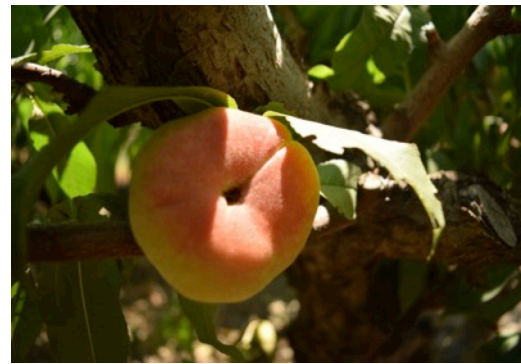


+ Montana Farm to School Successes



Small hands planting tiny seeds in Bozeman

By: Piper Frame, Montana Dietetic Intern

Miranda Kacer, Preschool Director, and Christine Lux, Early Childhood Education & Child Services Academic Program Leader, have made a big change in making healthy, local foods a focus at the MSU Child Development Center.

The preschool participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which means certain meal planning and serving requirements must be fulfilled to receive reimbursement. However, these guidelines do not stop the preschool from serving a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains that are prepared from scratch daily.

The MSU Child Development Center has an onsite edible garden, allowing the children the opportunity to grow a variety of vegetables, from kale to beets, to carrots and snap peas. After the harvest, children get to try the foods that they grew over



the season. Sometimes, it's for a taste test in the classroom and, other times, the produce is incorporated into the meals. The children work with the teachers to plant, maintain, and harvest the plants throughout the season. Actively being

involved in the full cycle of produce, from planting to eating, gives children a better understanding of where their food comes from and helps them create a better connection to their food.

The MSU Child Development Center also purchases food from many local resources. The center has purchased a CSA share from the Towne's Harvest Garden. Towne's Harvest Garden is the student run CSA program at Montana State University. The CSA share provides the preschool with fresh produce once a week during the summer season, which is incorporated into snacks and meals.

For More Information:
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+ Montana Team Nutrition Program

More information available at www.opi.mt.gov/Farm2School
Montana Team Nutrition Program is housed at Montana State University and works in cooperation with the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Growing Farm to Preschool

Montana Farm to School Success

The children have the opportunity to experience in-season produce and see the large variety of foods that can be grown in Montana.

The preschool also organizes tours to Towne's Harvest with the children and their parents. These educational trips give the children a chance to experience farm production.

One of the reasons that the MSU Child Development Center has had such success in farm to preschool is due to the staff being passionate about the work they are doing. Both Kacer and Lux understand what role nutrition plays in healthy development and how eating behaviors influence wellbeing in early childhood. They believe that their preschool-aged children should have access to foods beyond those that are highly processed and altered. They believe that when given the chance, children will eat healthful options and local foods such as wheat berry salad and lentil sloppy joes.

The children and parents love the variety and quality of the food provided. The children have an appetite for healthy, local foods and the MSU Child Development Center is making sure that they are supplying foods that meet that need.

To read more about the Child Development Center, visit:

<http://www.montana.edu/hhd/cdc.html>

For more information about farm to preschool efforts at the Child Development Center, contact Christine Lux at christine.lux@montana.edu or 406-994-5005.



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