

Learning Session 2 Gardening



Special Thanks To:

- Nemours
- Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - Whole Foods Market

Housekeeping

- Restrooms
- Snacks
- Please turn off/mute cell phones





Ground Rules

- All are welcome
- All are invited to participate
- Please respect the opinions and thoughts of others
- Keep sensitive information confidential
- Acknowledge that everyone may not agree
- All questions are welcome





Alabama Farm to ECE Coalition

- AL Cooperative Extension System
- AL Department of Agriculture and Industries
- AL Department of Education
- AL Department of Public Health
- AL Partnership for Children
- Childcare Resources
- Child Care Central
- Farm Food Collaborative- Food Bank of North AL



Darmeshia



Molly



Talicia



Joan



Natalie, Chyna, Carey



Myra, Caliste and Theresa

Alabama Farm to ECE Coalition



• Mission- The Alabama Farm to ECE Coalition strives to create more equitable access to healthy foods for children, families and ECE providers while building new markets for small farmers to sell their produce. We cultivate and activate community-informed solutions that build local and statewide capacity and infrastructure to support local food sourcing, gardening and food and agriculture education in all ECE programs, regardless of geographic location, program type or socioeconomic status of families served.

How are ECE Providers Powerful?



- •Impact
- Influence
- Connection

You make a difference!



Action Periods

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- Leadership Team meetings
- Review assessments
- Talk with staff
- Ask families for help
- Create Goals
- Work on Action Plans
- Try out activities



Learning Session 2



^{*}Go NAP SACC is a Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care for ECE settings comparing their current practices with a set of best practices

CORE ELEMENTS OF

FARM to ECE





EDUCATION

PROCUREMENT

DHR Minimum Standards

- Does not address gardening.
- Gardening is allowable.
- Depending on how the garden is used, it may or may not reduce the number of square feet per child calculated if located in your outdoor play area- this must be discussed with your DHR licensing consultant.
- If children are helping with the garden, it should not count against your required square feet.



Training Objectives

- ECE garden benefits
- Creative ways to garden
- Step-by-step planting
- Staff and family engagement





Physical Activity Break



Let's Talk!

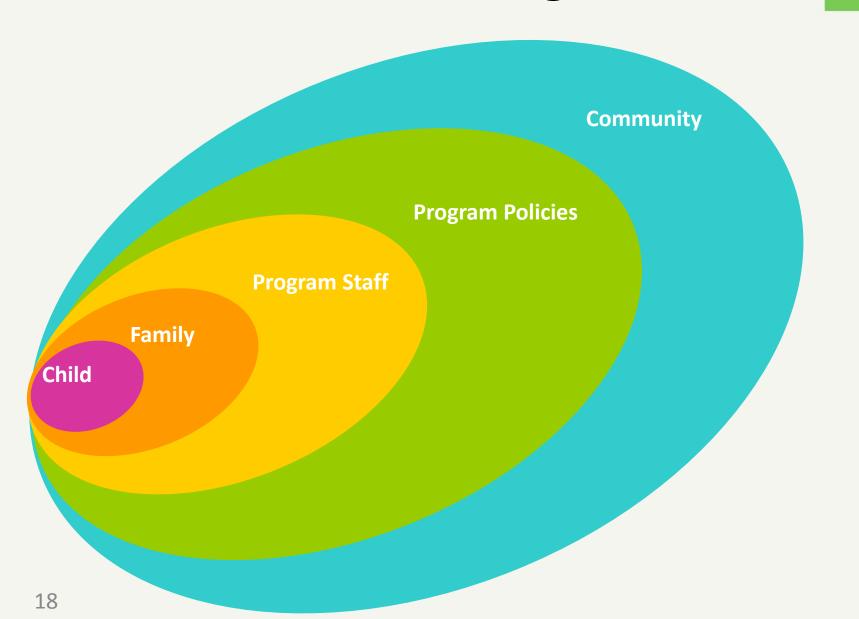
What do young children get from gardening?



I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples.

-Mother Teresa

Benefits of Gardening in ECEs





Equitable Access for Children

- Healthy habits
- Language
- Relationships
- Motor development
- STEAM
- Empowerment





Healthy Habits

- Kids experience fresh food
- If they grow it, they will be more likely to eat it
- Regular physical activity
- Introduction to a variety of new fruits and vegetables





Language

- Plant names
- Stories
- Seed packages
- Design
- Map & label garden
- School readiness





Relationships

- Teamwork
- Sharing
- Self-confidence
- Relaxation





Motor Development

The process through which our bodies learn to move.

