



renewing the countryside



Farm to Early Care & Education

We would like to invite you to join the Farm to Child Care - Minnesota Facebook Group



Hello! We would like to invite you to join the Farm to Child Care Minnesota Facebook Group, if you are not already a member. This is a great opportunity to share experiences, opportunities, successes, challenges, and questions with other child care providers and trainers. We will also continue to post about new grants, resources for activities and meals, and more. Let's stay connected! We look forward to active conversations about Farm to Child Care! This is a closed group, so just make sure to click to request access.

Happy Holidays,

Cassie Lewis, GreenCorps member with Renewing the Countryside

When Farmer's Markets aren't as frequent, and the snow begins to fall, in-season fruits and vegetables can be few and far between. So what can we do? Stock up on vegetables that store easily, or make sure to freeze some favorites. Ask your distributor about locally frozen foods and fall vegetables. Read more about storing hearty vegetables for the winter months below.

In The News

Obesity rates for young Children in nutrition programs have dropped in 31 states

over the past 5 years. Children aged 2-4 years of age who were part of the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program routinely go in for a physical and they receive WIC coupons.

Minnesota's obesity rate drops for young children enrolled in WIC

Minnesota's obesity rate for young children enrolled in WIC is eighth lowest in the nation. SHIP grantees across Minnesota are also focused on families with babies and young children. Since January 2016, 266 child care providers caring for 8,591 children are partnering with SHIP (three-quarters of these providers are serving low-income children). Working with SHIP, providers receive training and assistance to improve their practices in healthy eating, supporting breastfeeding and physical activity.



Health4Life, the SHIP grantee in Todd, Wadena and Morrison counties, has assisted in coordinating the Choose Health program, where Lakewood Health System prescribes community-supported agriculture (CSA) with local farmers to patients who report having trouble getting healthy foods.



The vision for Nursery Fields Forever. (Courtesy of aut- -aut)

Could Urban Farms be the Preschools of the future?

A group called aut- -aut in Italy and the Netherlands have sprouted the idea of ‘Nursery Fields Forever.’ With saying how the preschool system is keeping children indoors, instead of experiencing the outside world. It would be a visionary hybrid, “between a farm and a school where children’s physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development would be encouraged by interaction with plants and animals.” *(Click picture to read more.)*

Winter Storage for Hearty Vegetables

Store your onions in a cool, dark, well ventilated place to prevent mold for up to 6 to 7 months. Onions can also be preserved frozen! Wash, chop, and blanch the onions for 3 minutes then put them in an ice water bath, saute them in oil, and bring them back to room temperature before freezing . Store your winter squash in a dry area that stays around 50 degrees F and enjoy this Minnesota Grown product even as snow begins to fall. *(From [MinnesotaGrown](#))*

- Acorn Squash: 4 weeks
- Spaghetti squash: 4 weeks
- Buttercup squash: 13 weeks
- Butternut squash: up to 6 months.
- Blue Hubbard: 6 to 7 months

(From [Bonnieplants](#))



A Call for Success Stories

We would like to shine a spotlight on the successes of Farm to Child Care with some new posts to [Renewing the Countryside's](#) blog and newsletter. We would love to share your stories and help inspire other providers, teachers, and parents to embrace the F2CC ideals. Have there been any unexpected challenges that you have overcome? Any noteworthy accounts of positive responses from a child or family? How has the F2CC curriculum affected your business? Tell us your story, and be sure to include any photos!

Send to cassie@rtcinfo.org

This Months Local Food



Onions

Parsnips and potatoes



Turnips and winter squash

Activities



Farmer's Market! Bring out some baskets, fruit and vegetable play food and have a blast pretending to be a farmer. Additionally, the kids can also pretend to be customers buying from the farmer. As for the tables commonly found at market's or on roadsides, large cardboard boxes can be creatively designed to whatever color, height or width. This could be a fun and creative activity for the kids to participate in. Other ideas and activities about farmer's markets, and on the farm play can be found on Page 101 of the [IATP Farm to Child Care Curriculum PDF](#).

Another great source is "[Harvest for Healthy Kids: Free for all](#)", for it has a plethora of material inside each kit: activity plans, pictures of produce, teacher newsletter, family newsletter, and recipes.

Recipes



Porcupine Sliders (Page 9)

This looks like a delicious Slider! It's called the Porcupine Slider. You can make the burger ahead of time, then pop it in the oven before lunch.

1 slider provides 2 oz meat/meat alternate and 1 serving grains/bread

Harvest Delight (Page 42)

Who knew that sweet potatoes, butternut squash, carrots, spinach, dried cranberries, and apples could cause so much excitement?

1/2 cup provides 1/2 cup vegetable and 1/8 cup fruit.



Purple Power Bean Wrap (Page 78)

Avocado and purple cabbage yielded the best color and flavor combination. It is sure to surprise and delight your children!

1 wrap provides 1/2 oz meat/meat alternate, 5/8 cup vegetable, and 1-3/4 serving grains/bread. 1/2 wrap (one half) provides 3/8 cup vegetable, and 3/4 serving grains/bread.

* This is where I found the [meal pattern crediting](#) for each recipe.

Team Nutrition's '[Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Homes.](#)'

In compliance with CACFP policies.