

What Parents and Teachers Can Do to Support Farm-to-School

■ Contact Katie Strack, *Oklahoma Farm to School Program Administrator*

OK Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry,
2800 N. Lincoln Blvd., OKC, OK 73105
405/990-6372, Katie.Strack@ag.ok.gov
www.okfarmtoschool.com

■ Get a copy of *The Oklahoma Farm-To-School Report* and *The Oklahoma Food Connection 2005: A Directory of Agricultural Producers, Crops and Institutional Buyers* from the Oklahoma Food Policy Council:

Oklahoma Food Policy Council
c/o Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture,
PO Box 588, Poteau, OK 74953 (918) 647-9123

Farm-To-School Report,
www.kerrcenter.com/ofpc/farmtoschool.htm

The Food Connection,
www.kerrcenter.com/ofpc/foodconnection.htm

Contact Farm to School Coordinator to see if your school district has indicated interest in making local produce purchases.
<http://sde.state.ok.us/home/defaultns.html>

■ Learn more about the many great farm-to-school programs taking place around the country by checking out these organizations and publications:

ATTRA – National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. PO Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR 72702
1(800) 346-9140

Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions: A Resource Guide for Farm-to-School and Farm-to-Institution Programs.
www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/farmtoschool.html

Community Food Security Coalition
PO Box 209, Venice, CA 90294. (310) 822-5410.
www.foodsecurity.org/farm_to_school.html

The National Farm-to-School Program Center for Food and Justice, Occidental College, 1600 Campus Road, Mail Stop M1, Los Angeles, CA 90041.
(323) 341-5095. www.farmtoschool.org/index.htm

■ Tell your school administrators how you feel. If you believe that farm-to-school activities should be implemented, let your school officials know.

Some key players include: teachers, principal, school cafeteria manager, district food service director, district superintendent and school board members

Most school district phone numbers can be found in the “community pages” of your local phone book.

■ Assist with planning and coordinating a hands-on nutrition education activity with your child’s class.

■ If you enjoy working with food, conduct a healthy food tasting or cooking activity using fresh locally grown fruits or veggies; or arrange for a local culinary professional to visit your school. Resources include:

Cooking with Kids
3508 Camino Jalisco, Santa Fe, NM 87507
www.freenewmexican.com/news/13629.html

Feeding Young Minds: Hands-on Farm-to-School Education Programs.

Community Food Security Coalition,
www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#feeding

Slow Food USA
Slow Food in Schools, 20 Jay Street - Suite 313,
Brooklyn, NY 11201. (718) 260-8000.
www.slowfoodusa.org/education/

■ Invite a local farmer to come visit your school and talk about the tasty and nutritious food they grow. For a list of farmers interested in visiting nearby schools, check the Kerr Center’s website: www.kerrcenter.com/farm_to_school/index.htm

■ Organize a visit to a nearby farm or farmers’ market. To find the market nearest you, call city hall or check out the directory of Oklahoma farmers’ markets: www.madeinoklahoma.net/Okgrown/farmmkt.asp

For tips on organizing a visit:

Farm-to-School Farm Visit Manual
Community Alliance with Family Farmers,
PO Box 363, Davis, CA 95617. (530) 756-8518
www.caff.org/programs/f2sManual.shtml

■ **Help establish a school garden so children can see where food comes from and be empowered to make healthy choices.**

Children's Gardens in Which to Learn and Grow: A Guide to Planning, Designing, and Building an Outdoor Garden Classroom.

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, OSU, 139 Ag Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078. (405) 744-5398 www.pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1075/F-6402web.pdf

Children's Gardens, kinderGARDEN Program Texas A&M University, 202 Horticulture/Forest Science Building, College Station, TX 77843 (979) 845-5341. www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/kindergarten/Child/school/sjintro.htm

National Gardening Association, 1100 Dorset Street, South Burlington, VT 05403. (800) 538-7476 www.kidsgardening.com/

■ **Become involved with or help establish a School Health Advisory Committee.**

As of 2004, each public school in Oklahoma is required by state law to establish a "Healthy and Fit School Advisory Committee," composed of teachers, administrators, parents, healthcare professionals and business community

representatives. Each advisory committee is to study and make recommendations to the school principal regarding health education; physical education and activity; and nutrition and health services.

For more information about school health advisory committees contact:

Child and Adolescent Health Division / School Health Program at the Oklahoma State Department of Health, 1000 N.E. Tenth, Room 809 Oklahoma City, OK 73117. (405) 271-4471.

www.health.state.ok.us/Program/cahd/sch.html

Contact your child's principal to find out more about the current status of this committee. Many schools have not yet formed one and may just need a little encouragement from a concerned parent.

Some school districts have initiated healthy child programs. Find out what your school is doing.

When contacting school officials, please keep in mind, they face a number of demands related to academic performance, financial soundness and school safety. Having a dedicated parent or group of parents to help initiate a new activity might be essential in order for teachers and school officials to understand the full potential of such projects.

Other Useful Resources:

■ **Action for Healthy Kids Program**

Oklahoma State Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Health, 1000 N.E. Tenth, Room 905 Oklahoma City, OK 73117. (405) 271-4471. www.actionforhealthykids.org/index.php

■ **Healthy School Meals Resource System**

USDA's Team Nutrition, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 632, Alexandria, VA 22302. (703) 305-1624. www.schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/index.html

■ **Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom**

Oklahoma 4-H Programs, 205 4-H Youth Development, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. (405) 744-8885. www.agclassroom.org/ok

■ **Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition**

420 N.W. 13th Street, Suite 101, Oklahoma City, OK 73103. (405)236-5437. www.integrilifespan.com/fitkids.html

■ **School Foods Toolkit**

Center for Science in the Public Interest, 1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20009. (202) 777-8352. www.cspinet.org/schoolfoodkit/



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