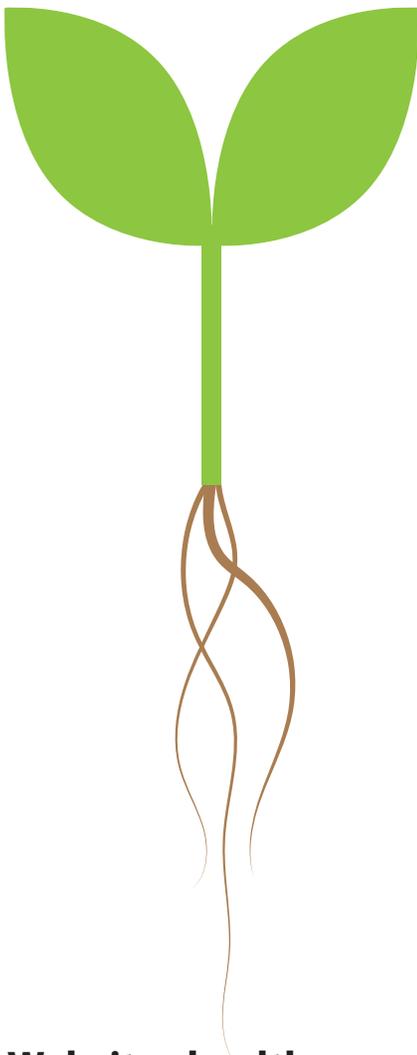
The posters are visual tools to help preschool children become familiar with MO's harvest of 14 fruits and vegetables. Each of the 8.5" x 11" posters shows three photographs of the fruit or vegetable:

1. Before harvest.
2. At the store or market.
3. On the plate, served raw or cooked.

The posters shown at the right may be downloaded from health.mo.gov/growingwithmo.

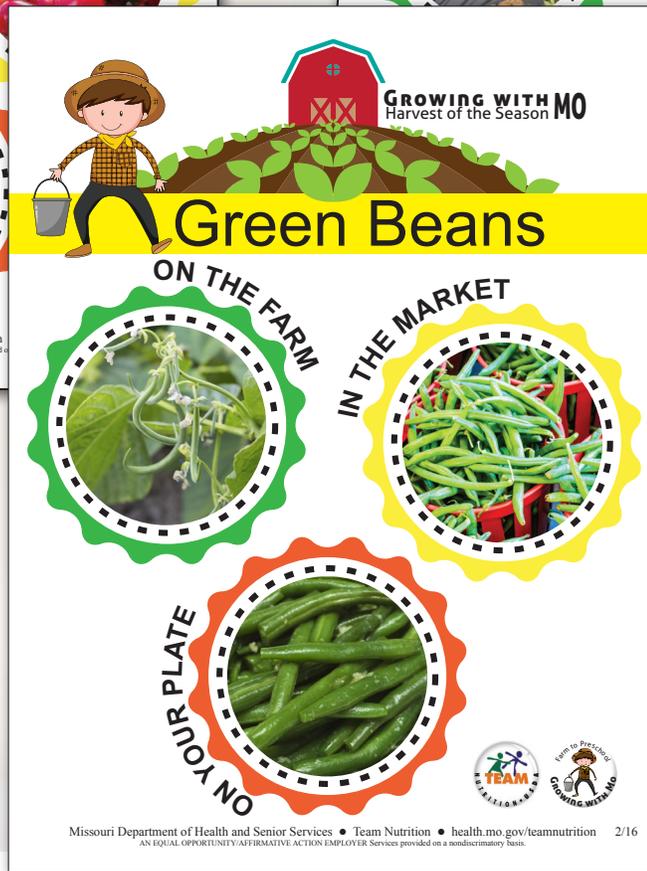
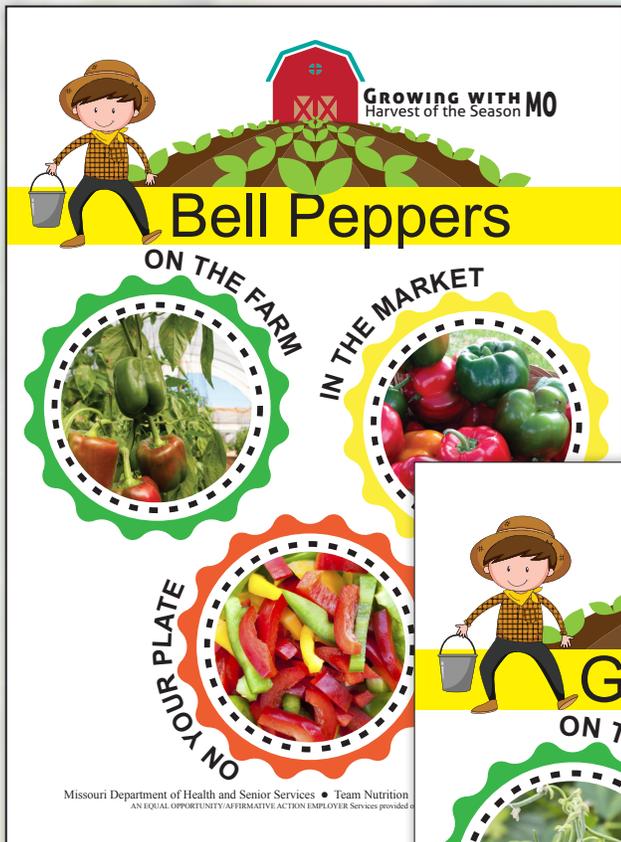
Pictures are worth a thousand words. Centers participating in the farm to preschool pilot came up with LOTS of creative ways to use these posters, including:

- Start a discussion on how the food is planted and how it grows.
- Talk about where food comes from and how it gets from the farm to our plates.
- Talk about what part of the plant we eat (root, stem, leaf, etc.).
- Encourage mealtime talk by showing the pictures when serving each food.
- Print, cut out and laminate the pictures to make row markers for the garden.
- Teach sequencing by having children put cut out pictures in order from farm to plate.
- Talk about how the food changes in color, texture, shape and size as it is cooked.
- Show the difference between the inside and outside of the fruit or vegetable.



Website: health.mo.gov/growingwithmo

Resources cont.



Mini Posters (8.5" x 11")

Resources cont.

MO Grown Produce Kitchen Tip Sheets

The kitchen tip sheets offer information for child care kitchen staff on purchasing, storing, preparing and serving MO's harvest of 14 fruits and vegetables. See Appendix A: MO Grown Produce Kitchen Tip Sheets for the complete set. Tip sheets may be downloaded from health.mo.gov/growingwithmo.

Meet Chef
Ginger!



Kitchen Tips for Apples

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	September - November
Quality:	Choose apples that are firm with no soft spots or wrinkled skin. They should produce a "snap" sound when cut with a knife or bitten.
Storage:	Store in refrigerator up to 20 days or at room temperature for up to 7 days.
Food Safety:	Wash under cold running water prior to serving. Seal, date and refrigerate cut apples immediately and use the following day.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need 35 pounds of whole fresh apples.
Preparation Tips:	Dip or coat sliced apples with an acidic solution of 1 part lemon juice to 3 parts water to prevent browning.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slice and serve with cinnamon, chopped nuts, cheese slices, peanut butter or with dips like yogurt, cheese sauce or ranch dressing.• Allow children to construct their own "Apple Parfait" using a variety of local apples, granola, cranberries and vanilla yogurt.• Add chopped apples to a tuna or chicken salad.• Set up an "Apple Market" with different varieties of apples for tasting.
Nutrition:	Apples come in great varieties of sweetness and textures! They are high in vitamin C, potassium and fiber, which help fight against heart disease and cancer, maintain healthy blood pressure and keep you regular.

Fun Fact # 1:
More than 2,500 varieties of apples are grown in the United States. That means if you ate an apple a day it would take you nearly seven years to eat each kind.

Fun Fact #2:
It takes about 36 apples to make one gallon of apple cider.

Fun Fact #3:
Two-thirds of the fiber and lots of the antioxidants in apples are found in the peel.



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER SERVICES PROVIDED ON A NONDISCRIMINATORY BASIS.



Resources cont.

MO's Harvest of Books

Fun picture books about food and gardening can enhance classroom lessons. This two-page book list includes many teacher tested and recommended books. Share the list with parents to connect families with your farm to preschool program. See Appendix B: MO's Harvest of Books.

Newsletters

Seasonal updates with information to share with families and child care staff will be posted at health.mo.gov/growingwithmo. The newsletters include tips on gardening, preschool learning activities with fruits and vegetables, recipes, etc., and will keep everyone informed about *Growing with MO*.

Culinary Skills Institute: Farm to Preschool

This is a six-hour, hands-on training for anyone who prepares meals in a child care facility. The training includes basic nutrition and culinary skills taught by nutrition and culinary professionals. The hands-on cooking and skill building activities are designed to support all aspects of meal preparation, from planning to preparing and serving. Participants leave with new, taste-tested, child-approved recipes and a network of peers to communicate with. Upcoming trainings may be found at health.mo.gov/growingwithmo.

Funding and Technical Assistance

When funding is available, child care providers may apply for small grants to help with implementation of farm to preschool strategies. Technical assistance is available on a limited basis to help providers manage their farm to preschool activities. Additional information may be found at health.mo.gov/growingwithmo.



CSI students practicing knife skills.

Program Strategies

Classroom Learning Experiences

Farm to preschool does not have a one size fits all model. The toolkit provides resources to begin implementing farm to preschool. Change can be difficult so make sure you have a strong and committed group of champions to lead your efforts. There are many ways to approach farm to preschool. You don't have to do all the strategies. Decide what is most important to you and start there. You can always add more.

Classroom Learning Experiences

Children learn where their food comes from and how to make healthy food choices. They learn that eating can be fun and help them feel good. When children learn about different foods, they are more willing to try them. Children can learn many things through experiences with food and plants. These experiences connect with science, math, literature, creative arts and social skills, so they can easily be incorporated into your existing curriculum.

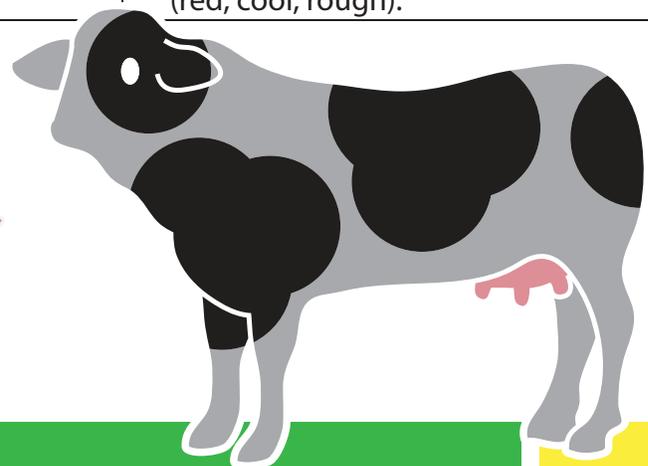
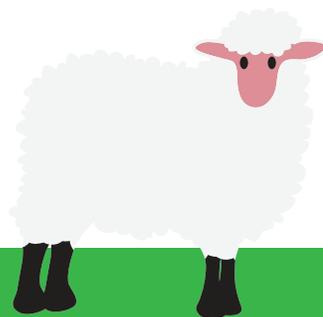
Farm to preschool activities fit especially well with the Missouri Early Learning Standards for Life Science shown on the following page.



Program Strategies cont.

Missouri Early Learning Standards for Life Science

Process Standards	Indicators	Examples
1. Explores characteristics of living things.	a. Shows interest in plant and animal changes.	Remarks that flowers on a plant turn into green beans.
	b. Uses one or more senses to observe the natural world.	Comments on the tastes of different colored peppers.
2. Investigates characteristics of living things.	a. Asks questions about the natural world.	Asks "Why didn't the seed grow?"
	b. Collects information to learn about living things.	Uses a magnifying glass to find bugs on plants.
	c. Shows knowledge of the characteristics of living things.	Tells which vegetables grow above ground and which ones grow below.
3. Solves problems related to living things.	a. Identifies problems involving living things.	Comments that the plant is drooping (wilting).
	b. Recognizes that living things have needs.	Says "the plant needs water."
	c. Makes predictions based on experiences with living things.	Says "If we don't water the plant, it will die."
4. Represents observations about living things in a variety of ways.	a. Represents observations through pretend play.	Engages in role playing (farmer, chef).
	b. Represents observations through movement and music.	Reaches and stretches arms to mimic picking fruit from a tree.
	c. Represents observations through art and construction.	Draws pictures of plants in the garden.
	d. Talks about plants and animals.	Uses words to describe a strawberry (red, cool, rough).



Farm to Preschool Curriculum Resources

Curriculum activities can be developed by creative preschool teachers. Many child care providers find it easier to use an already developed, set curriculum. Another option is to pick and choose activities from a variety of curriculum resources.

