

# Provider Perspectives

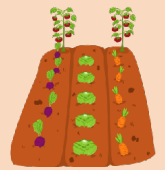
How do you bring fresh produce or gardening activities into your program?



Our community of CACFP providers has amazing ideas! In this resource, we're sharing their insights on how they local foods and gardening to inspire and support you in your own programs.

“We built a **raised garden bed** for our child care and it's amazing to see how much the kids love being part of it! They plant, water, weed, harvest and even taste the foods they've grown. This year we're adding a **pollinator section** too! From making salsa in the fall to sharing extra produce with neighbors, our garden is teaching healthy habits, kindness and a love for trying new foods.”

“We have **six 5-gallon bucket gardens** and two raised beds where we grow fresh veggies. The children plan, plant, care for and harvest our bounty. They help prepare the vegetables for cooking and love enjoying the harvest together. We also **visit local community gardens and Amish farms** to learn how they grow food too.”



“Next month we'll be planting our own garden! I want to teach outside the classroom and show each child how food grows and encourage them to try different kinds. Learning about food isn't just from a book; it's **hands-on, getting messy and digging in the dirt.**”



“Years ago we received the **Grow It, Try It, Like It set** and I still use the books and DVDs with the kids. **At each meal we talk** about what the food is, how it grows and how it helps their bodies. We buy fresh produce and learn about farmers, and we plant our own gardens and flowers so the bees can visit and make honey. The children love seeing how food grows from farm to table.”

“All of our classrooms participate in gardening! At our school sites we use **portable greenhouses**, and at our other locations we plant in garden beds. The children help with everything from preparing the soil to planting, weeding and harvesting. We've also **added more fresh produce to our menus** throughout the year.”

“Each year we plant a veggie in a clear pot so the kids can watch it grow—this year it's carrots! We also have **fruit and veggie parties** to try new foods, and one of the children's favorite traditions is **planting our very own pumpkin patch every year.**”

