



Why Farm to Child Care?

By connecting young children with delicious and healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables, you can shape healthy habits that will last a lifetime. Research shows that children form eating habits at an early age, typically between ages three and five. Plus younger children are typically more willing than older children to try new foods.

For Their Health

Because children spend most of their day in the child care setting and often have breakfast, lunch and snacks in the child care facility, child care directors, cooks and teachers have a tremendous opportunity to introduce children to fresh fruits and vegetables (perhaps for the first time for some children!) and help them form lifelong healthy eating habits!

Childhood overweight and obesity is one of the fastest growing public health concerns nationally and in North Carolina.

- **Overweight:** 14.7% of children aged 2-4 in Wake County
- **Obese:** 14.5% of children aged 2-4 in Wake County
- Children aged 2 and above should consume 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day but 1995 studies show that nationally 97% of children consume only 3.3 servings.

Overweight and obesity follows children into adulthood and puts us at risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and more. Overweight and obese children are also at greater risk for poor self-esteem and social stigma.

Improved Learning

Proper nutrition is linked to cognitive development in young children as well. Beyond the nutritional benefits, Farm to Child Care fits perfectly into the hands-on learning environment at child care facilities where all the senses can be involved in learning about and tasting foods.

Sources:

North Carolina –Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (NC-PASS) 2012; includes data on children seen in NC public health sponsored WIC and child health clinics

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy Farm to Child Care: Opportunities for Connecting Young Children with Local Food and Farmers (June 2012)

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