Grow It, Try It, Like It

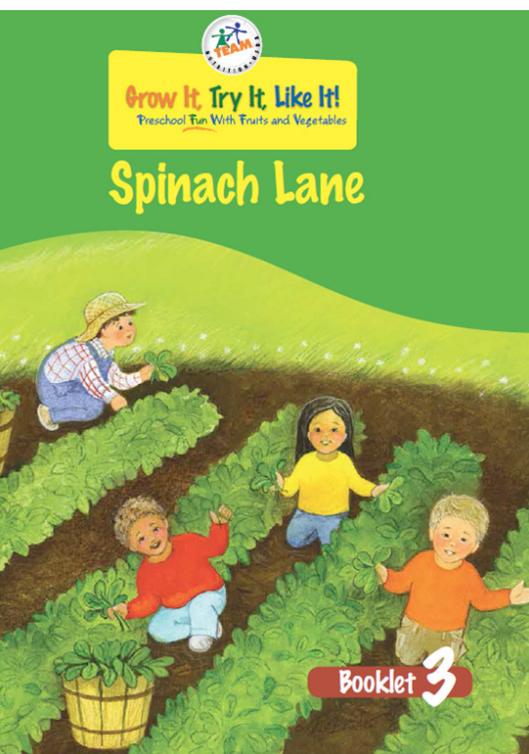
A garden-themed nutrition education kit that introduces children to six of the fruits and vegetables that are grown in Missouri and part of *MO's Harvest of the Season* materials: peaches, strawberries, cantaloupe, spinach, sweet potatoes and crookneck summer squash. The kit includes seven booklets featuring fun activities through the imaginary garden at Tasty Acres Farm! It also has a CD-ROM loaded with supplemental information and a DVD. Each set of lessons contains: hands-on activities, planting activities and nutrition education activities that introduce MyPlate.

The *Grow It, Try It, Like It* kit, a resource of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Team Nutrition program, is available free to child care providers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). To order this and other Team Nutrition resources, go to www.usda.gov/tn and click on Resource Order Form.

The following curricula can be downloaded from the Internet. Visit Missouri's farm to preschool website at health.mo.gov/growingwithmo for links to these resources.

Farm to Preschool Harvest of the Month Curriculum from Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College in Los Angeles, CA

Includes a wide variety of activities for tomatoes, peppers, winter squashes, persimmons, cabbage, asparagus and cucumbers. The curriculum is organized for the California growing season, so the recommended months would be different for Missouri.



Curriculum Resources cont.

Harvest for Healthy Kids from Portland State University and Mt. Hood Community College in Portland, OR

Includes activity kits for beets, asparagus, winter squash, potatoes and sweet potatoes, cabbage, berries, winter root vegetables, carrots, beans, apples, cauliflower, tomatoes and melons. Each kit includes activity plans, picture cards, teacher newsletter, family newsletter in three languages and recipes.

Farm to Childcare Curriculum Package from Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in MN

Includes activities on apples, broccoli, cabbage, cantaloupe, carrots, chives, cucumber, kale, peppers, radishes, snap peas, tomatoes and zucchini. Activities are organized into circle time, sensory and dramatic play, math and science, and arts. Also includes family engagement ideas.

Growing Minds Farm to Preschool Lesson Plans from Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) in Asheville, NC

Includes some lessons on specific fruits and vegetables plus more general lessons on topics such as how vegetables grow above and below ground and the role of insects in the garden.

How's It Growing—Farm to Preschool from Green Mountain College in Vermont

Includes nine simple lessons related to starting and caring for a preschool garden.



Taste Testing

Taste testing is an excellent way for children to learn about food in the classroom. Sampling small bites of unfamiliar foods is a non-threatening way for children to broaden their taste horizons. Tasting activities provide an opportunity for classroom staff and kitchen staff to work together educating children. It is important to taste new foods before adding them to the menu.

Children may need up to five exposures to a new food before they will try it, and 10 or more times before they like it, so don't get discouraged! The poster below may be downloaded from health.mo.gov/growingwithmo.

Trying New Food Takes Time

The poster features several photographs of children interacting with food. One child is shown smelling a bowl of green peas. Another is touching a banana. A group of children is shown eating carrots. A child is shown eating a bowl of mixed vegetables. Another child is shown eating a slice of orange.

Smell/Touch/Play **Nibble/Spit** **Swallow/Eat**

1 **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9+**

Nine or more tries before they eat it and like it!

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services • Team Nutrition • health.mo.gov/teamnutrition
Reference: Johnson, Bellows, Beckstrom, Anderson, Am J Health Behav, 2007; Sullivan, Birch, Develop Psych, 1990; Lakkakula, Geaghan, Zanovec, Pierce, Tuuri, Appetite, 2009

Taste Testing cont.

Choosing Foods to Taste

- Taste fruits and vegetables when they are in season.
- Keep it simple – no more than three different foods to taste at a time.
 - Compare the taste of different varieties of the same food (Example: red, green and yellow bell peppers).
 - Taste the same food prepared different ways (Example: raw, steamed and roasted).
 - Try the same food with different herb seasonings (Example: cooked carrots with basil, rosemary and mint).
 - Different foods from the same part of the plant (three kinds of leafy greens like spinach, kale and romaine lettuce).

More Tips for Taste Testing Success

- Polite tasting. Teach children what to do if they don't like a food.
 - Quietly remove it from their mouth.
 - Place it in a napkin.
 - Throw it in the trash.
 - Don't make faces or say bad things about the food.
- If the children helped prepare the food, compliment them on their work.
- Show the whole, uncut fruit or vegetable and ask the children questions about its color, texture, weight, smell, etc. Get them curious about what it's like inside.
- Offer the new food first to the children that are usually willing to try new things. The reluctant eaters will watch their friends and may be more willing to try.
- Offer small portions for tasting. This does not have to be a full snack.
- Be a positive role model!
 - Children are more willing to taste foods when they see teachers tasting them.
 - Be adventurous about trying new things.
 - If you like the food, share your enthusiasm, but if you don't like it, do not criticize the food.



Taste Testing cont.

Recording Taste Preferences and Using the Results

Give children a chance to express themselves and always respect their opinions. Use a Voting Sheet to track preferences of the foods they taste. Save the results to use when planning new menus. Do a “before and after” tasting to see if the children’s preferences change after they have more learning experiences with that food. The Voting Sheet may be downloaded from health.mo.gov/growingwithmo.



 **Voting Sheet** Date _____
Classroom _____

_____ (name of food item)

I Like This A lot 	It's OK 	I Don't Like This Yet 

Teachers,
Make a separate voting sheet for each food different food tasted. Have children put a sticker in one column to show if they like the food or they don't like it yet.

Taste Testing cont.

Another way to track preferences is to have children compare different items and chart their favorite. In the following example, the chart would be completed by the teacher after asking the children which pepper was their favorite.

Number Children	6			
	5			
	4			
	3			
	2			
	1			
		Red Pepper	Green Pepper	Yellow Pepper



Both of these voting methods give the children practice in math and counting skills in a fun and interactive way.

Cooking with Children

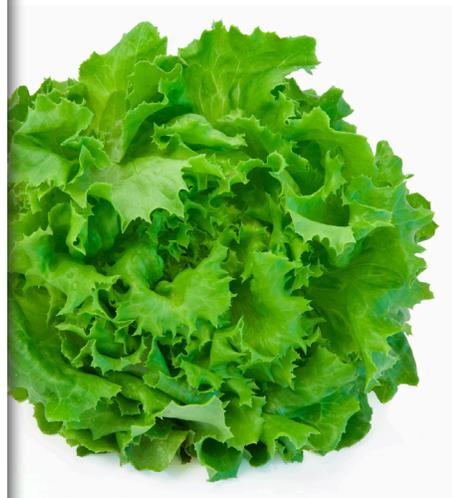
Preparing food is a fun, engaging activity for children and helps them develop many skills. They are usually happy to try the foods they have helped prepare. There are many simple recipes that can be prepared in the classroom and tasted or eaten as their snack.

Social-Emotional Development – Hands-on cooking activities encourage independence and help children develop pride and confidence in their skills and abilities.

Physical Development – Chopping, squeezing, spreading, and mixing are all cooking skills that help develop a child's small muscle control and eye-hand coordination.

Cognitive Development – Cooking inspires children's curiosity, thinking and problem solving, offering new opportunities to make predictions and observations. They organize ingredients, measure and count, follow a sequence and carry out multiple directions.

Language Development – With its own vocabulary, cooking is a great opportunity for language development. Take advantage of opportunities for children to match pictures to words and articulate questions inspired by their new experiences.



Cooking with Children cont.

Cooking Abilities of Young Children

Two-year-olds are learning to use the large muscles in their arms.

Try activities such as:

- Scrubbing hard vegetables and fruits like potatoes and melons.
- Carrying unbreakable items to the table.
- Dipping foods.
- Washing and tearing lettuce and salad greens.

Three-year-olds are learning to use their hands. Try activities such as:

- Stirring with a spoon.
- Mixing ingredients together in a bowl.
- Pouring liquids into containers with large openings.
- Shaking ingredients in a tightly closed container.
- Spreading butter or cream cheese.
- Mashing soft fruits and vegetables.
- Pressing cookie cutters.
- Serving foods.

Four and five-year-olds are learning to control small muscles in their fingers. Try activities such as:

- Cutting soft foods like mushrooms or bananas with a plastic knife.
- Juicing oranges and lemons.
- Peeling some fruits and vegetables with a peeler.
- Mashing soft fruits and vegetables.
- Measuring dry ingredients.
- Setting and clearing the table.
- Wiping up after cooking.

After a cooking project, ask the children to explain how they made the food. They will be eager to talk about their hard work and the finished product.



Field Trips

Good planning and organization are keys to a field trip that is fun and educational for everyone.



At the farm, children and parents create a "local food story," learning how everything we eat starts at the farm, how food grows, what the farmer needs to help it grow and how food gets from the farm to their tables. Successful farm field trips often include several activities.

1. **Helping task** – A chance for kids to actively help the farmer with some sort of seasonally appropriate farm task.
2. **Harvest opportunity** – Many kids have only seen fruits and vegetables in the grocery store. It's valuable for them to pick fruits and vegetables directly from the plants they grow on.
3. **Tasting opportunity** – Tasting the produce that was harvested from the farm can take place during the field trip or back in the classroom after the visit.
4. **Farmer's story** – Listening to the farmer tell a story helps children form a relationship with the people who grow their food and gain a deeper understanding of rural ways of life.
5. **Farm scavenger hunt** – Children practice their observation skills.

Steps to Planning a Farm Field Trip

1. **Find a farm.** (Start 2-4 months before the trip.)
Consider how far you are willing and able to travel. Think about any farmers you know from the farmer's market or farm families within your child care. It takes a special kind of farmer to be good at interacting with preschoolers. There are some farms that specialize in educational experiences and will require less planning on your part.
2. **Plan with your farmer.** (Start 2-4 months before the trip.)
 - Contact the farm early to lay out expectations and clarify details. This will make the field trip run more smoothly and be more enjoyable for everyone.
 - Farmers are busy and are often hard to reach by phone. Find out the best way to reach them.
 - Learn the best time of year to visit; this is usually when crops are available to see, harvest and taste.

Field Trips cont.

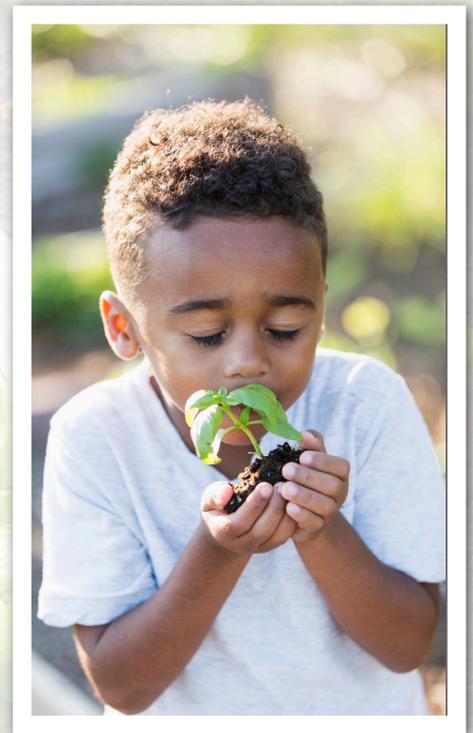
- Clarify the time frame and logistics of the trip and how you can work together to create hands-on activities.
- Ask about details like directions to the farm and parking. Is there a restroom, a place to wash hands, shelter in case of rain, a place for a picnic lunch?
- What are the farm's ground rules?
- What is the charge? If there is no set fee, \$2 to \$5 per child may be a reasonable amount to offer.
- Tell the farmer the number and age of children, number of adults and the expectations and roles for each adult.
- Plan the day's activities with the farmer. It often works well to divide the children into small groups and rotate through several stations.

3. **Arrange transportation.** (Start 1-2 months before the trip.) Review Missouri's licensing rules for transportation and field trips.