- Gross motor
- Fine motor





Fundamental Movement Skills



Locomotor skills

- Walking
- Wheelbarrowing
- Moving tools/supplies

Object control

- Digging
- Adding soil
- Planting
- Harvesting
- Watering plants
- Installing plant supports

Stability- balance

- Turning
- Twisting
- Bending
- Reaching
- Lifting

STEAM in the garden

- Scientific concepts
- Technology
- Engineering
- Arts
- Math skills







• NOTE:

Some child care quality initiatives (AL Quality STARS) and programs prefer that children do not use edible materials as part of art experiences because they give a misleading message about the proper use of food; present possible health issues (allergies), sanitary issues, safety issues (choking hazards); and send conflicting messages between home and school for children from food insecure families.

Empowerment

I choose. I plant. I grow. I harvest... I eat.



Empowerment

- Health
- Freedom
- Know your food
- Find your place





Digging in the Dirt – Good for any age!







Gardening is good for...

- Food as fresh as you can get
- Nutrition from the source
- Exercise that produces more than strong pecs
- Topic of acceptable conversation for any group, ethnicity, religion, political party
- Self-esteem (Hey look what I grew!)
- Communing with nature and self





Benefits for the ECE Program

- Positive affirmation
- Quality food
- Less food waste
- Culture
- Resources

Supports CACFP Best Practices

- Incorporate seasonal and locally produced foods into meals.
- Make at least one of the two required components of snacks a vegetable or fruits.
- Serve a variety of fruits an choose whole fruit more often than juice.
- Provide at least one serving of each vegetable subgroup: dark green, dark red/orange, bean & pea, starchy and other.

Using CACFP Funds to Buy Gardening Materials

After all items for the regular mealtimes have been purchased, CACFP funds can be used to purchase items like:

 Seeds for gardening, fertilizer, watering cans, rakes, etc. to grow food that will be used in the food service or for nutrition educational activities







Benefits for Staff

- Increased Mood (stress reliever)
- Physical Movement (exercise)
- Learning a challenging new skill
- Healthier lifestyle

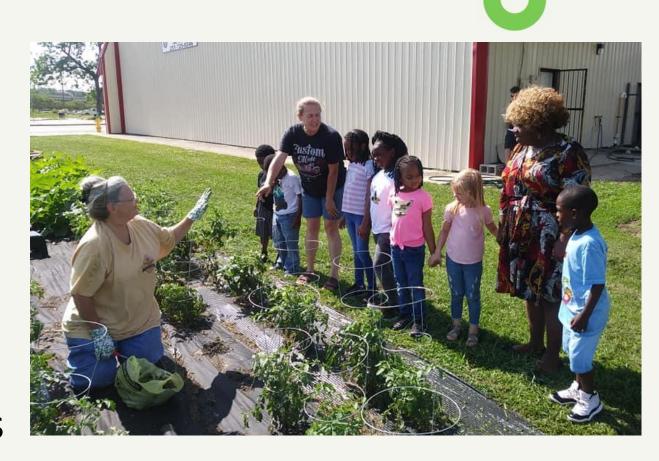


Benefits for Families

- Creates lasting memories with children
- Children and their parents eat more fruits and vegetables when they are homegrown
- Strengthens family communication and relationships
- See nature at work, first-hand and together
- Shared learning experience- educating each other in a relaxed and productive environment

Benefits for the Community

- Community service opportunities
- Experienced community members
- Community garden field trips
- Donation of gardening materials
- Master Gardener service hours



Pictures: Lighthouse Academy of Excellence, Prichard, AL and Agape Life Gardens, Mobile, AL



Creative Ways to Garden

Gardening

- Containers
- Raised Beds
- In ground gardens
- Hydroponics
- Vertical gardening





Photo Credit: Fairyland Family Childcare, YMCA of Madison, WI, Taking Root Tennessee, IATP Farm to Head Start

Indoor Gardening Activities

- Herb garden
- Living necklaces
- Growing experiments- take scraps or seeds from food you eat and see if they will grow
- Create a seed viewer
- Make seed balls
- Grow your own salad

