



HCFS Farm to PreSchool Project

**As local as possible,
always healthy and sustainably produced.**

See “Farm to PreSchool” pages at: www.HCFS.org

Farm to PreSchool is an extension of the familiar K-12 Farm to School program to our youngest children. As such it involves connecting to local farms and ranches for as much healthy food as possible and for information about who grew it and how it is grown. This is set within the broader healthy school food movement in that we want the healthiest, most sustainably produced food as possible for our school children whatever the source. Local food tends to be fresher, whole rather than processed, carries much more information with it from its source on neighboring farms, and supports local producers, the local economy, and the environment.

Farm to PreSchool is a critical program in that these younger children need the best food possible since their overall health and attitudes about food established at this age tend to carry on throughout their lives. Local food can be easier to incorporate into meals since many preschool settings are active in the summer growing season in contrast to K-12. Experiential education is the norm at this age, so garden and cooking activities are very influential. Parent involvement in their children’s food is often greater at this age, so hopefully this parental interest developed around healthy local food will continue into the K-12 setting.

The Project: HCFS was involved in two projects in 2013 in which interviews were conducted with home day care providers and day care centers across Colorado to determine access to healthier foods including local foods. This experience, along with our work to establish K-12 Farm to School in Southwest Colorado over the last nine years has led us to start a Farm to PreSchool Project in the La Plata County and surrounding areas. Funding has come so far from the generosity of the Colorado Health Foundation, La Plata Electric Roundup Foundation, Ballantine Family Fund, and MercuryGives.

Project Objectives:

- Increase the amount of healthy, minimally processed, sustainably produced foods consumed by preschool children and their families in our area, especially local products when possible.
- Increase access for preschool providers to these healthier foods in our area.
- Increase the acceptance by children and their families of these healthier foods through gardening, cooking, and tasting activities.
- Increase the connections between preschools and neighboring farms and ranches.
- Increase the amount of healthy local products grown and made available in our area.

To Get Involved — as a preschool, producer, parent, garden volunteer, etc: Contact Jim Dyer, Project Director (contact info is below)

To Find Out More: See the many resources available at www.HCFS.org