







Evaluation for Transformation:

A User Guide

Framework for Farm to School Evaluation

Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School is intended to be a resource for farm to school / farm to preschool planning, evaluation, research and reporting. It provides:

- Common language for defining farm to school core and supplemental elements, touch points and actors.
- History of the farm to school movement
- Guidance on program articulation and tools to track implementation.
- A comprehensive literature review on farm to school and farm to preschool outcomes for four sectors: public health, community economic development, education and environmental quality.
- Priority outcomes, indicators and measures for all four sectors.
- Compilation of evaluation and implementation tools and resources.
- Cross-sector connections.

CORE ELEMENTS OF FARM to SCHOOL



The core elements of farm to school and farm to preschool include: procurement of local and regional food products, gardening and education (food and farm related).

How to Use the Evaluation Framework

Users at different levels — program, research and policy can use the evaluation framework to:

- Gather Ideas When developing or redesigning program goals, activities and strategies, use the framework as a resource for ideas to impact multiple sectors. Researchers and external evaluators can use the research priorities to identify and guide research questions and study designs. Grant program administers and funders can align funding priorities and reporting requirements with framework themes.
- **Document Activities and Impact** Program administrators, evaluators, researchers and grant administrators can use program articulation resources for documenting activities (such as spreadsheet matrices, logic model and theory of change development guides) and prioritized outcomes and indicators for documenting impacts.
- **Expand Activities** Program administrators can identify existing activities within the framework and explore ideas for expansion as well as measurements. For example, if current efforts focus on school nutrition staff skill building, consider expanding to support student knowledge of local foods in the cafeteria or to engage families in creating culturallyspecific recipes using local foods.
- **Find Resources** The appendices in the evaluation framework and the National Farm to School Network website provide various resources on farm to school evaluation - program development guides, how-to manuals on evaluation, measurement tools, farm to school implementation and abstracts for relevant peer-reviewed journal articles.

Farm to school by sector

Multiple sectors within the school and larger community are needed to ensure farm to school success. The evaluation framework is structured by sector (public health, community economic development, education and environmental quality) to facilitate a deeper understanding of outcomes by sectors, as well as to highlight cross-sectoral connections.



Public Health: How does farm to school contribute to public health outcomes?

- Providing all preschool and school children and their families equitable access to healthy, local food and food education.
- Promoting health and wellness through local foods in schools /preschools.
- Supporting children's development of healthy eating habits.
- Bolstering a school nutrition program's efforts to address child and family food insecurity.



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Community Economic Development : How does farm to school contribute to community economic development outcomes?

- Creating new economic opportunities for local and regional producers.
- Encouraging market diversification.
- Providing job, income or skill expansion in the local food system.
- Establishing and expanding deeper relationships between producers, buyers, learners and educators.



Education: How does farm to school contribute to education outcomes?

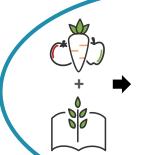
- Improving student academic achievement.
- Enhancing learning environments for teaching core content.
- Increasing student knowledge of specific content areas.
- Supporting children's development of learning skills and social or emotional development.
- Engaging parents or caregivers through field trips, gardening and food preparation homework.



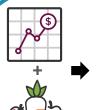
Environmental Quality: How does farm to school contribute to environmental quality outcomes?

- Encouraging children to learn environmental attitudes and behaviors.
- Creating green-spaces such as gardens and naturescapes.
- Supporting producers who help steward natural environments.

Cross-sectoral connections and collaborations:



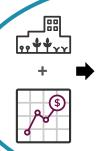
When students eat more fruits and vegetables, they have greater likelihood of being and feeling healthy, which will affect their ability to concentrate and learn.



Increased access to local foods through salad bars, snacks and school meals is one part in supporting student awareness and understanding of how foods affect health.



Farm to school activities such as composting, recycling or reducing food waste can have an impact on environmental quality outcomes.