Sample Field Trip Schedule

9:00 am	Depart school for farm
9:30-10:00 am	Arrive at farm, welcome and ground rules with farmer
10:00-10:35 am	Split into small groups for rotation Red group: farm tour and farmer's story Blue group: harvesting activity Yellow group: farm scavenger hunt
10:35-10:55 am	1st rotation
10:55-11:15 am	2nd rotation
11:15-11:35 am	3rd rotation
11:35-11:45 am	Wash hands and prepare for lunch
11:45-12:15 pm	Lunch at the farm
12:15-12:30 pm	Pack up and return to school



Field Trips cont.

Supplies Check List

- Name tags
- Baskets or bins for harvesting
- Any needed activity supplies
- Soap, paper towels and hand sanitizer
- Lunches or snacks
- Water jug
- Cups or water bottles
- Blankets or tarps for picnic
- Trash bag
- Raincoats or ponchos
- Sunscreen
- First aid kit
- Camera

Other Field Trip Ideas

Check out other places in your community that can offer a rich learning experience about local foods.

- A farmer's market
- A school or community garden
- A garden nursery
- An orchard
- A local urban agriculture coalition

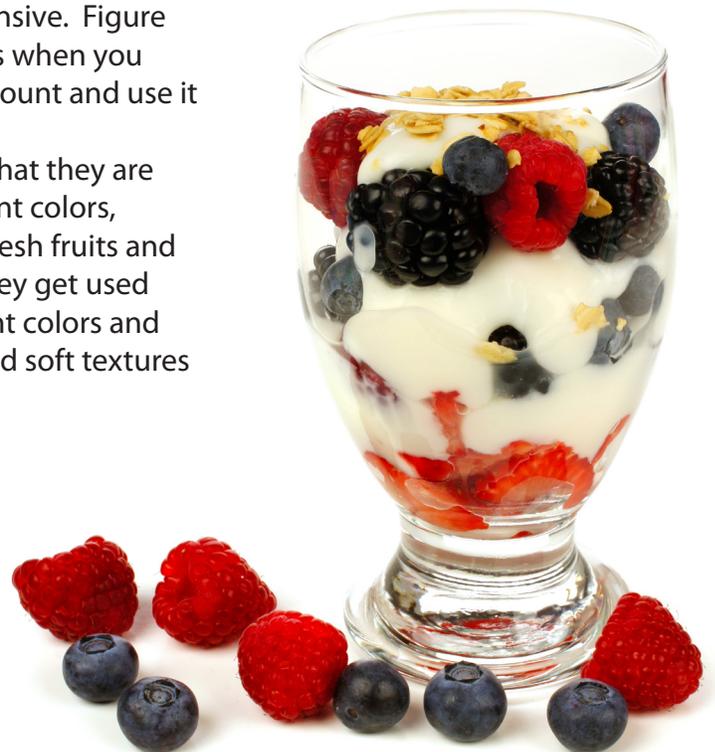
- 4. Recruit chaperones/volunteers.** (Start 2-3 weeks before the trip.) A good ratio is at least 1 adult to 5 children. Volunteers should be given a clear explanation of their role and expectations.
- 5. Confirm with farmer and volunteers.** (One week before the trip.) Touch base with the farmer to make sure he or she remembers you are coming. Review the planned activities to make sure they are ready for you. Review your supplies checklist and find out what the farm will supply. Send the schedule to volunteers and make sure they understand their responsibilities.
- 6. Deliver in-class lesson.** (One week or less before the trip.) The trip will be a much richer experience when it is tied to the classroom curriculum. Spend some time talking about where food comes from and what the kids already know about farms. See Appendix C: In-Class Lesson for Pre-Field Trip.
- 7. Prepare for the day.**
 - Get parent permission slips signed.
 - Remind parents to dress children appropriately in sturdy shoes and clothes that can get dirty.
 - Prepare sack lunches or ask parents to send a lunch.
 - Prepare name tags, color coded for the small group each child is in.
 - Talk to children about respecting the farmer's land and following rules about where they can walk and what they can touch.
 - Collect all needed supplies.
- 8. After the field trip.**
 - Send thank you notes and payment to the farmer.
 - Do tasting activities with foods from the farm.
 - Reinforce what the children learned with other classroom lessons.

Fresh Fruits & Vegetables in Child Care Meals

A major goal of farm to preschool is to introduce children to more fresh fruits and vegetables. Serving fresh foods at mealtime helps to reinforce the lessons they learn in the classroom. Even when you can't get locally grown items, include in-season fresh fruits and vegetables in your menus as often as you can. Things to consider when using fresh versus canned or frozen fruits and vegetables:

- **Preparation time** – Fresh produce from the farm may need to be scrubbed, trimmed and cut up. This preparation can be done in advance of meal time when the cook is less busy.
- **Space and equipment needed** – Make the job easier with basic equipment like a produce scrub brush, good cutting board and a sharp chef's knife.
- **Skill of cook** – Cooks who are used to preparing "heat and serve" meals may need some training. Consider sending the cook to the Missouri Culinary Skills Institute-Farm to Preschool training.
- **Cost** – Don't just assume that fresh is more expensive. Figure the cost per serving. The cost of fresh will be less when you buy in season. Plan carefully to buy the right amount and use it before it spoils.
- **Children's acceptance** – Children often reject what they are not familiar with. They might not like the different colors, textures, peeling, seeds, etc., which they see in fresh fruits and vegetables if they normally eat canned. Once they get used to the differences, children often prefer the bright colors and crunchy crispness of fresh over the dull colors and soft textures of canned.

Make small changes to avoid being overwhelmed by change. Focus on one easy menu change to start with and implement more over time. Remember, "small steps lead to big changes!"



Fresh Fruits & Vegetables cont.

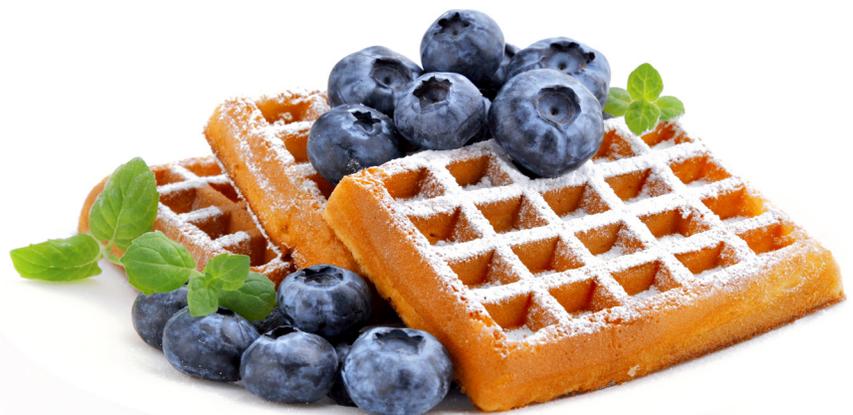
Teacher Tips for Successful Mealtimes

- Talk to the children about where their food comes from.
- Model good eating practices in front of the children and try new foods yourself.
- Be patient when children refuse a new food. Never make them eat it.

Menus

Tips for menu planning:

- Plan seasonal cycle menus. See Appendix D: Harvest of the Season Sample Menus. Use MO's Harvest of the Season Calendar to choose in season fruits and vegetables. For more items, refer to the Missouri Fruits and Vegetables Harvest Calendar at health.mo.gov/growingwithmo.
- Be flexible. You can substitute a different fruit or vegetable in the cycle menu when what you planned is not available or when you get a good deal on something different. Just remember to write down what you really served for your records.
- Repeat the same fruit or vegetable to help the children recognize it and become more comfortable eating it.
- Serve the same fruit or vegetable prepared in different ways to add variety.
- Give your menu items fun names like "Squashed Spaghetti," "Very Merry Berries" or "Green Giant Salad."
- Refer to MO Grown Produce Kitchen Tip Sheets.
- Refer to booklet one of *Grow It, Try It, Like It* for 10 terrific ways to serve fruits and vegetables.



Purchase of Local Fruits & Vegetables

The term local does not have a set definition. We recommend that you define what local means for your situation. For some items, local might be grown right in your garden. Other local items might have to come from 100 miles away or somewhere within the state. Purchase of local foods helps to support the economy of your community and it might cost less because you are not paying for food to be shipped thousands of miles.

Decide what your goals are. Serving local foods can involve more effort, so you might want to start small. Here are some possible approaches:

- Choose just one or two products that are easy to find locally.
- Host a special local foods meal or event and promote this to families.
- Use local foods for learning activities with the children instead of for meals.
- Consider buying a product in bulk when it's in season if you have storage space. Choose items that keep well such as apples, carrots, winter squash or sweet potatoes.
- Consider your capacity to handle whole, unprocessed produce before you take on something too big. Think about your storage space, kitchen space and equipment, staff time and staff cooking skills.

Where to Get Local Food

- **Food distributor** – If you buy from a wholesale food distributor, you can tell them you prefer local and ask what is available. Distributors will try to supply more local food when more customers ask for it.
- **Local grocery store** – Many stores are carrying more locally grown produce. Look for signs that identify local foods or ask the produce manager. Some grocery stores may offer free delivery.
- **Direct from a local farmer** – If large quantities are needed, you may be able to arrange delivery to your center, or pick up at a convenient location.



Purchase of Local Fruits & Vegetables cont.

- **Farmer's market** – This may be an option for small quantities. The market might also be a pick up location for larger orders from a farmer.
- **CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) programs** – A CSA is a subscription program that sells members a “share” of everything grown on a particular farm. Shares are delivered or picked up on a regular basis through the growing season. Products vary depending on what is harvested at the time. A share may include items that are unfamiliar or unpredictable, so child care providers must be flexible and willing to try new things. A CSA may work better for taste testing than for meeting meal requirements.
- **Grow your own** – The most important function of a child care garden is to provide learning experiences for the children. If enough food is harvested, it may be used in child care meals.
- **Cooperative buying** – If you are a small child care program, consider partnering with other programs to buy in bulk from a farm or wholesale distributor to lower costs.



How to Find a Farmer to Purchase Locally Grown Produce

- Options will vary in different parts of the state. Make connections with people in your community. There may be families in your child care who are farmers or know farmers. Many larger cities have an urban agriculture or community garden organization that could be helpful.
- *Local Harvest* is a national online directory for finding local food. Go to www.localharvest.org and search for farms, markets, food co-ops and more in your area. More resources for buying local foods are posted and updated on the Missouri farm to preschool website health.mo.gov/growingwithmo.

Buying Direct from a Farmer

It is important for you to learn what the farmer can and cannot do and for the farmer to learn what your child care needs and expects.



Farmer's Market



Buying Direct from a Farmer

Consider asking the following questions.

1. What do you grow and when is it available?

Typically, farmers know their production schedule and should be able to estimate when products will be ready. Weather makes farming unpredictable though, so flexibility is important.

2. If you did not have what we ordered, will you substitute something else? Will you notify us of the substitution before delivery?

3. What is the cost per pound or per bushel?

Farmers price their products in different ways. Make sure you understand what you are getting in relation to the price. Ask if they have a price/availability sheet.

4. Can we buy your seconds? If so, what is your adjusted price?

“Seconds” is a term used to describe products that do not meet USDA grade and size standards. They may have some minor defects but still be acceptable for your use. Farmers are often happy to sell these products at a discounted price.

5. Will the produce be ready to eat when we get it?

Often the fruits and vegetables will need to be washed and trimmed. Some freshly picked items may still need to ripen after you get them.

6. Do you use any pesticides? Is your produce organically grown?

If this is important to you, ask. Just because it’s local, it is not necessarily organic.

7. Can you deliver to our food distributor? Do you already work with any local distributors?

If yes, this can simplify your purchasing process and you still know that you’re getting local food.

8. Do you deliver to other local schools or child care programs? If so, which ones?

This may help if you want to set up a cooperative buying system with others.

For more information on buying directly from a farmer, check out: USDA Verifying On-Farm Food Safety at <http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20110822025822.pdf>



Buying Direct from a Farmer cont.

9. Can you deliver directly to the child care facility? If so, when and how often can you deliver?

Also find out if there is a delivery charge and/or a minimum order amount for delivery.

10. Can we pick up products at the farm or at another location?

11. How can I contact you and what is the best time to reach you?

Ask what works best for the farmer – phone, email, mail or in person?

12. If there is a problem with the quality of the produce, can we reject the order or will you give credit for the amount we couldn't use?

13. What are your terms of payment?

Ideally, a farmer will want to be paid on delivery, but other terms could be discussed. Many farmers operate on a cash or check only basis.

14. Would you consider planting specific products and/or larger quantities to sell to our site?

This question should be asked early as farmers often plan 2-3 seasons in advance. Expect to have a written agreement with the farmer if this option is available.

15. Do you conduct farm tours for children or speak to groups?

This could provide a great educational opportunity for your children.

16. Would you donate products for taste tests?

Farmers may be willing to donate extra products for taste testing.

A good relationship and open communication with the farmer helps you to get the best possible quality, service and prices.



Gardening with Young Children

Research indicates that many eating habits and food preferences are formed by age 5.

Children who garden:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Are willing to try a wider variety of vegetables.
- Are more likely to show a preference for fruits and vegetables.



For preschool children, a garden is a fun place to learn, offering many sensory experiences and chances to observe, wonder, question and reflect about the world of nature.