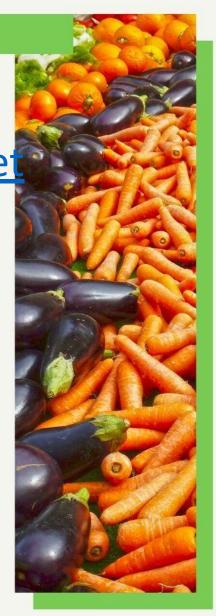


Ideas for Small Spaces

Growing potatoes in a bag/bucket

- Growing and exploring herbs
- Vertical gardening
- Window gardening
- Container gardening







Step by Step Planting with Children

Consider safety issues

- Are plants 'kid safe' if consumed?
- Will plants cause allergic reactions either via skin or inhaled?
- Could plants attract stinging insects?
- Could plants attract beneficial insects?
- Access to child-sized garden tools
- Always under supervision of adult





Use Resources and Guides



Washing Fruits and Vegetables

Introduction

Fresh fruits and vegetables can be contaminated either when they are purchased or if they are handled incorrectly. Thorough washing of fruits and vegetables will minimize the risk of serving a contaminated product to customers.







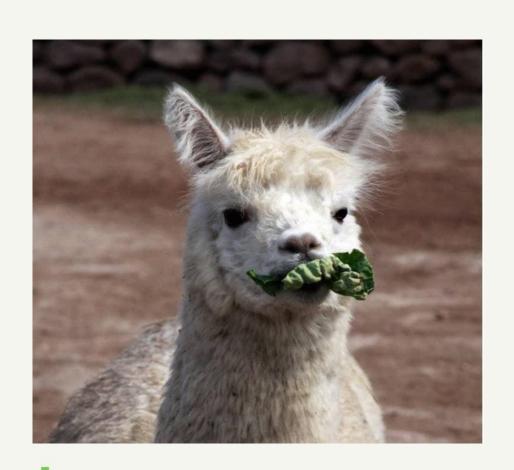
AL Cooperative Extension Chart



Alabama Vegetable Garden Planting Chart						
				Search		Q
Vegetable	Days to Maturity	Cultivars**	Planting Dates, Spring	Planting Dates, Fall	Seeds or Plants/100 ft	Spacing, Rows/Plants (inches)
Asparagus	2nd Year	Mary Washington (female hybrid), UC-157 (male hybrid), Jersey Giant (male hybrid)	April***		50 - 75 crowns	36x9-15
Beans, Bush Snap	50 - 60	Contender, Green Crop, Derby	April	Aug. 5-20	3/4 lb	36x2-3
Beans, Lima	65 - 75	Fordhook 242, Baby Fordhook, Henderson	Apr. 10 - May 10	July 20 - Aug. 5	3/4 lb	36x3-6
Beans, Pole Lima	80 - 85	Carolina Sieva, Florida Speckled, King of the Garden	Apr. 15 - May 15	July 15 - Aug. 1	1/2 lb	36x6-8

Baby llamas and bunnies love their veggies







Determine where you'll be planting

- Containers can be moved if needed
- Be aware of how much sun/shade plants need
- Most veggies, herbs need 6 hours full sun
- Remember children can plant, water, weed, and harvest!



Select plants

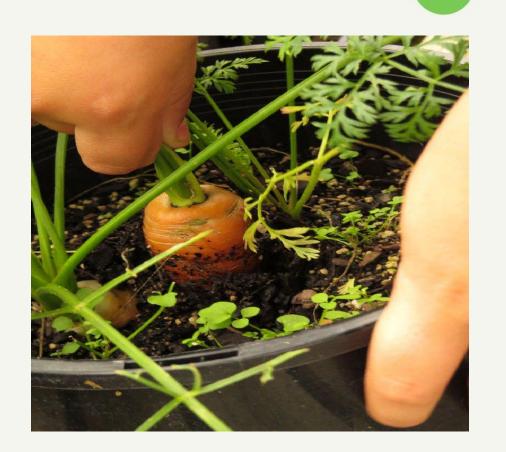




- Many vegetables, most herbs are good choices
- Choose varieties labelled for 'containers' or 'patio plants'
- Container large enough to grow healthy plants
- Can mix edible, ornamentals or herbs
- BE SURE PLANTS NEED SAME SUN & SHADE

Veggie choices for kid's containers

- Root crops (RC) like carrots, beets, radishes, onions (potatoes need more room)
- RCs grow best in cooler weather
- Vegetables grow better outdoors
- Temperature conducive to outdoor activity
- Container/pot size 18" diameter OK



Appropriate container/pot/planter



- KEY: MUST HAVE ADEQUATE
 DRAINAGE
- Self-watering containers help w/ drainage & watering
- Large enough to hold sufficient growing medium for intended plants
- Consider pros/cons of container materials (plastic, terra cotta, etc.)