When a school district purchases sustainably produced foods, it supports economic viability for those growers or ranchers in the region who may not have as many market opportunities.

Farm to school by user level

The evaluation framework provides guidance for users engaged at the program site, research and policy levels.



Program site level users may include:

- Food service professionals
- Educator, teachers administrators
- Farmers, laborers, processors, distributors
- Community supporters
- Nonprofit staff
- Funders



Research level users may include:

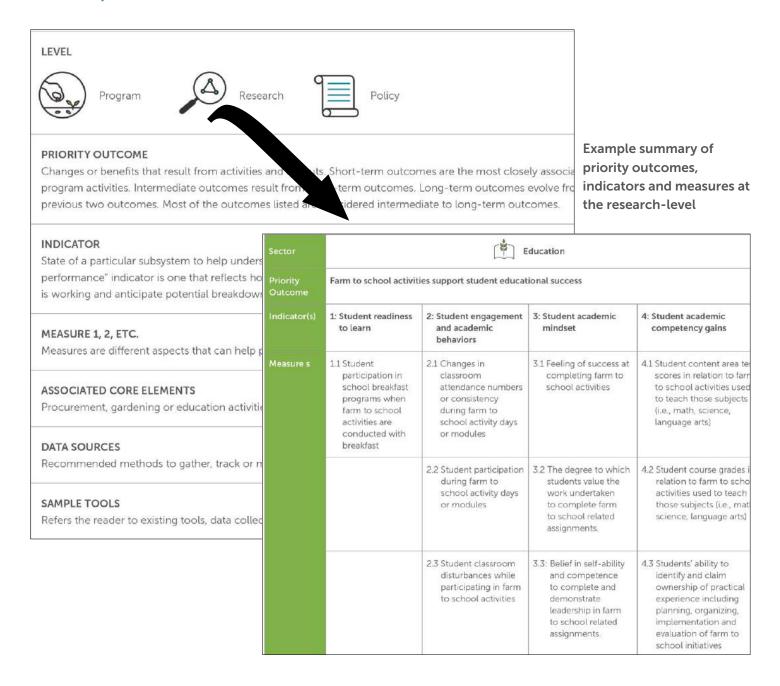
- Researchers
- College professors
- Land grant university staff
- Extension agents
- Federal and state agencies
- Funders



Policy level users may include:

- School board members
- City, county level elected officials
- Local, state and federal agencies
- Policy advocates
- Policy makers and staff
- Funders

Use the template below for interpreting prioritized outcomes, indicators and measures to be used in the ways described earlier.





The **National Farm to School Network** is an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food and agriculture education into schools and preschools.



Community Economic Development

Community Economic Development and Farm to School

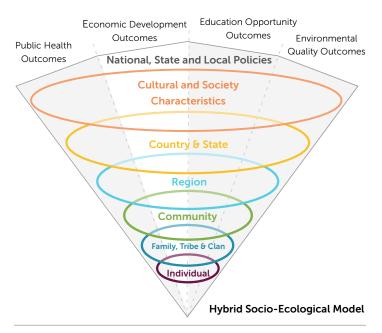
This sectoral brief accompanies Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School, focusing on the community economic development linkages with farm to school / farm to preschool. Farm to school efforts may create new economic opportunities for local and regional producers who may otherwise face barriers to the traditional food system, such as lower income individuals, women, people of color, those in rural areas and those limited by size or scale. Farm to school provides opportunities to explore equity-related considerations in the food system, such as living wages, professional development, safe working conditions and equal marketing opportunities. Key economic outcomes include:

- Increasing purchase of local foods by school districts and early child care centers.
- Encouraging market diversification including opportunities to expand operations.
- Providing job, income or skill expansion in the local food system.
- Establishing and expanding deeper relationships between producers, buyers, learners and educators.





The core elements of farm to school and farm to preschool include: procurement of local and regional food products, gardening and education (food and farm related).