Garden-based learning improves nutrition and eating behaviors as well as social, physical and emotional well-being. When children work with adults in caring for a garden they are often more excited about tasting and eating the foods they helped grow.

Some teachers may be afraid to garden with young children because they have never grown a garden themselves. There's no need to worry. Think of a preschool garden as an experiment where teachers can model the learning experience. As children watch teachers make mistakes and solve problems, they learn valuable lessons. Gardening with young children is more about the learning experience than it is about producing large amounts of food.

Before you start:

1. Develop your vision and plan: Before you begin digging into your garden, have ideas of what you want to accomplish.

- What kind of learning opportunities do you want the garden to provide?
- What size garden can you manage? Start small and dream big. It's easy to get excited about a new garden and all the possibilities. NOTE: Gardening is work – fun work, but it is work. Avoid overwhelming staff by keeping the initial project small and manageable. When the initial garden is established and children and adults have a feel for the gardening tasks that need to be done, then look at expanding the garden beds if you want and have space.
- What will you grow? Start with the easy stuff. Some plants are easier to grow than others. Choose plants that are tried and true and grow well in your area. Check out some of the

Gardening cont.

common plants grown in Missouri listed in the Growing Guide for MO's Harvest (see page 34).

- Who will be responsible for garden maintenance throughout the seasons and when the program is not in session? Plants still need water and care during breaks.
- Who will develop and lead the garden lessons and experiences?
- How will a garden affect the rest of your space?
- What funding is needed and how will funding be secured now and in the future?

2. Cultivate a team of supporters: It takes a village to grow a garden. Having support is a key to success when starting a new preschool garden program. The number of people willing to help and their skill sets will make a difference in the kind of garden you start. To grow your village, enlist support and gain approval, where necessary, from:

- Administration and/or director, board and property management.
- Teachers, staff, custodial and maintenance personnel.
- Parents and other family members.
- Community members and businesses, civic organizations, scouts, master gardeners, garden clubs and farmers.
- And of course, the children!

Key Learning Concepts

- All things on earth are either living or non-living.
- Plants are living things.
- Living things need light, water, air and space to survive.
- Plants have a life cycle: germination, growth, reproduction (fruit/seed), death.
- Plants and parts of plants have names.
- We eat different parts of plants.
- We recognize plants by their shape, size, color and form.

Create interesting spaces with garden plants like a pole bean teepee, strawberry pyramid or squash hut.



Gardening cont.

Before you dig an inch check with local utility companies to locate underground sewer, gas and power lines. Call 1-800-DIG-RITE (344-7483) or 811.



Basic Requirements for Growing

- **Light** – Vegetable plants need 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight to grow healthy.
- **Water** – Easy access to water is crucial. Plants need 1 to 2 inches of water a week. Soil should be kept moist, especially when seeds are sprouting.
- **Soil** – Plants need good, healthy soil. The best garden soil is dark, loose, deep, fertile, well-drained, slightly acidic (pH 6.2-7.0) and has plenty of organic (plant) matter. Most soils can be improved by adding organic material like compost, peat moss or dried manure. Contact your county Extension office to have soil tested for pH, nutrients and possible contaminants, especially lead.

Other considerations:

- Locate the garden close to the classroom so it's convenient and easily accessible to ensure maximum use. In the playground is a great place.
- Fencing may keep the garden secure from wildlife and other animals, including humans.
- Have a convenient place to store tools.
- Avoid planting near trees and shrubs.

Types of Gardens

1. **In-ground garden:** This is the familiar, traditional garden with vegetables neatly spaced in rows.
Advantages – Affordable; uses available space and soil; needs less water than container gardens or raised beds.
Challenges – More weeds; soil may be poor quality; soil may not drain well; requires more space.
Tips:
 - Create pathways to reduce foot traffic in planting areas (and on plants).
 - Use materials such as wood mulch, straw, gravel or stepping stones to maintain pathways.
 - Improve the soil by adding organic matter.

Gardening cont.

2. **Raised-bed garden:** A garden where the planting area is raised, either by mounding the soil or by building a frame or structure to hold the soil.

Advantages – Better drainage; higher yields from better root growth and no wasted space; defined garden space; easy to reach plants; accessible for children who use wheelchairs; less likelihood of plants being stepped on; fewer weeds; can be used in places where growing plants would otherwise be impossible.

Challenges – Needs consistent watering; structure and soil can be costly; labor intensive to build bed.

Tips:

- Use non-toxic, non-leaching materials such as: cedar, untreated pine or fir boards, or concrete.
- Try to get donated materials and labor.
- If raised bed kit is purchased, look for good quality.

Soil for raised beds – Use “garden soil” that is a blend of topsoil and organic matter with nutrients. To fill a 3 x 6 bed with 10 inch sides, you will need 15 cubic feet of blended soil. To create the blend, use the following quantities:

- 9 cubic feet of topsoil
- 4.5 cubic feet of compost
- 1.5 cubic feet of soilless growing mix (potting mix)
- 1.5 cups all-purpose fertilizer

You can also purchase bags of commercial garden soil that have all these ingredients. Mix garden soil with existing soil from the ground when possible.

3. **Container garden:** This can be a window sill, an indoor container or outdoor container.

Advantages – Easy access; affordable; easy to maintain; movable to follow the sun; allows gardening in limited spaces and areas with poor or no soil (patio or courtyard); a good way for beginners to try gardening.

Challenges – Dries out quickly; indoor containers have limited light, not all plants grow well inside; large containers can be heavy.

Keep Garden Food Safe.

Do not use pressure treated wood, used tires, single use plastics or old railroad ties.



Gardening cont.

Container gardening allows for classes or families to “adopt a plant” during the winter and school breaks.



Tips:

- Use recycled containers like milk jugs and 5 gallon buckets; clean and sanitize thoroughly; containers should be 12 to 18 inches deep.
- Use potting mix, not garden soil.
- Water daily and fertilize as needed.
- Choose plants that don't get too big.
- Make sure containers have drainage holes with space below for water to drain.
- If using an indoor container, use a tray to collect drainage water and put in sunniest window possible or use a grow light.

Strategies and Tips for Gardening with Children

- Involve children in the entire process – planning the garden, choosing the site and plants, creating structures, planting seeds and transplants, watering, weeding, harvesting and of course tasting.

Tip: In choosing what to plant give children a list of options from which to choose.

- Provide real child size tools (not toys). Small children work best with hand tools. If using long handled tools such as shovels, rakes or hoes, teach children how to safely handle them. Avoid swinging the hoe up over their shoulder where it might hit an unsuspecting child or adult standing behind them.
- Larger seeds are easier for young children to handle. Try beans, squash, cantaloupe and cucumber.
- Give each child about one square foot as their own garden plot to plant, care for, water, weed and harvest.

Tip: Use baking flour to mark where to plant or what to weed.

- Create clearly defined pathways for children to walk.
Tip: Carpet squares can be used as well as wood chips, straw, rock or other mulching material.
- Make the tasks of garden care fun. Engage children in making a list of things that need to be done in the garden and be creative

Gardening cont.

in matching who does each task. Make a wheel with a spinner and take turns spinning the wheel to determine who does what or create a deck of garden chores to be drawn.

- Increase the exercise value. Conduct weed and compost relays, tag around the garden and other active games.
- Observe good food safety practices in the garden. Teach children to wash fruits and vegetables before eating them. Children should also wash their hands before harvesting produce.
- Engage families in your gardening adventure. Keep parents informed of what you are doing in the garden so they can help reinforce the healthy habits their children are learning. Share recipes and garden tips with them. Invite parents to participate in special events, garden parties, taste testing and other celebrations.
- Have Fun! Get dirty, play in the sprinkler, be curious, experiment, nibble the fruits and vegetables you grow.

General Garden Care

- **Weeding** – Overgrown weeds can take over a garden and prevent vegetable plants from growing well. Pull or dig weeds when they are small. Teach children to recognize weeds. Do not put chemical weed killer on vegetable gardens.
- **Fertilizer** – Good soil does not need too much extra fertilizer. Too much can be harmful to some plants. A general guide is to use 1 to 2 pounds of a complete vegetable fertilizer per 100 square feet of garden. Some plants benefit from an extra boost of fertilizer and more water at certain stages of growth.
- **Mulching** – Natural mulches like compost, straw and hay protect the soil, reduce the need for water, decrease weed growth and keep the soil cooler.
- **Pests** – Over 90 percent of insects around the garden are harmless to people and plants. Teach children to inspect plants for any damage and identify what caused it.

Purchase transplants at a nursery or check a good gardening resource to learn how to start your own seeds indoors to transplant outside.



Gardening cont.

Growing Guide for MO's Harvest

Cool season – Plant in early spring and harvest before weather gets too hot. For fall crop, plant in early August.			
	Plant in Garden	Special Care	Harvest
Broccoli	Transplant seedlings 12-24 in. apart.		Cut 6-7 in. below main head before yellow flower buds show; smaller side shoots will keep growing.
Lettuce	Scatter seeds & cover lightly with soil; leaf varieties like romaine work best.	Keep soil moist; thin plants to 3 in. apart as it grows.	Cut or pick outer leaves so inner leaves can keep growing.
Spinach	Scatter seeds & cover lightly with soil.	Keep soil moist; thin plants to 3 in. apart as it grows.	Cut or pick when leaves are 3-4 in. long; plants will keep growing.
Warm season – Plant after last chance of frost, usually May			
Green beans	Plant seeds in warm soil.	Pole varieties take less space, but need a sturdy trellis 6-8 ft. tall.	Pick when beans are small and tender, before seeds begin to bulge; pick frequently.
Cantaloupe	Transplant seedlings or plant seeds; need lots of space.		Pick when rind changes from green to tan/yellow and stem separates easily.
Cucumber	Transplant seedlings or plant seeds.	A trellis or fence allows vine to climb & take less space.	Pick when small, 6-8 in. long; pick every day or 2 because they grow fast.
Bell pepper	Transplant seedlings.	Plants may need support; don't fertilize too much; good in containers.	Pick when firm and full size; leave on plant longer for sweeter peppers and different colors.
Summer squash	Transplant seedlings or plant seeds in small hills with 2-4 plants per hill; plant when soil warm to reduce damage from pests.		Pick when small, 6-8 in. long; pick every day or 2 because they grow fast.
Winter squash	Transplant seedlings or plant seeds in small hills with 2-4 plants per hill; plant when soil warm to reduce damage from pests.	Need space for long creeping vines; pinch off fuzzy ends after squash has formed.	Harvest when vines die back after light frost; rind should be hard and uniform color; leave part of stem attached.
Sweet potato	Plant "slips" with leaves & roots in hills a foot apart.		Dig up carefully when ends of vines start to yellow before 1st frost; "cure" in warm place 1 week to bring out sweetness.
Tomato	Transplant seedlings in warm soil; remove lower leaves and plant deep.	Indeterminate varieties should be staked and pruned; choose determinate varieties for containers.	Pick tomatoes that have fully ripened on vine.

Gardening cont.

Gardening Reference Books

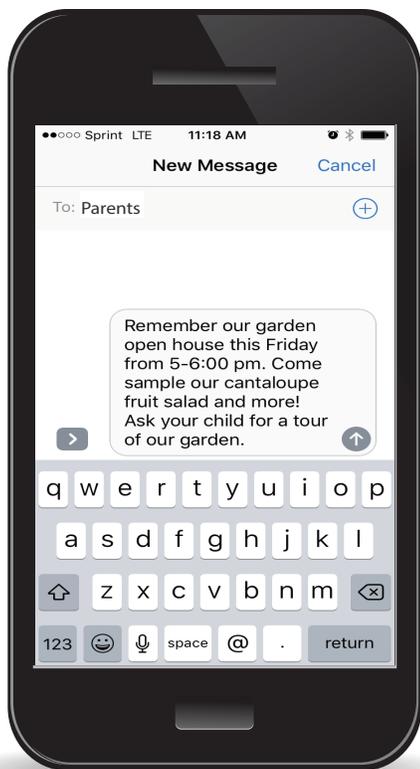
1. *Gardening with Young Children* by Sara Starbuck, Marla Olthof and Karen Midden (2014)
2. *Early Sprouts* by Karrie Kalich, Dottie Bauer and Deirdre McPartlin (2009)
A garden-based curriculum
3. *Roots Shoots Buckets & Boots* by Sharon Lovejoy (1999)
Activities to do in the garden
4. *The Enabling Garden: Creating Barrier-Free Gardens* by Gene Rothert (1984)
Resource for improving garden accessibility for people with disabilities
5. *Got Dirt?* from Wisconsin Division of Public Health (2016)
A youth gardening toolkit, available online



Family Engagement

Children can be amazing change agents for families.

Find out how your child care families want to receive communication. Do they look at paper handouts or would they rather get a text message (see below), tweet or look at your Facebook page?



Healthy habits are reinforced when children practice the same habits at home and at child care. When children become excited about being exposed to new, fresh produce at preschool, they talk about it with their parents. There are many reports about children asking for foods at the grocery store that parents have never heard of. Your communication with families and effort to involve them in activities will make your program stronger.

