



# Increasing Healthy Food Access through Farm to School and Farm to Early Care and Education

**Kimberly Della Donna**  
Farm to School Director



## 3 Goals – Increase the number of:



1. Organic farms in Georgia.
2. Kids participating in farm to school.
3. Georgians eating local and organic food.



Kimberly Della Donna  
*Farm to School Director*  
*Georgia Organics*



# What is Farm to School?





# What is Farm to School?

**Farm to School** is interactive, fun, **nutrition and agriculture education** that teaches students the life skills of **growing and eating fresh food** while **supporting local farmers** and making **community connections**.





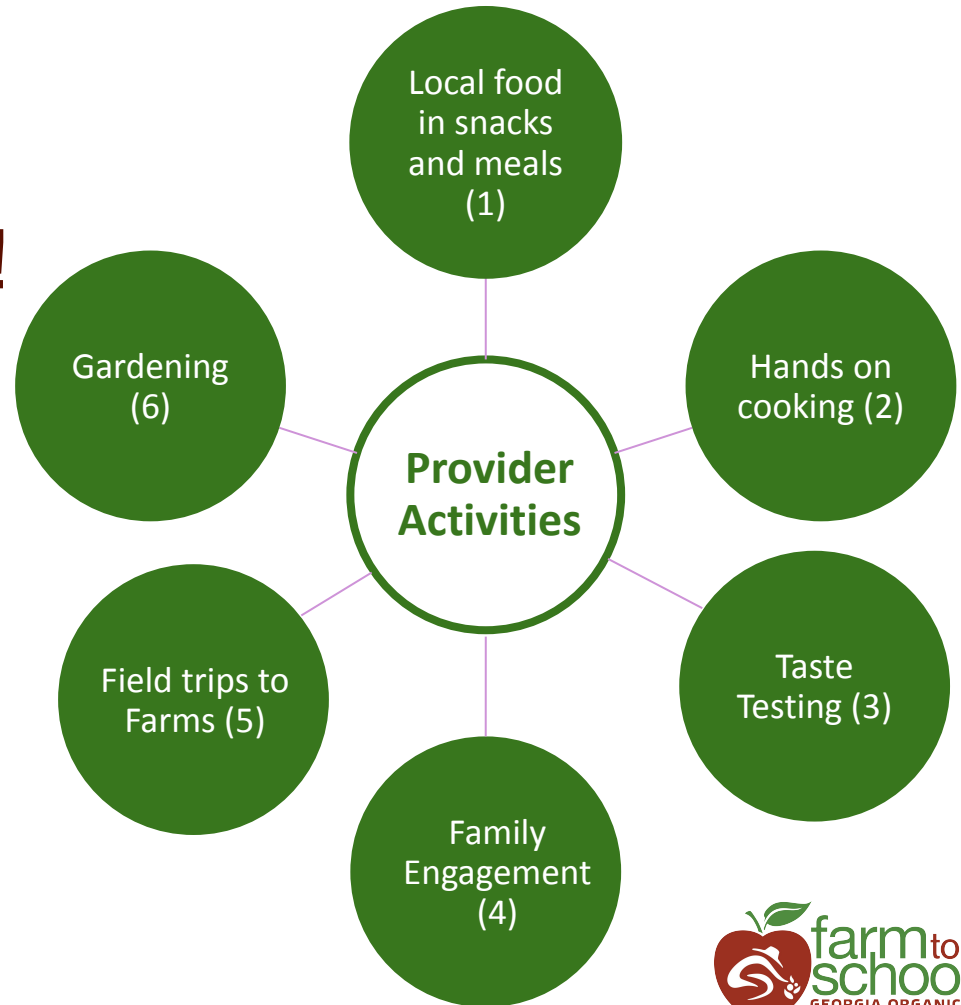
# What is Farm to ECE?

**Farm to ECE** connects children and their families with **fresh, locally-grown foods** and **supports farmers** in their communities.



# Farm to Early Care and ECE...

Can be all these things!



# The Great Opportunity with Farm to ECE

Early Childhood 0-5 years:

[T]his period may represent **the best opportunity for obesity prevention**. During early childhood, lifestyle behaviors that promote obesity are just being learned, and **it is easier to establish new behaviors than to change existing ones**. Child care settings offer a potentially powerful infrastructure to implement such efforts because:

- 70% of US preschool-aged children are enrolled in daily, out-of-home child care
- [C]hildren from low-income backgrounds consume 50% to 100% of their Recommended Dietary Allowances (standards established by the Child Care Food Program) in the child care setting
- [M]any children spend the majority of their waking hours out-of-home and in the child care setting
- [A]ccess to high-quality food is a health disparity

*Ruby A. Natale, PsyD, PhD,\*† Sarah E. Messiah, PhD, MPH,†‡ Lila Asfour, MS, MA,‡ Susan B. Uhlhorn, PhD,\* Alan Delamater, PhD,\* Kris L. Arheart, EdD†‡*





# Family Engagement Through Farm to ECE





# The Research Says:

**Parent support**, through providing both social relationships (e.g., directly supportive words), interpersonal transactions (e.g., actions), and active role modeling have all been suggested as having a **significant impact on child activity patterns**.

