Together We Grow Healthy Kids
Early Care Education Curriculum

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Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative wants to ensure that caregivers (family and others) of children from birth to age five provide access to healthy food and active play every day.
Farm to Early Care Education Curriculum
WHY?

Why implement Farm to Early Care & Education into your classroom?
Iowa ranks 49th for Fruit & Vegetable Consumption

Median **Daily Vegetable Intake**
Among Adults in the United States

Source: Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index
Goals of the Curriculum

1. Children will become more connected to the foods they eat (learn to identify the foods and where they come from).
   ◦ Background: By offering frequent, positive and varied experiences with healthy foods, children will become more familiar with and able to enjoy healthy foods.

2. Children’s taste preference towards healthy foods will be influenced.
   ◦ Background: The preschool years are a critical time for developing lifelong eating habits.

3. Families will increase their knowledge about the foods they eat, how to prepare them, and consume more healthy foods in the home environment.
   ◦ Background: The home environment is also a critical piece of children’s access to healthy foods and influences their food preferences and eating habits. Parent engagement is crucial!
Desired Outcomes

- Increased knowledge of ‘local’ and ‘fresh’ concepts
- Increased knowledge of fruits and vegetables
- Increased willingness to try new fruits and vegetables
- Trend towards preferring more fruits and vegetables, less likely to prefer unhealthy foods
- Parents: Increased knowledge of farmers’ markets, healthy eating practices, reading nutrition labels, identifying obesity risk factors
Curriculum Components

*STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) is an important part of our curriculum. Through hands-on learning experiences, students will:

- Learn about shapes, patterns, numbers and measurement tools
- Observe and investigate plant and animal life cycles.
- Apply technological reasoning as they utilize garden tools and explore topics on the Internet.
- Make hypotheses, observe/collect data and draw conclusions to learn how the world works around them.
- Learn to represent plant and animal processes and behaviors through art, music, movement and dramatic play.
TEACHER PREP
(Before Introducing Monthly Food Investigation)

DO YOUR HOMEWORK!
Be prepared to answer children’s questions and extend their learning.

- Where does it grow?
- How does it grow? (vine, under the ground, etc.?)
- When is it harvested?
- Other varieties?
- Parts of the plant (vocabulary)
- Fruit or Vegetable?
- Nutrition Facts?
- How to Prepare? Recipes?
- Locate Children’s Literature related to food
- Growers in our area? (plan field trip or invite a grower to present)
- Ask children, families and community gardeners if they grow this food (invite parents to present)
Is a Tomato a Fruit or Vegetable?

A **fruit** is the mature ovary of a seed plant, usually developed from a flower. Fruits have seeds so they further the reproductive cycle.

A **vegetable** is a plant or that part of a plant which is edible, and does not necessarily have a role in the plant's reproductive cycle.
According to the Oxford Dictionary

The confusion about 'fruit' and 'vegetable' arises because of the differences in usage between scientists and cooks. **Scientifically speaking, a tomato is definitely a fruit.** True fruits are developed from the ovary in the base of the flower, and contain the seeds of the plant (though cultivated forms may be seedless). Blueberries, raspberries, and oranges are true fruits, and so are many kinds of nuts. Some plants have a soft part which supports the seeds and is also called a 'fruit', though it is not developed from the ovary: the strawberry is an example.

As far as cooking is concerned, some things which are strictly fruits, such as **tomatoes or bean pods, may be called 'vegetables' because they are used in savory rather than sweet cooking.** The term 'vegetable' is more generally used of other edible parts of plants, such as cabbage leaves, celery stalks, and potato tubers, which are not strictly the fruit of the plant from which they come. Occasionally the term 'fruit' may be used to refer to a part of a plant which is not a fruit, but which is used in sweet cooking: rhubarb, for example.

So, the answer to the question is - a tomato is technically the fruit of the tomato plant, but it's used as a vegetable in cooking.
Prior to the first week of the food investigation, teachers should begin the **Planning Web** process using the acquired background information and locally available resources.
Three Year Local Food Cycle

WHY WE USE A 3 YEAR CYCLE?

• WE HAVE NUMEROUS LOCAL FOODS IN IOWA THAT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES NEED TO BE EXPOSED TO

• WE ALL LEARN FROM EXPOSURE AND EXPERIENCE

Research shows local foods:
1) Locally grown food tastes and looks better.
2) Local food is better for you.
3) Local food preserves genetic diversity.
4) Local food is safe.
5) Local food supports local families.
6) Local food builds community.
7) Local food preserves open space.
8) Local food keeps taxes down.
9) Local food benefits the environment and wildlife.
10) Local food is an investment in the future.
Calendar of Featured Foods
We feature a nine month school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Raspberries</td>
<td>1. Apples</td>
<td>1. Melons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cabbage</td>
<td>2. Cauliflower</td>
<td>2. Broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cheese</td>
<td>5. Yogurt</td>
<td>5. Milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Be Flexible!

Follow the lead of your children and families and the teachable moments that arise in your setting. Feel free to substitute the foods on our calendar.

Some Great Reasons for Substituting with other Foods:

- Kohlrabi is ripe and ready to harvest from your school garden.

- A child brings in some basil from their family herb garden with a pesto recipe from his grandma.

- Two children in your program are allergic to dairy. Substitute another food item for the Cheese listed on our calendar.
Featured food of the Month: Raspberries

Raspberry Quick Facts

Raspberry Tips

Buy Local: Leon Kern

Vegetables and Fruits (Raspberries, apples and pears)

Garber, IA - 563-590-7812

Recipes – 5 ingredients or less

Curriculum Connections

◦ Literacy Connections
◦ Art Connections
◦ Math Connections
◦ Science Connections
◦ Technology Connections
Kids Page

Farm to Preschool
Food of the Month: Raspberries

I tried raspberries!
I thought they were... (circle one)

Awesome!
Okay
Not Very Good

Together: We Grow Healthy Kids.

My favorite raspberry recipe was ________________

Check out my picture on the back:

(Rew a picture of yourself eating your favorite raspberry recipe on the back)

Raspberry Fun Facts
* There are over 200 different species of raspberries!
* Raspberries can be red, black, purple, and gold.
* Raspberries are a member of the rose family.
Posters for Classrooms

Farmer Don – Master Gardener
Parents will receive additional education about the food throughout the month in the newsletter or at parent meetings and will receive a recipe to use in the home environment each month.

- Events
- Recipes
- Tastings
- Gardens
- Field trips
- Themes
For more information about ‘Together We Grow Healthy Kids’ curriculum or to receive the curriculum link contact Haleisa Johnson at johnsonha@nicc.edu