Materials shared with families should be simple tips, to-the point, action-oriented and realistic considering time and money.

Parents may welcome:

- Recipes for the fruits and vegetables tried at school.
- Monthly menus.
- Children's book list.
- Gardening resources.
- Information on local farmer's markets.
- *Growing with MO* monthly newsletters.

Events and activities to engage families:

- Host an open house and let the children show parents what they have done in class.
- Have a taste-testing event or short cooking demonstration for families at pick up time.
- Ask parents to share their expertise on gardening or cooking.
- Host a family workday in your garden, but add some fun with games and refreshments.
- Host a harvest party or garden potluck to celebrate the season's bounty.
- Invite family members on field trips. Some families may even have a farm you could visit.
- Have a recipe roundup, asking parents to share their favorite recipes using the featured fruits and vegetables.
- Create a bulletin board display featuring your farm to preschool activities. Photos of the kids in action will attract parents' attention.

Use Multiple Strategies

Use Multiple Strategies for a Strong Learning Experience

Focus on one fruit or vegetable for a two week period to make a bigger impact on the children. You may choose to feature items from MO's Harvest of the Season Calendar when they are in season. University of Missouri Extension has a more complete list of what's in season in Missouri in their Seasonal and Simple resource online at <http://seasonalandsimple.info> or you can download the Seasonal and Simple app.

Young children are often slow to accept new foods. Using a combination of strategies in the same week familiarizes kids with the foods in the classroom first, creates a buzz, and then gives them a chance to eat the foods as part of their normal meals. Following the schedule below, by the end of the two-week period, children will have at least eight exposures to the featured food.

It's important for classroom and kitchen staff to work together.



Mondays & Tuesdays	Choose activities from the various curriculum resources to use in the classroom. Through these activities, the children will learn about the featured food, the farm and the farmer, and healthy eating, and may participate in taste testing and cooking projects, read books about nutrition and healthy habits, and even try gardening activities!
Wednesdays	Serve the featured food in a snack.
Thursdays	Serve the featured food as part of lunch.
Fridays	Reach out to families.

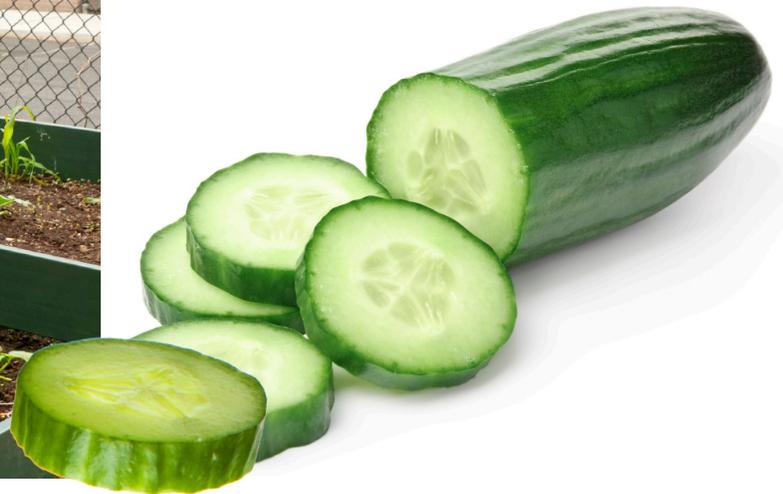
Use Multiple Strategies cont.

Example of Using Multiple Strategies with Cucumbers

Cucumbers	Monday Activity	Tuesday Activity	Wednesday Snack	Thursday Lunch Item	Friday Family Outreach
Week 1	Mystery bag guessing game	How do they grow? Use mini-poster	Make cucumber sandwiches with tuna salad	Cucumber and tomato salad	Send home <i>Growing with MO</i> newsletter
Week 2	Cucumber discovery lab	Taste test raw cucumbers & pickles	Cucumber and Greek yogurt dip for crackers	Turkey wraps w/sliced cucumber	Field trip to a local farm



Focus on one fruit or vegetable for a two-week period to make a bigger impact on the children.



Child and Adult Care Food Program

Farm to Preschool and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 expanded the purpose of CACFP. Child care programs are now encouraged to use local foods as a means to enhance CACFP operations. The following are important points to consider.

- The costs associated with growing food that will be used in the CACFP, either as part of the meal service or for activities related to nutrition education are allowable. These costs may include seeds, fertilizer, plot rental, labor, etc.
- Documentation must be kept for any donated foods. Document the date, type of food and how much was received.
- Handwritten receipts for items purchased directly from a farmer or farmer's market are acceptable as long as the receipt includes the date of purchase, name of vendor/farmer, item cost, amount and total cost.

Food that is donated from local gardens or farms can be used as part of the reimbursable meal.





Appendices

Appendix A: MO Grown Produce Kitchen Tip Sheets.....42

Appendix B: MO’s Harvest of Books.....56

Appendix C: In-Class Lesson Plan for Pre-Field Trip58

Appendix E: Harvest of the Season Sample Menus60



Kitchen Tips for Apples



MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	September - November
Quality:	Choose apples that are firm with no soft spots or wrinkled skin. They should produce a “snap” sound when cut with a knife or bitten.
Storage:	Store in refrigerator up to 20 days or at room temperature for up to 7 days.
Food Safety:	Wash under cold running water prior to serving. Seal, date and refrigerate cut apples immediately and use the following day.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need 35 pounds of whole fresh apples.
Preparation Tips:	Dip or coat sliced apples with an acidic solution of 1 part lemon juice to 3 parts water to prevent browning.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slice and serve with cinnamon, chopped nuts, cheese slices, peanut butter or with dips like yogurt, cheese sauce or ranch dressing. • Allow children to construct their own “Apple Parfait” using a variety of local apples, granola, cranberries and vanilla yogurt. • Add chopped apples to a tuna or chicken salad. • Set up an “Apple Market” with different varieties of apples for tasting.
Nutrition:	Apples come in great varieties of sweetness and textures! They are high in vitamin C, potassium and fiber, which help fight against heart disease and cancer, maintain healthy blood pressure and keep you regular.

Fun Fact # 1:

More than 2,500 varieties of apples are grown in the United States. That means if you ate an apple a day it would take you nearly seven years to eat each kind.

Fun Fact #3:

Two-thirds of the fiber and lots of the antioxidants in apples are found in the peel.

Fun Fact #2:

It takes about 36 apples to make one gallon of apple cider.





Kitchen Tips for Bell Peppers

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	July and August
Quality:	Choose firm peppers with good color and smooth skin. Red, orange and yellow peppers taste sweeter than the green ones.
Storage:	Store in refrigerator up to 5 days. Bell peppers can be frozen whole or chopped for longer storage.
Food Safety:	Wash thoroughly under cold, running water.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings of raw pepper strips, you need 3.5 pounds of whole bell peppers.
Preparation Tips:	Clean well and remove seeds and stem.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cut into slices and serve raw with ranch dressing or hummus.• Add chopped peppers to scrambled eggs or mix in salads.• Cut peppers into slices, top with chili or cheese and bake.• Roasting peppers brings out their smoky sweetness.
Nutrition:	Bell peppers come in a variety of colors and are a good source of vitamins A and C, fiber, potassium and folate.

Fun Fact # 1:

Christopher Columbus gave “peppers” their name upon bringing them back to Europe from the West Indies.

Fun Fact #2:

Red bell peppers are simply ripened green peppers.





Kitchen Tips for Broccoli

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	May - June AND September - November
Quality:	Choose heads with a tight cluster of closed flower buds that are green, purplish or bluish green. Yellow flowers and large buds are a sign of over maturity. The stalks should be firm.
Storage:	Store unwashed in refrigerator up to 5 days. Store away from ethylene gas producing fruits.
Food Safety:	Wash thoroughly under cold, running water just before use.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need 5.25 pounds of untrimmed fresh broccoli.
Preparation Tips:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut florets into even bite-sized pieces for cooking. • Avoid overcooking, which produces a strong sulfur odor and results in lost nutrients • If preparing large quantities, cook in small batches. • Stems can be eaten if the tough outer part is peeled off.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanch broccoli uncovered in boiling water for 3-5 minutes. Drain and plunge broccoli into cold water, drain. Then add to pasta, pizza or scrambled eggs. • Offer raw broccoli “trees” with a dip. • Top cooked broccoli with shredded cheese • Try Asian seasonings such as sesame, ginger, soy sauce and garlic
Nutrition:	Broccoli is a dark green vegetable. It is high in vitamin C and vitamin K, and is a good source of fiber, folate, vitamin A and manganese. It also has lots of phytochemicals like lutein and zeaxanthin.

Fun Fact # 1:

Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers of the United States, was a fan of broccoli, importing the seeds from Italy to plant at Monticello.

Fun Fact #2:

Broccoli contains kaempferol, an anti-inflammatory, which helps fight against cancer and heart disease and may help prevent adult Type 2 diabetes.





Kitchen Tips for Cantaloupe

MO Grown Produce

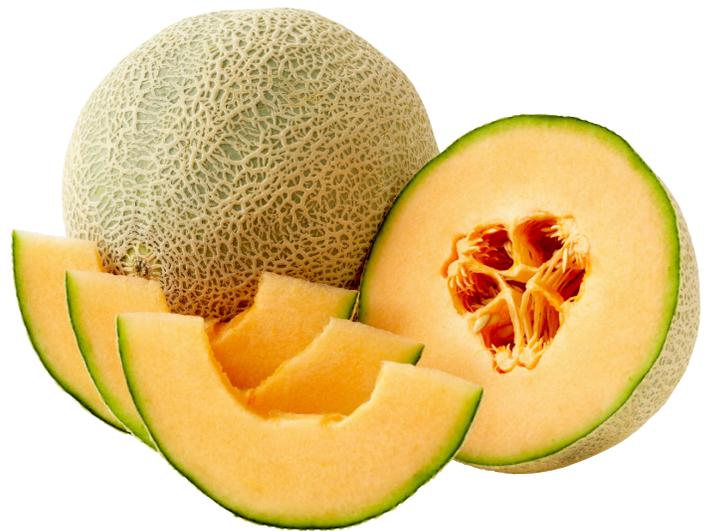
In Season in Missouri:	July - October
Quality:	Should be well netted with light green to turning yellow rind color. Avoid melons with damaged rinds. Check for ripeness by looking for the stem end to be hollowed inward. It should yield to light pressure and have a sweet, musky aroma.
Storage:	Store whole melons in refrigerator up to 5 days or at room temperature up to 2 days.
Food Safety:	Wash outer surface under cold running water and scrub with a clean produce brush before cutting. Do not keep cut cantaloupe more than 2 hours at room temperature or 7 days in refrigerator.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need 8.75 pounds of fresh whole cantaloupe.
Preparation Tips:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut in half and remove seeds from center before cutting into bite sized pieces. • Use a scoop to make melon balls.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make fruit salad using cantaloupe, strawberries, peaches and other fruits as desired. • Puree cantaloupe with a splash of lime juice and freeze in molds to make popsicles.
Nutrition:	Cantaloupe is a melon that is a good source of antioxidants - vitamins A and C. Vitamin A also helps maintain eye health. Cantaloupe also contains potassium and fiber.

Fun Fact # 1:

Cantaloupe grows on a trailing vine that can grow up to 5 feet long.

Fun Fact # 2:

Honeybees pollinate the yellow flowers on cantaloupe plants. If the flowers are not well-pollinated, they may not produce fruit.





Kitchen Tips for Cucumbers

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	July - October
Quality:	Choose firm, green and slender cucumbers. Avoid cucumbers that have soft spots or wrinkled skin.
Storage:	Store fresh whole cucumbers in refrigerator up to 1 week.
Food Safety:	Wash thoroughly under running water before use, even if you plan on removing the skin.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need 5 pounds of whole cucumbers.
Preparation Tips:	Slice, chop or grate cucumbers to add to salads or sandwiches. Keep the skin on to boost nutrient value of the meal.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add sliced cucumbers to sandwiches or salads. • Add chopped cucumbers to Greek yogurt to make a dip for carrots or crackers. • Have the kids assist in making “homemade pickles.” • Top cucumber rounds with hummus or tuna salad.
Nutrition:	Cucumbers are about 96% water, making them extremely low in calories. The peel is the most nutritious part and is a good source of vitamin K and contains potassium and vitamin C, too!

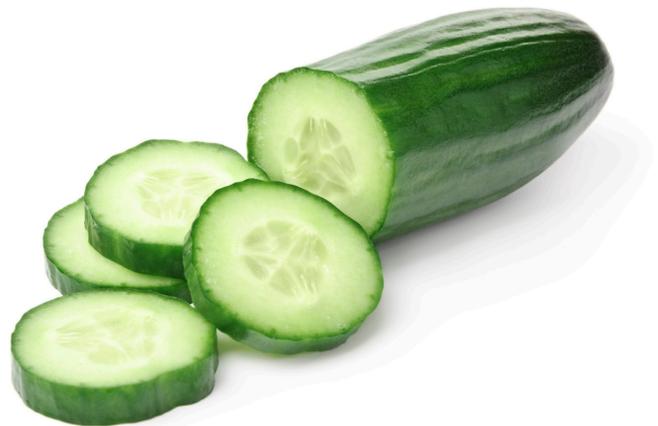
Fun Fact # 1:

Have you ever heard the phrase “cool as a cucumber?”