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# Supporting Community Access to Fresh Food: Little Ones Learning Center Farm Stand





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# Supporting Community Access to Fresh Food: Little Ones Learning Center Farm Box Program





# Initiatives Supporting Community Access to Fresh Food

## Expanded Fresh Food Access to Students and Families

Georgia Organics Farm to ECE Farm Box & activity pilot at Pre-K Prep Academy in Hall County





# Expanded Fresh Food Access to Students and Families



# The Impact of Farm to School and Farm to ECE Programs

- Agricultural economic development
- Increased access to fresh food
- The “trickle up effect” of healthy attitudes & behaviors affects families and causes community shifts toward health.





# What Can We Do?

## *Opportunities to Support ECEs & Farmers*



**Farm to School and Farm to ECE is a hot topic and a crowd pleaser!**

Overcome minimum order limitations by piloting a state agency led buying cooperative in rural regions of the state.

**Aggregation increases supply chain options for producers!**

Farmer support orgs / Department of Agriculture could offer technical support and business development to facilitate relationships with ECEs



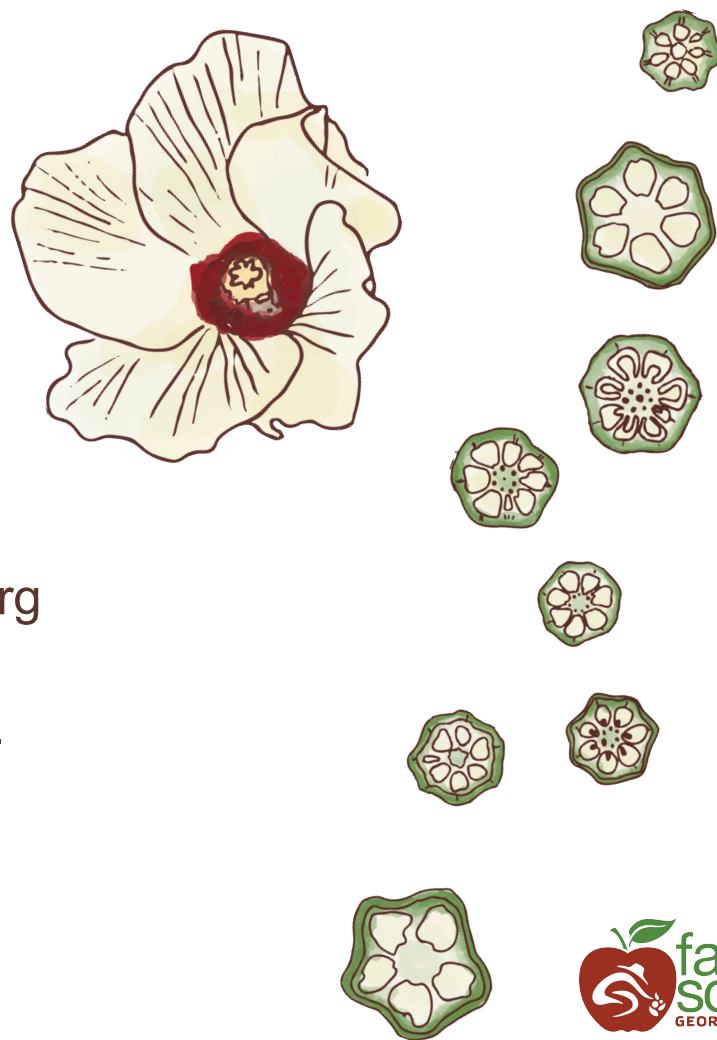


# Investments That Will Support Communities



**Automatic SNAP/WIC doubling** for families that purchase fresh local food from **GEORGIA FARMS**, up to \$20 per month.

**Investing** and building out **cold storage infrastructure** to help small farmers and nonprofits serve and meet community where they live (also helps emergency relief to have a place they can store produce)



# Thank you!

Web: [farmtoschool.georgiaorganics.org](http://farmtoschool.georgiaorganics.org)

Email: [kimberly@georgiaorganics.org](mailto:kimberly@georgiaorganics.org)

Social: @GeorgiaOrganics