Farm to school activities can support economic development outcomes at multiple levels of the socioecological model.

- National, State and Local Policies: Lenders make loans for producers to meet local food demand. State procurement policies allow school districts and other public institutions to prioritize local food purchases.
- Cultural and Society Characteristics: It is expected that local foods are readily available in school meals and communities.
- Region, County and State: Training for Good
 Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification is available to
 all growers. Institutional food distributors carry more
 local products.
- Community: Parents request local foods at grocery stores; grocery stores increase the percentage of local foods available.
- Family, Tribe and Clan: Families visit farmers' markets and purchase from producers who supply their schools.
- **Individual**: People buy local food and know where it comes from, due to farm to school activities.

The evaluation framework is intended to be a resource for farm to school planning, evaluation, research, reporting. The framework categorizes priority outcomes for community economic development by program, research and policy levels. Example priority outcomes, indicators and measures for each level are provided (refer to document for full listing).

The evaluation framework also provides:

- Common language on farm to school core and supplemental elements, touch points and actors.
- A comprehensive literature review of farm to school and farm to preschool outcomes in four sectors (public health, community economic development, education and environmental quality).
- Guidance on program articulation and tools to track implementation.
- Lists of implementation and evaluation tools.

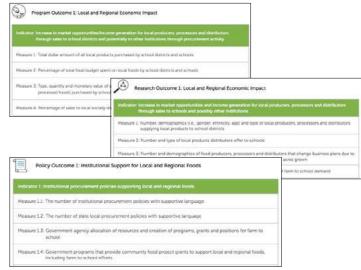


Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross Sectoral
Evaluation Framework for Farm to School was developed
as a collaborative project led by the National Farm to
School Network, funded in part by the Aetna Foundation.

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Program outcome example



- Outcome: Local and regional economic impact.
- Indicator: Increase in market opportunities/income generation for local producers, processors and distributors through sales to school districts and potentially to other institutions through procurement activity.
- Measure: Total dollar amount of all local products purchased by school districts and schools.

Research outcome example



- Outcome: Local and regional economic impact.
- Indicator: Increase in market opportunities/income generation for local producers, processors and distributors through sales to school and possibly other institutions.
- Measure: Number, demographics (i.e. gender, ethnicity, age) and type of local producers, processors and distributors supplying local products to school districts.

Policy outcome example



- Outcome: Institutional support for local and regional foods.
- Indicator: Institutional procurement policies supporting local and regional foods.
- Measure: The number of institutional procurement policies with supportive language.



Education

Education and Farm to School

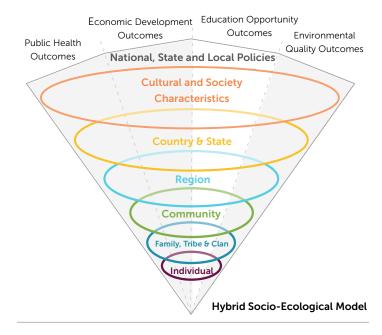
This sectoral brief accompanies Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School, focusing on the education linkages with farm to school / farm to preschool. Participants can review their farm, food, project based and garden based activities as a means to improve student academic achievement and education of the "whole child". Examples of how farm to school can support education include:

- Enhancing the physical and social learning environments for teaching core content such as math, language arts, health, science and geography while also supporting youth skill development.
- Increasing student knowledge of specific content areas.
- Supporting children's development of learning skills and social or emotional development.
- Engaging parents or caregivers through field trips, gardening, food preparation homework.





The core elements of farm to school and farm to preschool include: procurement of local and regional food products, gardening and education (food and farm related).



Farm to school activities can support education outcomes at multiple levels of the socio-ecological model.