Seeds or transplants?

- Seeds: allow children to experience process of germination
- Seeds: less \$
- Seeds: Wider selection of plants materials
 with seeds
- Seeds: Each child can have own 'seed pot'
- Seeds: Transplants faster, root system already established costs more
- Each child can have has own transplant to grow out



How to 'read' a seed pack







Adequate potting mixture

- KEY: GROWING MEDIUM NEEDS TO DRAIN WELL & HOLD SUFFICIENT MOISTURE
- Soilless mix best for container/pots
- Simplest use premixed bagged media
- Available at most garden centers
- Will read "Potting Mix/Soil"
- Not 'garden' or 'top' soil
- Some include wetting agents and/or fertilizer





Soil and Planting*

- Fill container about ¾ full with media
- Moisten media thoroughly
- Position plants still in pots on top of soil
- Make sure enough space for roots
- Let mix settle 3-5 mins, add more media to bring soil w/in 1" from top of pot
- Whether seeds or transplants, check recommended depth & spacing
- *CRITICAL STEP





Fertilizing

- Container plants must be fed on regular basis
- Use slow-release AND quick-release (water soluble) products
- Synthetic and Organic fertilizers OK
- Some soil mixes contain fertilizer not enough for entire growing season
- Read and follow label directions (better to add too little than too much)





Watering

- ROT (Rule of Thumb): Container grown plants need more frequent watering
- 2-3 times per week to daily
- Porous materials dry out faster than other materials i.e. clay or terra cotta
- Use lighter colored pots for plants in full sun
- Water-retaining polymers retain water
- Install drip system if several pots involved





Learn from mistakes – no jail time involved 🔘







No "failures" It's experimentation







"I think we found the spot where you spilled the fertilizer."

Resources



- "A Kid's Guide to Container Gardening" Stephanie Bearce
- "Kids Container Gardening: year round projects for inside and out" Cindy Krezel
- "Container Gardening" ACES ANR-1139
- https://www.seewhatgrows.org/kids-guide-beneficial-bugs-garden/
- https://www.safeoptions.co.uk/blog/3-things-to-teach-y our-kids-when-they-play-in-the-garden/



Engaging Staff and Families

Racial Equity Parallels – The Process

 "As a process, we apply racial equity when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives."





Staff Engagement

- Education and resources
- Overcoming fears
- Safety concerns
- Start with small and simple ideas
- Experienced staff
- Provide materials and space- be creative
- Class gardening plots or containers
- Empowerment of staff with new skills!





Welcome staff and families to participate in decision-making about gardens:

- What to grow
- Where to grow, inside classrooms or outside
- How to involve children
- Process to build, plant, maintain, and harvest





Family Engagement



- Communication
- All family members
- Drop-off and pick-up feedback
- Family "discovery books"
- Become a CSA location

More Ideas for Families

- Container garden support- families can bring plants to grow
- Produce share box
- Farm stand at pick-up
- Gardening books & props reflect families
- Create family farm to ECE team
- Volunteer opportunities are strengths-based









Gardening Resources



GARDENING AND COOKING ABILITIES OF PRESCHOOLERS ages 2-5

Activities based on experiential learning with growing and cooking fruits and vegetables can help preschool age children learn key developmental and life skills and healthy eating habits, including:

- Science skills: classification, weather, insects, soil, and plant life cycles.
- Math skills: counting, measuring, and weighing.
- Language skills: describing and comparing color, taste, and texture.
- Fine motor skills: mixing, spreading, and chopping.
- Cognitive skills: curiosity, cause-and-effect, and problem-solving.
- Healthy eating skills: willingness to try new foods and making healthier choices

GARDEN YOGA FOR KIDS



Pretend to be a tree

Tree Pose: Stand on one leg. Bend the other knee and place the sole of your foot on your inner thigh. Sway like a tree in the breeze. Now the other side.



Pretend to be a frog

Squat Pose: Come down to a squat with your knees apart and arms resting between your knees. Touch your hands to the ground. Jump like a frog.



Pretend to be a seed

Child's Pose: Sit back on your heels and bring your forehead down to rest on the floor. Pretend to be a seed in the garden.