Cucumbers can be 20° F lower in temperature on the inside than the outside air.

Fun Fact #2:

One cucumber vine can produce 25-125 cucumbers in one season.





Kitchen Tips for Green Beans

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	June - August
Quality:	Choose beans with a vivid color, velvety feel and firm texture. When broken they should snap crisply. Do not buy beans that are limp, oversized, split or have rust spots or scars. If the seeds are bulging inside the pod, they are too mature.
Storage:	Untrimmed green beans should be stored in the warmest part of the refrigerator, or in the coolest part of the storeroom. Fresh beans can be stored in the refrigerator for 3-4 days in a plastic bag. Store away from ethylene gas producing fruits such as apples and bananas.
Food Safety:	Wash the green beans under running water and trim off the ends. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need 4.5 pounds of fresh, untrimmed green beans.
Preparation Tips:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanch beans in boiling water for 2-3 minutes then plunge into ice water until chilled. • Place green beans in boiling water for 4-5 minutes uncovered until they are crisp/tender, then drain, season and enjoy! • Batch cook green beans in a commercial steamer for 3-5 minutes.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bake crispy green bean “fries” topped with parmesan cheese. • Sauté green beans with olive oil and garlic. • Offer different varieties of green beans, such as purple or yellow. • Make a bean salad with blanched green beans, red peppers and mandarin oranges with a ginger vinegar dressing.
Nutrition:	Green beans are a good source of vitamin C and vitamin K. They also have fiber, vitamin A and folate.

Fun Fact # 1:

Green beans take nitrogen from the air and put it back into the soil, so growing green beans can be good for your garden soil!

Fun Fact #2:

“Green” beans can actually be green, yellow, purple or speckled in these colors.





Kitchen Tips for Lettuce

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	April - June AND September - November
Quality:	There are many varieties of lettuce and colors will vary, but all should be bright and crisp. Leaves should not be wilted, brown or slimy. Check package expiration date on pre-washed, bagged lettuce.
Storage:	Store lettuce in cold refrigerator, but do not allow it to freeze. Store in air tight containers for maximum shelf life. Lettuce is extremely sensitive to ethylene, so store away from fruits.
Food Safety:	Wash lettuce just before serving under cold, running water. Strip outer coarse leaves from heads before washing. Separate the leaves of Romaine during washing to remove sand and debris. Do not wash lettuce that has been labeled "ready to eat," "washed" or "triple washed."
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need 1.75 pounds of fresh, untrimmed lettuce.
Preparation Tips:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tear lettuce leaves with your hands or cut with a plastic knife to keep lettuce from browning quickly. • Salad dressing clings best to dry leaves.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chopped salad with smaller pieces may be easier for young children to eat. • Pair lettuce in a salad with other fresh, seasonal fruits or vegetables.
Nutrition:	The most important nutrients in lettuce are vitamin A and potassium. The darker green varieties like Romaine are more nutritious. Iceberg lettuce has little nutritional value.

Fun Fact # 1:

Lettuce is the 2nd most popular fresh vegetable in the United States behind potatoes. Americans eat about five times more lettuce than we ate 100 years ago.

Fun Fact #2:

Lettuce was very important for the ancient Romans and ancient Greeks who believed that it induced sleeping.





Kitchen Tips for Peaches

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	June - August
Quality:	Choose firm peaches that give to a little gentle pressure. Choose a peach that has a strong sweet smell.
Storage:	Store ripe peaches in plastic bag in refrigerator up to 5 days. Peaches that are not yet ripe should be kept at room temperature for ripening.
Food Safety:	Rinse with cool water when ready to use.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need 5 pounds of fresh, whole peaches.
Preparation Tips:	Rinse peach when ready to use. Cut in half to remove pit. Eat whole like an apple or cut into slices.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve fresh peach slices with yogurt for dipping and sprinkled with cinnamon. • Top pancakes with chopped peaches. • Add peach slices to cold or hot cereal.
Nutrition:	Peaches are a sweet treat with a sweet scent that provide vitamin A, potassium, magnesium and fiber.

Fun Fact # 1:

The largest peach on record weighed 1.6 pounds and was picked in Michigan.

Fun Fact #2:

Georgia is known as the “Peach State” but it is actually 3rd in the line of largest peach producers behind California and South Carolina.





Kitchen Tips for Spinach

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	March - June AND September - November
Quality:	Look for spinach without damage from insects and other environmental sources. It should be fresh, tender and dark green in color. Reject bunches that are yellowed or wilted.
Storage:	Refrigerate in air tight container up to 5 days.
Food Safety:	Spinach should be washed well to remove any sand or dirt, however, pre-washed packaged spinach should NOT be washed again.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings of cooked spinach, purchase 6.5 pounds of ready to use fresh spinach leaves.
Preparation Tips:	Baby spinach stems are tender and do not have to be removed. Spinach cooks very quickly and shrinks as the moisture cooks out of the leaves.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use raw baby spinach in place of lettuce in wraps and sandwiches. • Mix spinach into a tossed salad with lettuce and strawberries. • Add a few baby spinach leaves to a fruit smoothie for a fun green color. • Add spinach to scrambled eggs.
Nutrition:	Spinach is a dark green vegetable. It is high in vitamin A, vitamin K and is a good source of vitamin C and folate. And for all that goodness, it's very low in calories—one cup of raw spinach only has about 6 calories!

Fun Fact # 1:

The popularity of spinach began in the early 1800's in the United States. Consumption surged after the cartoon "Popeye the Sailor Man" was developed in the 1920's.

Fun Fact #2:

Spinach likes to grow in cool weather and only takes about 4-6 weeks from seed to harvest, so it is a good crop for school and childcare gardens.





Kitchen Tips for Strawberries

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	May - June
Quality:	Choose firm, brightly colored berries with the stem attached. Avoid soft or dark colored berries as they are bruised or overripe. The overripe berries are often in the bottom of container, so look carefully when purchasing.
Storage:	Store in the refrigerator and use within 2-3 days.
Food Safety:	Rinse berries just before use.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need 5 pounds of fresh, whole strawberries.
Preparation Tips:	Rinse berries and remove stem.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top pancakes or shortcakes with fresh strawberries. • Make a strawberry smoothie with vanilla yogurt. • Make “strawberry salsa” with other fruits for a sweet treat. • Spread cream cheese or yogurt on a graham cracker and top with sliced strawberries and other fruits for a healthy “fruit pizza.”
Nutrition:	Strawberries are a sweet treat that provide vitamin C, potassium and fiber. Eight strawberries contain more vitamin C than a medium sized orange.

Fun Fact # 1:

Native Americans mixed crushed strawberries in their cornbread.

Colonists later developed their own version and called it strawberry shortcake.

Fun Fact #2:

Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside of their skin. There are about 200 seeds on each berry!





MO Grown Produce

Kitchen Tips for Summer Squash

In Season in Missouri:	June - September
Quality:	Popular varieties of summer squash include yellow crookneck, zucchini and patty pan. All should have bright color and be firm to touch. Skin should be intact and have very little discoloration. Avoid squash that are overly large or have scuff marks, scars or bruises.
Storage:	Store in a plastic bag in refrigerator up to 4 days. Remove blossom and stem before storing to delay decay.
Food Safety:	Gently wash under cold running water. Cover, date and refrigerate sliced summer squash immediately and use within 24 hours.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings, you need about 4 pounds of whole fresh summer squash.
Preparation Tips:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin is tender and edible. • Can be eaten raw or cooked. • Summer squash cooks quickly and becomes mushy if overcooked.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dip raw strips in Ranch dressing. • Sauté or stir fry. • Peel zucchini its whole length with a vegetable peeler to create zucchini ribbons to be used as “noodles” with pasta sauce. • Make zucchini or squash “fritters.”
Nutrition:	Summer squash is mostly water so it’s low in calories, but contains vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, potassium and magnesium.

Fun Fact # 1:

The world’s largest zucchini on record was 69 1/2 inches long, and weighed 65 pounds.

Fun Fact #2:

The flower of the summer squash plant is edible. Fried squash blossoms are considered a delicacy.





MO Grown Produce

Kitchen Tips for Sweet Potatoes

In Season in Missouri:	September - December
Quality:	Choose firm potatoes with smooth, unbruised skins without cracks.
Storage:	Store in a cool, dark place for 1-2 weeks. Store cooked sweet potato for up to 7 days in refrigerator.
Food Safety:	Scrub under running water with a vegetable brush before cutting and cooking.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings of cooked sweet potato, you need 7.5 pounds of fresh, whole sweet potatoes.
Preparation Tips:	Wash sweet potatoes and peel if desired. Cut into slices, strips or chunks. They can be boiled and mashed or baked or roasted.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mash sweet potatoes with butter, cinnamon and a little brown sugar. • Make baked sweet potato fries. • Try sweet potato pie for a special treat. • Roast sweet potato chunks with other root vegetables.
Nutrition:	Sweet potatoes are an orange vegetable that is one of the richest sources of vitamin A, which is what gives the sweet potato its orange color. They are also a good source of fiber, potassium and vitamin C. Much of the nutrition is in the sweet potato skin.

Fun Fact # 1:

Sweet potatoes are one of the oldest known vegetables. They were introduced in the United States in the mid-20th century as “yams,” but a sweet potato and yam are actually different.

Fun Fact #2:

In Asia and Micronesia, typical sweet potatoes are actually blue, not orange.





Kitchen Tips for Tomatoes

MO Grown Produce

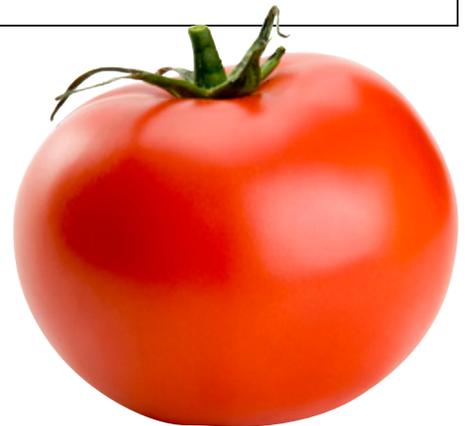
In Season in Missouri:	July - October
Quality:	Tomatoes should be slightly soft and free from skin damage such as punctures or cracks. Heirloom tomatoes come in a variety of colors and shapes and are known for their superior flavor.
Storage:	Store whole tomatoes at room temperature for best taste. Tomatoes that are not fully ripe will continue to ripen if kept at room temperature and out of the sun.
Food Safety:	Wash under running water that is ten degrees warmer than the tomato to prevent infusion of bacteria. Do not soak in water. Do not keep cut tomatoes more than 4 hours at room temperature or 7 days in refrigerator.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings of raw tomato you need 3-4 pounds.
Preparation Tips:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove core and slice with a sharp or serrated knife. • To peel, drop in boiling water 30 seconds and then plunge in ice water. Use a paring knife to pull away skin. • Add sliced tomatoes to salads and sandwiches at the last minute to avoid sogginess.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May remove seeds if desired by cutting in half and gently squeezing out the jelly like juice and seeds. • Tomatoes are delicious with Italian seasonings such as basil, oregano, garlic and olive oil. • They are great with Mexican/Southwest flavors such as cilantro, onion and peppers as a fresh “Pico de Gallo” salsa.
Nutrition:	Tomatoes are a red/orange vegetable and are rich in vitamins A and C. They are also rich in lycopene, an antioxidant, which may help prevent disease. Cooking enhances the lycopene in tomatoes.

Fun Fact # 1:

According to the USDA, Americans eat 22-24 pounds of tomatoes per person, per year. About half of that comes in the form of ketchup and tomato sauce.

Fun Fact #2:

Colonial American gardeners grew tomatoes for their looks, but didn't eat them because they thought they were poisonous.





Kitchen Tips for Winter Squash

MO Grown Produce

In Season in Missouri:	August - December
Quality:	Choose firm squash that feels heavy for its size. They should have a dull sheen and be intact and hard. Avoid squash with soft spots.
Storage:	Winter squash usually keep up to 3 months if stored in a cool, dry place. Never store partially cooked squash.
Food Safety:	Rinse squash under water before using.
Yield:	For 50, ¼ cup servings of cooked squash, you need 6.75 pounds of fresh, whole butternut squash.
Preparation Tips:	Remove the hard stem. If necessary, remove skin, or roast with skin on for easy removal after roasting. Separate top and bottom of squash, then cut the bottom section in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds with as spoon. Winter squash is never served raw.
Kid-Friendly Serving Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puree squash and serve as a soup. • Cube squash, bake it and sprinkle with cinnamon and nutmeg. • Squash and apples blend well in a casserole dish. • Roast squash seeds with vegetable oil for a crunchy snack.
Nutrition:	Winter squash are red/orange vegetables high in vitamin A, which helps maintain your eye health and gives the squash its bright orange color. It is also a good source of vitamin C and fiber.

