



# SHELBURNE FARMS

*Educating for a Sustainable Future*

Farm to School & Early Care and Education Testimony by:  
Joint Hearing: Farm to School Awareness Day  
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## **Thank you!**

### Why Expand Farm to School to Early Care and Education?

- Brain science – 80 % of our brain is developed by age 3 and 90% is developed by age 5, our youngest children need healthy food and good nutrition to build healthy brains
- 1 in 7 VT children live in food insecure homes – this is an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) which can lead to toxic stress, higher ACE scores, and contribute to health issues later in life
- 70% of VT children under six are likely to need care – Farm to Early Care and Education can offer our youngest children access to healthy food where they receive daily care and buffer children from ACEs
- Early Care and Education settings need support to meet CACFP and licensing regulations around nutrition and food service
- Early Care and Education field offers an extended food and purchasing power to Vermont Farmers and producers since approximately 20,000 young children eat meals in ECE settings daily

### Farm to Early Care and Education: A bridge for linking cross sector early childhood systems

Farm to ECE can help providers and families bridge cross sector state initiatives such as:

- Meeting Child Care Licensing Regulations, ECE Professional Development, STARS levels (CDD)
- Adhering to Child Adult Care Food Program, VT Early Learning and Common Core Standards (AOE)
- Participating in the 3-4-50 Campaign (VDH Health Promotion & Chronic Disease Prevention)
- Impacting the evolving Early Childhood Professional Development System (CDD)
- Supporting the Blue Ribbon Commission Report Recommendations (legislated commission through Act 58, 2015)
- Leveraging Private Dollars: ***Current funding for Farm to ECE comes from private foundations as well as VAAF through the Farm to School Grants Program: there are opportunities to further leverage private dollars***

### What has FTECE facilitated?

Programs: Invested resources, time and space to participate in Farm to ECE learning. Topics included child nutrition, healthy positive eating environments, developing healthy eating habits, gardening, cooking, curriculum development for classrooms, family inclusion, community building and Vermont Early Learning Standards implementation.

Kids: Gardened, cooked, visited farms to learn where food comes from, taste-tested, meal planned.

Staff: Participated in a Professional Learning Community with peers, met on their own time after work, gardened, cooked, visited farms to learn where food comes from, taste-tested, meal planned, developed curriculum, investigated CACFP and Vermont Early Learning Standard intersections, continue to work cooperatively to access healthy food for their programs, children and families.

Community: A Professional Learning Community across childcare settings was created to learn together. They continue to meet to work cooperatively to celebrate and solve Farm to ECE issues locally. Farmers met providers and offered field trips for both the adult Learning Community as well as childcare classes on the farm to learn about the farm and create community building relationships.

Economy: Addison providers pooled resources to cooperatively buy into a CSA share for their programs, spending locally for nutritious food.

Increased Interest in the grant program: \$75K ask from ECE for CNP grants (\$15K awarded) and \$22K requested from ECE for equipment grants with an initial \$11K available (\$14K awarded thanks to additional grant funds moved around by VAAF)