

# SCHOOL GROUNDS FARM TO PRESCHOOL

Partners for Health  
FOUNDATION



The mission of the School Grounds Farm to Preschool program is to provide outdoor garden classrooms, teacher training, and on-going support for partner preschools, enhanced by food access opportunities and family engagement. The program is designed to foster student interaction with the natural world, an understanding of where food comes from, and the taste and health benefits of freshly picked vegetables. Collaborating teachers gain the curriculum, resources, knowledge and enthusiasm to use this outdoor classroom to foster a farm to school culture that values and celebrates garden education as an integral part of developing the whole child.



## WHY BUILD A SCHOOL GARDEN?



School gardens are simple to construct and easy to maintain. They are a powerful hands-on learning tool for children grades PreK-12. By working outside, students are mentally and physically engaged in the material. And the plants, insects, soil and seasonal changes in the garden connect to science, social studies, health, nutrition, language arts, and math.

School gardens offer an opportunity to develop the whole child. The garden can be the starting place for learning about the local environment, encouraging healthier food choices, creating project-based learning opportunities, and making space for community engagement.

Interested? Please email our Farm to Preschool Manager, Emma Latham, at [elatham@city-green.org](mailto:elatham@city-green.org) for more info or visit our website: [citygreenonline.org/farm-to-preschool](http://citygreenonline.org/farm-to-preschool)

## THE SCHOOL GARDEN EFFECT



Students eat more fruits and vegetables and are more willing to try new healthier foods.



Students get to go outside during the school day, and have increased levels of physical activity.



Students learn more about their local environment, food systems, and the climate.



Students show improvement in both grades and test scores.



Students show improved self-esteem, behavior management, and social skills.

(National Farm to School Network: "The Benefits of Farm to School", 2017)

# ONBOARDING PROCESS

## THE APPLICATION:

Teachers and administrators describe their goals for their garden, how they plan to sustain the garden, and describe their school community.

## THE SITE VISIT:

After the application is accepted, City Green comes to the school for a site assessment. We discuss the best location for the garden, the number of beds, and other elements of the design. The Farm to Preschool manager then uses this information to draft a Proposal for the school to approve.

## THE INSTALLATION:

City Green comes with the prefabricated materials, tools, and staff necessary to install the garden. If teachers are interested, students can participate in filling the bins with soil to inaugurate the garden!

## TEACHER TRAINING

City Green runs a teacher training workshop on how to effectively use and maintain the garden. In this hands-on workshop we review basic gardening skills, how to plan for the garden, and how to use the City Green Garden Curriculum.

# APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. **SUPPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL/DIRECTOR:** Administration support is a crucial component in a successful garden program.
2. **THREE DEDICATED TEACHERS:** Gardens that are frequently visited are easier to maintain and offer the greatest impact to the classroom experience.
3. **COMPLETE APPLICATION:** Complete the Farm to Preschool Application and return it to City Green in order to be considered for eligibility.

## ALL PRESCHOOLS WILL RECEIVE

**CURRICULUM:** Teachers will receive training and printed copies of a 12- month turn-key curriculum to engage students with gardening and environmental topics both in the garden and the classroom.

**PLANTING LESSONS:** City Green staff visit at the start of the fall and spring growing seasons with seed starts for every preschooler to plant a vegetable in their own school garden.

**VEGGIE MOBILE VISITS:** The City Green Veggie Mobile visits the school to provide students with the experience of shopping at a mobile farmer's market.

**TASTE-TEST WORKSHOPS:** Eat Better Tonight Jr. Workshops give students the opportunity to prepare a healthy snack using produce grown in their school garden.

**FIELD TRIPS:** Schools visit the City Green farm for a tour, farm animal interactions, and hands-on educational lessons focused on farm fresh foods and the food system

**ON-GOING SUPPORT:** City Green is always available to help support your school garden program. We assist you with garden cleanups, soil amendments, repairs, and issue troubleshooting, should you need them.

## CITY GREEN'S MISSION

*City Green's is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to facilitating the establishment of urban farms and gardens in northern New Jersey's cities. The goal of our School Grounds Program is to provide outdoor garden classrooms, teacher training and on-going support for partner schools in New Jersey, with a focus on at-risk urban communities. We aim to to enhance academic achievement across disciplines, as well as ensure student interaction with the natural world, access to hands-on experiential learning, and an understanding of where food comes from.*