Fun Fact # 1:

Winter squash first migrated to Europe from Peru by a Spanish Explorer. Many Europeans referred to squash as “melons.”

Fun Fact #2:

Native Americans planted corn, beans and squash together as the “Three Sisters” because the three crops benefit from each other.



Appendix B

MO's Harvest of Books

Book Name	Author	About the Book
A Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds	Jean Richards	non-fiction introduction to seeds
A Garden for Pig	Kathryn Thurman	funny story; includes tips on growing an organic garden
A Green, Green Garden	Mercer Mayer	story about gardening for young readers
A Harvest of Color: Growing a Vegetable Garden	Melanie Eclare	lessons on gardening; best for early elementary children
And the Good Brown Earth	Kathy Henderson	young child & grandma work side-by-side through the cycles of their gardens
Apple Countdown	Joan Holub	counting book about field trip to apple orchard
Apple Farmer Annie	Monica Wellington	Annie picks, counts, sorts, bakes, sells her apples, then makes some simple apple recipes; board book available
Apples	Gail Gibbons	non-fiction book about apple facts
Bear and Bunny Grow Tomatoes	Bruce Koscielniak	story about hard work and sharing
Bee & Me	J. Elle	simple environmental message about bees; board book available
Chicks and Salsa	Aaron Reynolds	a celebration of culinary diversity
Compost Stew	Mary McKenna Siddals	an A to Z recipe in bouncy verse for making compost
Cool as a Cucumber	Sally Smallwood	uses art & photography to describe characteristics of different fruits and vegetables
Cucumber Soup	Vickie Leigh Krudwig	counting book; includes facts on insects and a recipe
Dr. Strong and Sweet Potatoes	Yori Tokeda	story teaches nutrition and encourages children to try vegetables
Eating the Alphabet	Lois Ehlert	classic alphabet book introduces many fruits & vegetables; board book available
Farmer's Market Day	Shanda Trent	rhyming story about a girl's discoveries at the market
Food from Farms	Nancy Dickmann	non-fiction book about the world of farming
From the Garden	Michael Dahl	counting book about growing food
Fruit	Sara Anderson	beginner board book introduces fruit to babies
Giant Peach Yodel	Jan Peck	tale about peach pickin' fun; includes recipe for peach cobbler
Go, Go, Grapes!	April Pulley Sayre	chant about many different fruits; board book available
Green Bean, Green Bean	Patricia Thomas	rhyming text and illustrations show growing cycle of beans
Green Beans, Potatoes and Even Tomatoes	Brian Cleary	silly rhyming book highlights health benefits of vegetables for young readers
Growing Vegetable Soup	Lois Ehlert	father & child grow a garden and make soup from the harvest; board book available
How Martha Saved her Parents from Green Beans	David LaRochelle	funny book about overcoming fears for picky eaters
I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato	Lauren Child	story about a fussy eater trying new foods
Inch By Inch, The Garden Song	David Mallett	based on a classic folk song
Jamberry	Bruce Degen	classic rhyming book. board book available
Jody's Beans	Malachy Doyle	girl learns from her grandfather how to grow, prepare and eat scarlet runner beans
Johnny Appleseed	Jodie Shepherd	American legend
Lettuce!	Diana Kizlauskas	engaging tale about too much lettuce for young children

Lunch	Denise Fleming	hungry mouse samples different colored foods; children guess what comes next
Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli	Barbara Jean Hicks	story about learning to like a food
Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!	Candace Fleming	story with repetition about a gardener's battle with bunnies
My Garden	Kevin Henckes	imaginative book about a fantasy garden
Oliver's Fruit Salad	Vivian French	simple story about trying new foods
Oliver's Vegetables	Vivian French	Oliver learns to eat what he finds in grandparents' garden
One Bean	Ann Rockwell	non-fiction book about sprouting beans
One Watermelon Seed	Celia Barker Lottridge	counting book about gardening
Planting a Rainbow	Lois Ehlert	about the process of growing a flower garden; board book available
Pumpkin Circle, The Story of a Garden	George Levenson	shows the natural cycle of a pumpkin patch through photographs and verse
Pumpkin, Pumpkin	Jeanne Titherington	about the life cycle of a pumpkin
Rah, Rah, Radishes!	April Pulley Sayre	classic vegetable chant; includes art project; board book available
Rainbow Stew	Cathryn Falwell	rhyiming book about making vegetable stew
Scarlette Beane	Karen Wallace	fairy tale about a girl and her fantasy garden
Secrets of the Vegetable Garden	Carron Brown	reveals nature secrets when light is shined behind pages
Strawberries are Red	Peter Horacek	simple board book creates a rainbow with different colors of fruit
Sweet as a Strawberry	Sally Smallwood	introduces textures & tastes of different fruits; uses photographs of food
Sylvia's Spinach	Katherine Pryor	Sylvia learns to like spinach after growing it
The Apple Pie Tree	Zoe Hall	about the cycle of an apple tree; includes role of bees and weather
The Carrot Seed	Ruth Krauss	classic book teaches patience; book in print since 1945
The Gigantic Sweet Potato	Dianne De Las Casas	tale about cooperation and problem solving; includes recipe for sweet potato pie
The Little Gardener	Jan Gerardi	board book for toddlers about gardening
The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry and the Big Hungry Bear	Audrey Wood	engages very young children in a story about sharing; introduces simple math concepts
The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree	Gail Gibbons	about apples, plant life and the seasons
The Surprise Garden	Zoe Hall	engages young children by having them guess what the plants will be
The Vegetables We Eat	Gail Gibbons	a wide range of facts about vegetables
Tomatoes Grow on a Vine	Mari Schuh	non-fiction book describes how tomatoes grow
Tomatoes to Ketchup	Inez Snyder	simple story about making home-made ketchup
Too Many Zucchini for Zachary Beany	Tina Dozauer-Ray	a boy and his grandmother find many ways to use a bumper crop of zucchini; includes a recipe and packet of seeds
Tops and Bottoms	Janet Stevens	humorous trickster tale about plant parts
Up, Down and Around	Katherine Ayres	cheerful rhyming story about how plants grow
Vegetables	Sara Anderson	beginner board book introduces vegetables to babies
What's in the Garden	Marianne Collins Berkes	introduces 12 edible plants with riddles; includes recipes
Zora's Zucchini	Katherine Pryor	story about garden success and sharing

In-Class Lesson Plan for Pre-Field Trip

Where Food Comes From

1 Introduction

Tell class about the farm they will be visiting on their upcoming field trip and then have kids brainstorm things they know about farms.

2 Some Food Comes from Gardens

Gardens are awesome; we can grow our own food and make yummy snacks out of it. Getting food from our garden is cheaper than buying produce and the food is much fresher! Talk about the children's experience at their preschool garden or other gardens they've seen. *Farms are like gardens but they are bigger and grow more food.*

3 Almost Everything Else We Eat Comes from Farms

- Can you think of something you eat that comes from a farm?
They might guess eggs. *Yes, eggs come from chickens and chickens come from farms.*
They might guess corn. *Yes, corn grows on a farm.*
- **What is something you eat that doesn't come from a farm?**
For example, they might guess pizza. *Actually, all the parts of pizza come from a farm. The crust is made from flour which is made from wheat which grows on a farm. The cheese is made from milk which comes from a cow, which comes from a farm. The tomato sauce comes from tomatoes, which grow on a farm. If there are other veggies on the pizza, they grew on a farm. If there is meat on the pizza, it came from an animal that lived on a farm.*

They might guess chocolate. *Yes, even chocolate comes from a farm. The cocoa pods grow on a tree that grows on a farm. Almost everything we eat comes from a farm!!*



Where Food Comes From cont.



4 Let's Talk About Tropical Foods!

- **Tropical foods grow in the tropics and need warm weather all year long.**
(Maybe find a map and point out the equator/tropical locations)

- **What are some tropical foods? Foods that need warm weather all year?**

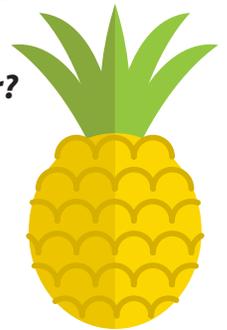
For example:

Pineapple (Costa Rica)

Oranges (FL)

Bananas (Ecuador)

Avocado (Mexico)



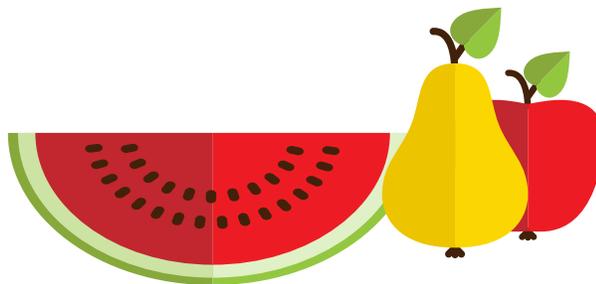
- **Is Missouri tropical? Does it stay warm all year long?**

It does get warm here, but it doesn't stay warm all year long. Missouri has a temperate climate which means we can't grow tropical foods, but we can still grow a lot!

- **What kinds of things grow in Missouri? What have you seen growing in a garden or on a farm?**

Cucumbers, melons, strawberries, sweet potatoes, apples, etc.

So many foods grow in Missouri!



Appendix D

Harvest of the Season Sample Menus

MO's Harvest of the Season - Fall Menu

Tomatoes, Spinach, Apples

Menu Guide:
 WG = whole grain served at least once per day
 Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces
 Cereal no more than 6 grams of sugar per ounce
BOLD = recipe provided on: www.health.mo.gov/growingwithMO

BREAKFAST	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Fluid Milk (Unflavored for children under 6-years of age)	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Grapes (cut in half)	Diced Peaches	Cranberry Applesauce	Tropical Mixed Fruit	Warm Cinnamon Apple Slices
Grain/Bread		Oatmeal	WG Pancake or Waffle	WG Flour Tortilla	Cream of Wheat
Meat or Meat Alternate	Hard Cooked Egg			Cheese Quesadilla	
Other Foods					
LUNCH					
Fluid Milk	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Stew (1/4 cup vegetables)	Steamed Green Beans	Steamed Broccoli	Cucumber Slices & Grape Tomato Halves	Baby Spinach Salad
Fruit or Vegetable	Orange Smiles	Tomato Soup	Pineapple Tidbits & Kiwi	Mixed Berries & Banana Slices	Orange Glazed Carrots
Grain/Bread	Whole Grain Roll	WG Bread	Noodles	WG Bread	Brown Rice
Meat or Meat Alternate	Hamburger Vegetable Apple Cider Stew	Grilled Cheese on WG Bread	Chicken & Noodles	Tuna Salad Sandwich	Baked Chicken
Other Foods		Vanilla Yogurt			
SNACK - Select 2 of the 4 components					
Fluid Milk			1% or Fat-free		1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Black Bean, Corn & Tomato Fiesta Salad	Fresh Apple Slices	Spinach in Wrap		
Vegetable					
Grain/Bread	WG Tortilla Chips		WG Flour Tortilla	WG Mini Bagel	Apple Pie Snack Mix
Meat or Meat Alternate		Cheese Cubes	Turkey Tortilla Snack Wrap	Hard Cooked Egg	
Other Foods	Water	Water		Water	

Black Bean, Corn and Tomato Fiesta Salad

Ingredients	10 Portions	25 Portions	50 Portions	Directions
Black beans, canned	2 cups	5.4 cups	1 No.10 can	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Thaw and drain corn. Drain black beans in a colander. In a large bowl or plastic tub, combine corn, black beans, diced tomatoes and chopped green onions. In a medium mixing bowl, combine fresh cilantro leaves, olive oil, lime juice, cumin, salt and pepper. Blend well. Pour dressing over the bean, corn, tomato and onion mixture. Blend well, cover and refrigerate overnight. Stir well before serving.
Corn, sweet yellow frozen	1 lb	3 lbs	5 lbs 6 oz	
Tomatoes, diced	9 oz	1 lb 10 oz	2 lbs 14 oz	
Green onions, chopped	3 Tbsp	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	
Cilantro	1/4 cup	3/4 cup	1 1/3 cup	
Olive oil	1/4 cup	3/4 cup	1 1/3 cup	
Lime juice	1/4 cup	3/4 cup	1 1/3 cup	
Cumin, ground	2 tsp	1 1/2 Tbsp	3 Tbsp	
Salt	1/3 tsp	1 tsp	2 tsp	
Pepper	1 tsp	1 1/2 tsp	1 Tbsp	

Portion size: 1/2 cup

Source: Sartell-St. Stephen Public School



CACFP Crediting

Grain/Bread	
Fruit	
Vegetable	3/8 cup
Meat/Meat Alt.	1/2 cup
Milk	

MO's Harvest of the Season – Winter Menu
Sweet potatoes, Winter squash

Menu Guide:
WG = whole grain served at least once per day
Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces
Cereal no more than 6 grams of sugar per ounce
BOLD = recipe provided on: www.health.mo.gov/growingwithMO