- National, State and Local Policies: Legislation prioritizes a whole-child approach, supports handson learning and gardening at schools.
- Cultural and Society Characteristics: Farm to school is one part of supporting the whole child in educational settings.
- Region, Country and State: School district policies support school gardens. Farm to school curriculum is readily available and aligned to Common Core standards.
- Community: Hands-on activities included at farmers' markets and community centers to engage children and families.
- Family, Tribe and Clan: The family incorporates hands-on experiences such as cooking or gardening to support student learning about food at home.
- Individual: Student forms positive attitudes and self-efficacy about learning through farm to school activities.

The evaluation framework is intended to be a resource for farm to school planning, evaluation, research, reporting. The framework categorizes priority outcomes for education by program, research and policy levels. Example priority outcomes, indicators and measures for each level are provided (refer to document for full listing).

The evaluation framework also provides:

- Common language on farm to school core and supplemental elements, touch points and actors.
- A comprehensive literature review of farm to school and farm to preschool outcomes in four sectors (public health, community economic development, education and environmental quality).
- Guidance on program articulation and tools to track implementation.
- Lists of implementation and evaluation tools.

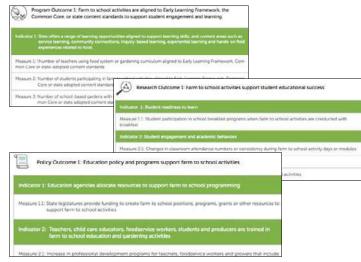


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Program outcome example



- Outcome: Farm to school activities are aligned to Early Learning Framework, the Common Core, or state content standards to support student engagement and learning.
- Indicator: Sites offer a range of learning opportunities aligned to support learning skills and content areas such as service learning, community connections, inquiry-based learning and hands-on field experiences to food.
- Measure: Number of teachers using food system or gardening curriculum aligned to Early Learning Framework, Common Core or state-adopted content standards.

Research outcome example



- Outcome: Farm to school activities support student educational success.
- Indicator: Student readiness to learn.
- Measure: Student participation in school breakfast programs when farm to school activities are conducted with breakfast

Policy outcome example



- Outcome: Education policy and programs support farm to school activities.
- Indicator: Education agencies allocate resources to support farm to school programming.
- Measure: State legislature provides funding to create farm to school positions, grants or other resources to support farm to school activities.



Environmental Quality

Environmental Quality and Farm to School

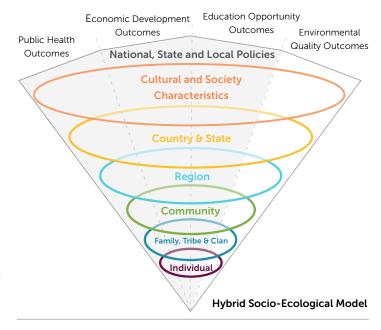
This sectoral brief accompanies Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School, focusing on the environmental quality linkages with farm to school / farm to preschool. Participants can observe how core farm to school elements and activities can help children learn an environmental ethic, how schools create new community "greenspace" infrastructure for healthy environments, and how schools buy local or regional foods produced to reduce potential negative environmental impacts. Examples of how farm to school activities link to environmental quality include:

- Encouraging children to learn environmental attitudes and behaviors.
- Creating green-spaces such as gardens and naturescapes.
- Supporting producers who help steward natural environments.





The core elements of farm to school and farm to preschool include: procurement of local and regional food products, gardening and education (food and farm related).



Farm to school activities can support environmental quality outcomes at multiple levels of the socio-ecological model.

- National, State and Local Policies: Policies support gardens at every school in the state.
- Cultural and Society Characteristics: Increase demand for local foods that are also sustainably produced.
- Region, Country and State: Producers increase agricultural innovations to reduce environmental impact.
- Community: School districts use integrated pest management policies to maintain their school grounds with less chemicals.
- Family, Tribe and Clan: Increase purchase of foods produced with less chemicals.
- Individual: Students learn to grow food in a garden using environmentally supportive methods such as composting.