BREAKFAST	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Fluid Milk (Unflavored for children under 6-years of age)	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Orange Smiles	Warm Diced Peaches	Banana, Sliced	Oven Warmed Blueberries	Fresh Grapes (cut in half)
Grain/Bread		Warm Brown Rice	WG Cereal	Oatmeal	WG Toast
Meat or Meat Alternate	Scrambled Egg				Cheese Cubes
Other Foods					
LUNCH					
Fluid Milk	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Chili Roasted Sweet Potatoes	Chic Penne (1/4 cup broccoli)	Tossed Salad	Sitr Fry (1/4 cup vegetables)	Spaghetti (1/4 cup sweet potatoes)
Fruit or Vegetable	Steamed Green Beans	Mandarin Oranges	Soup (1/4 cup vegetables)	Chunky Mixed Fruit	Applesauce
Grain/Bread	WG Bun	WG Penne	WG Tortilla Chips	Brown Rice	Spaghetti Noodles
Meat or Meat Alternate	Ground Beef Sloppy Joe	Chic Penne	Ground Beef & Bean Taco Soup	Stir Fry Fajita Chicken, Squash & Corn	Somali Spaghetti (ground beef or turkey)
Other Foods					
SNACK – Select 2 of the 4 components.					
Fluid Milk		1% or Fat-free			1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Pineapple Tidbits	Spiced Apple Topping	Carrot & Celery Sticks		
Grain/Bread		Cream of Wheat		WG Toast	WG Mini Bagel
Meat or Meat Alternate	Cottage Cheese		Lentil Squash Hummus	Hard Cooked Egg	Nut butter (sunflower or peanut)
Other Foods	Water		Water	Water	

Chili-Roasted Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients	12 Portions	25 Portions	50 Portions	Directions
Sweet potatoes, fresh	4 lb 2 oz	8 lb 4 oz	16 lb 8 oz	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Scrub sweet potatoes thoroughly. Leave skin on and cut potatoes into wedges about 1 1/2 inches thick. Place sweet potatoes in large mixing bowl. In small bowl, whisk together chili powder, sugar, peppers, garlic powder and salt. Drizzle sweet potatoes with oil, sprinkle with seasoning and toss to coat evenly. Place seasoned potatoes on sheet pan. Do not crowd sweet potatoes in the pan. Bake at 400⁰ F for 12-15 minutes or until tender and browned in spots.
Chili powder	3/4 tsp	1/2 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	
Sugar	3/4 tsp	1/2 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	
Black pepper	1/8 tsp	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp	
White pepper	1/8 tsp	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp	
Garlic powder	1/8 tsp	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp	
Salt	1/8 tsp	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp	
Vegetable oil	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup	

Portion size: 1/2 cup

Source: Sizzling School Lunches-Indiana Cooks with Chef Cyndie



CACFP Crediting	
Grain/Bread	
Fruit	
Vegetable	1/2 cup
Meat/Meat Alt.	
Milk	

MO's Harvest of the Season – Spring Menu
Strawberries, Broccoli, Lettuce

Menu Guide:
 WG = whole grain served at least once per day
 Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces
 Cereal no more than 6 grams of sugar per ounce
BOLD = recipe provided on: www.health.mo.gov/growingwithMO

BREAKFAST	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Fluid Milk (Unflavored for children under 6 years of age)	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Fresh Strawberries, Sliced	Orange Smiles	Banana, Smiles	Cinnamon Applesauce	Diced Peaches & Blueberries
Grain/Bread	WG Cereal		Smiling Banana Dog	WG Waffle	Oatmeal
Meat or Meat Alternate		Cheesy Scrambled Eggs			
Other Foods					
LUNCH					
Fluid Milk	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Steamed Broccoli	Baby Carrots	Spring Mix Lettuce Salad	Soup (1/4 cup vegetable)	Casserole (1/4 cup vegetable)
Fruit or Vegetable	Grape Tomatoes (cut in half)	Grapes (cut in half)	Diced Peaches & Pears	Clementine (1 whole peeled = 1/2 cup)	Kiwi & Strawberries, Sliced
Grain/Bread	WG Rotini Pasta	WG Bread	WG Flour Tortilla	WG Breadstick	Brown Rice
Meat or Meat Alternate	Chicken Alfredo with a Twist	Egg Salad Sandwich	Bean & Cheese Burrito	Broccoli Cheese Soup (3/4 oz cheese)	Chicken Curry Casserole
Other Foods			Salsa	Vanilla Yogurt	
SNACK - Select 2 of the 4 components					
Fluid Milk				1% or Fat-free	
Fruit or Vegetable	Diced Pears	Stop Light Bell Pepper Strips (red, yellow & green)	Pineapple Tidbits		Sunny Broccoli Salad
Vegetable					
Grain/Bread	Pretzels	WG Crackers		Cornbread	WG Crackers
Meat or Meat Alternate			Cottage Cheese		
Other Foods	Water	Cucumber Tzatziki Dip	Water		Water

Broccoli Cheese Soup

Ingredients	12 Portions	25 Portions	50 Portions	Directions
Chicken stock	2 1/4 cups	1 qt 1/2 cup	2 qt 1 cup	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a heavy pot, bring chicken stock to a boil. 2. Add carrots and onions. Boil until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. 3. In a separate heavy pot, melt butter. Whisk in flour and cook for 2 minutes. Do not brown. 4. Slowly add hot milk. Continue to whisk until smooth. 5. Slowly add stock and vegetables. 6. Add salt, pepper and hot sauce. Whisk to blend. Simmer until thickened, about 10 minutes, whisking occasionally. 7. Add cheese, whisking occasionally until cheese is melted. 8. Add broccoli. Stir occasionally.
Fresh carrots, 1/4" chopped	1 1/2 cup	3 cups	2 qt 2 cups	
Fresh onions, chopped	3/4 cup	1 1/2 cup	3 cups	
Butter	2 Tbsp	4 Tbsp (2 oz)	4 oz	
Flour	1/4 cup 3.5 Tbsp	3/4 cup 3 Tbsp	1 3/4 cups 2 Tbsp	
1% milk, hot	1 cup	2 cups	1 qt	
Salt	1/8 tsp	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp	
Black pepper	Dash	1/8 tsp	1/4 tsp	
Hot pepper sauce (optional)	Dash	1/8 tsp	1/4 tsp	
Reduced fat cheddar cheese, shredded	9 1/2 oz	1 lb 3 oz	2 lb 6 oz	
Frozen broccoli, chopped	1/2 lb	1 lb	2 lb	

Portion size: 1/2 cup
 Source: USDA Recipes for Child Care



CACFP Crediting

Grain/Bread	
Fruit	
Vegetable	1/2 cup
Meat/Meat Alt.	3/4 cup
Milk	

MO's Harvest of the Season – Summer Menu
Cucumber, Bell Pepper, Green Beans, Cantaloupe, Peaches, Summer Squash

Menu Guide:
 WG = whole grain served at least once per day
 Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces
 Cereal no more than 6 grams of sugar per ounce
BOLD = recipe provided on: www.health.mo.gov/growingwithMO

BREAKFAST	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Fluid Milk (Unflavored for children under 6 years of age)	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Banana, Sliced	Fresh Peaches (cut in small pieces)	Fresh Berries (choose blackberries, raspberries, blueberries)	Pineapple Tidbits	Fresh Peaches, Sliced
Grain/Bread	WG English Muffin	Homemade Granola	WG Cereal		WG Cereal
Meat or Meat Alternate		Vanilla Yogurt Parfait		Cottage Cheese	
Other Foods	Nut-butter (sunflower or peanut) spread on muffin				
LUNCH					
Fluid Milk	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free	1% or Fat-free
Fruit or Vegetable	Cucumber Tomato Salad	Fresh Green Beans	Diced Fresh Tomatoes & Shredded Lettuce	Saucy Baked Beans	Apple Slices
Fruit or Vegetable	Watermelon Wedge	Corn on the Cob	Orange Smiles	Baked Sweet Potato Fries	Carrot Sticks
Grain/Bread	WG Bread	WG Roll	WG Flour Tortilla	WG Bun	Hot Dog Bun
Meat or Meat Alternate	Turkey & Cheese Sandwich	BBQ Chicken	Ground Beef Taco	Sloppy Joe (ground turkey or beef)	Smiling Banana Dog
Other Foods			Taco toppings: Salsa & Shredded Cheese		String Cheese
SNACK – Select 2 of the 4 components					
Fluid Milk			1% or Fat-free		
Fruit or Vegetable	Red Bell Pepper Strips	Fresh Cantaloupe Chunks	Summer Squash (zucchini & yellow squash) Sticks	Grapes (cut in half)	Frozen Fruit Cup
Vegetable					
Grain/Bread		Just for Kicks Snack Mix			WG Crackers
Meat or Meat Alternate	Deviled Egg			Cheese Cubes	
Other Foods	Water	Water	White Beans Ranch Dip	Water	Water

Cucumber & Tomato Salad

Ingredients	12 Portions	25 Portions	50 Portions	Directions
Fresh tomatoes	1 lb	2 lb 8 oz	5 lb	1. Dice tomatoes and dice or slice cucumbers thinly. 2. Mix tomatoes and cucumbers with Italian dressing and chill until ready to serve.
Cucumbers	1 lb	2 lb 8 oz	5 lb	
Italian salad dressing	1/4 cup	1/2 cup 2 Tbsp	1 1/4 cup	

Portion size: 1/2 cup



CACFP Crediting
 Grain/Bread
 Fruit
 Vegetable
 Meat/Meat Alt.
 Milk

1/2 cup

Sources

National Farm to School Network

<http://www.farmentoschool.org/resources>

Produce Information Sheets

from United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA)

Food and Nutrition Service

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/ofs/produce-information-sheets>

Grow It, Try It, Like It curriculum

from USDA Team Nutrition

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-try-it-it>

Idaho State Department of Education, Child

Nutrition Programs, Team Nutrition

(kitchen tip sheets)

Farm to Childcare Curriculum Package

from Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

<http://www.iatp.org/documents/farm-to-childcare-curriculum-package>

Cooking Matters for Child Care Professionals curriculum

from Share Our Strength

<https://www.cookingmatters.org/courses>

Growing Minds Farm to Preschool Toolkit

from Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)

<http://growing-minds.org/farm-to-preschool/>

Farm to Early Childhood Programs-A Step-by-Step Guide

from Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems

http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/farm_to_early_childhood_guide

Growing Farm to Preschool in Your State-A How To Guide

from Ecotrust

http://www.ecotrust.org/media/Farm_to_preschool_digital.pdf

USDA Memo CACFP 11-2015-Local Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program with Questions and Answers

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/local-foods-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

CACFP Menu Planning Guide

from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

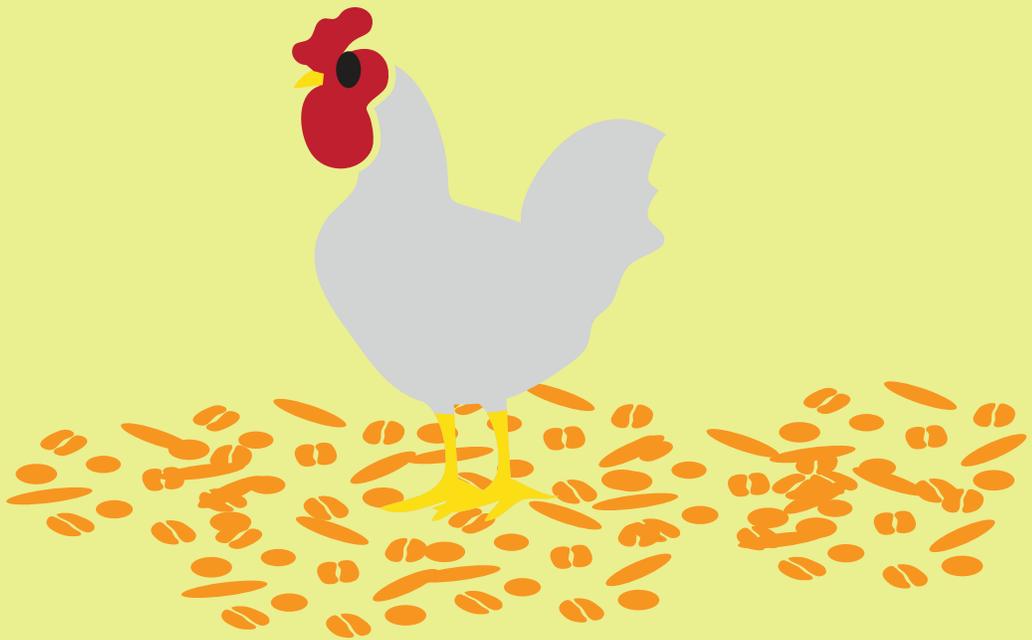
<https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/menu-planning/menu-planning-tools/menu-planning-tools-child-care-providers>

Farm Field Trip Toolkit for Teachers

from Willamette Farm and Food Coalition

<http://www.farmentoschool.org/resources>

USDA Memo CACFP 11-2015-Local Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program with Questions and Answers at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/procuring-local-foods>





Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Bureau of Community Health and Wellness
P.O. Box 570
Jefferson City, MO 65102
573-522-2820