The evaluation framework is intended to be a resource for farm to school planning, evaluation, research, reporting. The framework categorizes priority outcomes for environmental quality by program, research and policy levels. Example priority outcomes, indicators and measures for each level are provided (refer to document for full listing).

The evaluation framework also provides:

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Program outcome example



- Outcome: Students are environmentally literate through engagement in farm to school activities.
- Indicator: Increase in student knowledge about the relationship between the environment and food systems, including environmental impacts of food production, processing, distribution and waste or composition.
- Measure: Number of children, at what grades, for what length of time, are receiving what type of lessons on environmental concepts connected to food systems and/or school gardening.

Research outcome example



- Outcome: School supports environmentally friendly practices.
- Indicator: School district purchase of sustainably produced foods.
- Measure: Quantity purchase and amount spent on local foods that are also third-party eco-label certified foods.

Policy outcome example



- Outcome: Institutional support for local, sustainable foods.
- Indicator: Institutional procurement policies and programs that encourage purchase of, allocate resources to developing, or create infrastructure that encourages the markets for sustainable products that are also local.
- Measure: The number of school district procurement policies that set goals or other support for purchase of local products that are sustainable.

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Public Health

Public Health and Farm to School

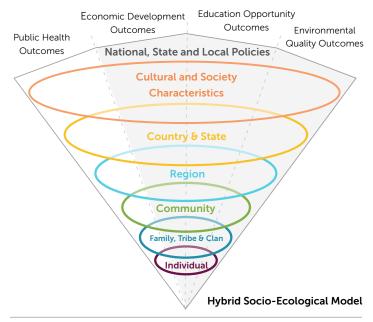
This sectoral brief accompanies Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School, focusing on the public health linkages with farm to school / farm to preschool. Farm to school activities provide all children in schools and preschools and their families equitable access to healthy, local food and food education that empowers them to maintain and improve their health and well-being. Farm to school activities can influence the following public health outcomes:

- Increase access to healthy and local foods in schools.
 School meals are a critical point of access to healthy food for most children in the United States.
- Promote health and wellness through skill building related to handling and using local food.
- Support children's development of healthy eating habits, such as preferences for and consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- Bolster a school nutrition program's efforts to address child and family food insecurity by increasing interest in school meal programs and encouraging families to grow, safely prepare and cook healthy foods.





The core elements of farm to school and farm to preschool include: procurement of local and regional food products, gardening and education (food and farm related).



Farm to school activities can support public health outcomes at multiple levels of the socio-ecological model.

- National, State and Local Policies: Legislation supports farm to school, such as state policies that encourage gardening in schools.
- Cultural and Society Characteristics: Preference for local and healthy foods becomes the social norm.
- Region, Country and State: Land-use laws support development of gardens and agriculture to produce foods for communities.
- Community: Families visit local farmers' markets and connect with farmers that produce the foods their children consume in school and purchase products for home use.
- Family, Tribe and Clan: Children bring home samples and recipes of local, seasonally available foods served in schools to try at home.
- Individual: Children are aware of and have positive attitudes toward healthy, local fruits and vegetables in their school lunches and demonstrate new eating behaviors.

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The evaluation framework also provides:

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Program outcome example



- Outcome: Students and their families access locally produced, healthy food through schools.
- Indicator: Student access to local healthy foods in schools.
- Measure: Number of students participating in, or exposed to, farm to school activities such as school gardening, cooking, nutrition and food-based lessons.

Research outcome example



- Outcome: Family access to local, healthy foods in the community.
- Indicator: Farm to school activities increase awareness of local food availability in the community.
- Measure: Number of people who received local, healthy food through participation in farm to school program activities; for example, garden harvest baskets.

Policy outcome example



- Outcome: Students and their families access locally produced, healthy food through schools.
- Indicator: School district and school policy environment supports student access to local, healthy foods in school meals.
- Measure: Increase in number of local school district wellness policies that include language on farm to school activities as part of addressing nutrition and wellness efforts.