Pretend to be a butterfly

Cobbler's Pose: Sit on your buttocks with a tall spine. Bend your legs with the soles of your feet together. Flap your legs like the wings of a butterfly.



Online trainings



 Better Kid Care: Fresh Harvest: Children Grow in the Garden

https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/lessons/fresh-harvest

Resources: Online

- Wisconsin Farm to ECE
 https://www.communitygroundworks.org/content/farm-early-car
 e-and-education
- Garden Yoga for Kids https://www.pinkoatmeal.com/garden-yoga/
- Garden Yoga Ideas for Kids
 https://www.kidsyogastories.com/garden-yoga-ideas/
- Local Food for Little Eaters
 https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/local-food-for-little-eaters
- CDC's Food Safety Information https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/

Resources: Online, continued

- Plant Alabama
 - https://www.plantsomethingalabama.com/
- Kids Gardening
 - https://kidsgardening.org/
- ACES Home Planting Guide
 - https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/planting-guide-for-home-gardening-in-alabama/
- Early Childhood Knowledge and Learning Center
 - https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/blog/gardening-enhance-early-childhood-help-children-grow



Resources: Phone Apps





- All Trails
 - https://www.alltrails.com/

Planter- Garden Planner



Garden Answers- Plant ID



Garden Plan Pro

Resources: Food and Farming Education

- Grow It, Try It, Like It! Curricula
- Harvest for Healthy Kids
- Smarter Mealtimes





LS2 – Action Period



^{*}Go NAP SACC is a Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care for ECE settings comparing their current practices with a set of best practices





LS2 Action Period

- The Leadership Team will:
 - Set up a time to train program staff
 - Host mini-version of this Learning Session
 - Finalize 3-5 Go NAPSACC Goals and Action Plans
 - Bring all Action Period materials back to LS3
- Trainers provide technical assistance (TA)



Action Plan Worksheet

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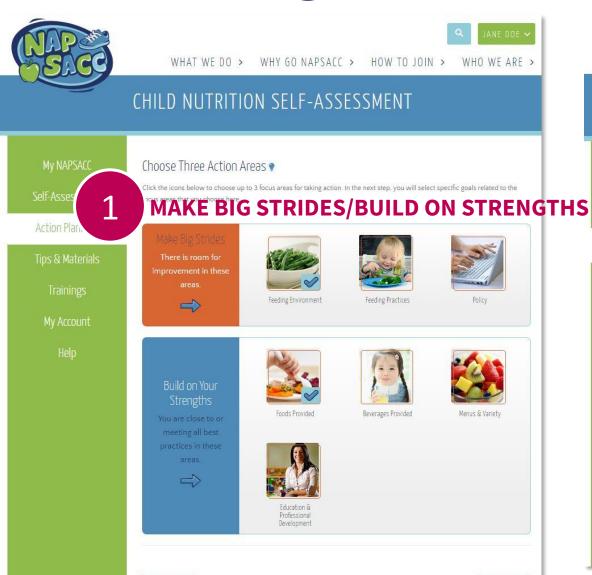
ECE Program Name:

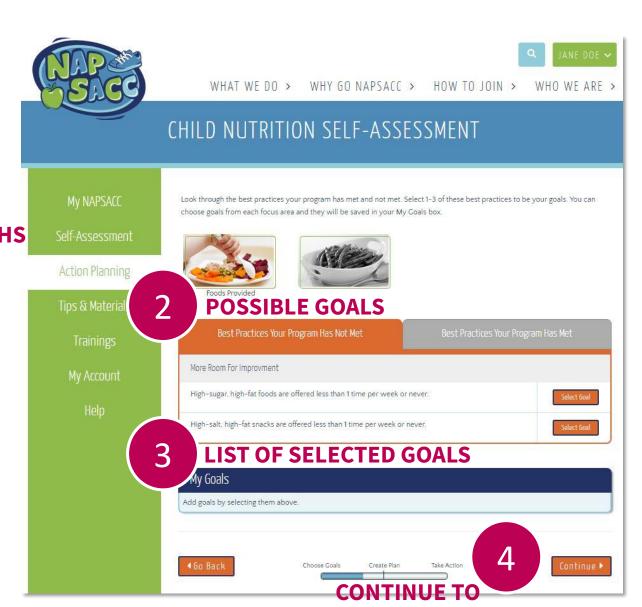
Goal:



Child	Family	Program Staff	Program Environment	Program Policies

Goal Setting



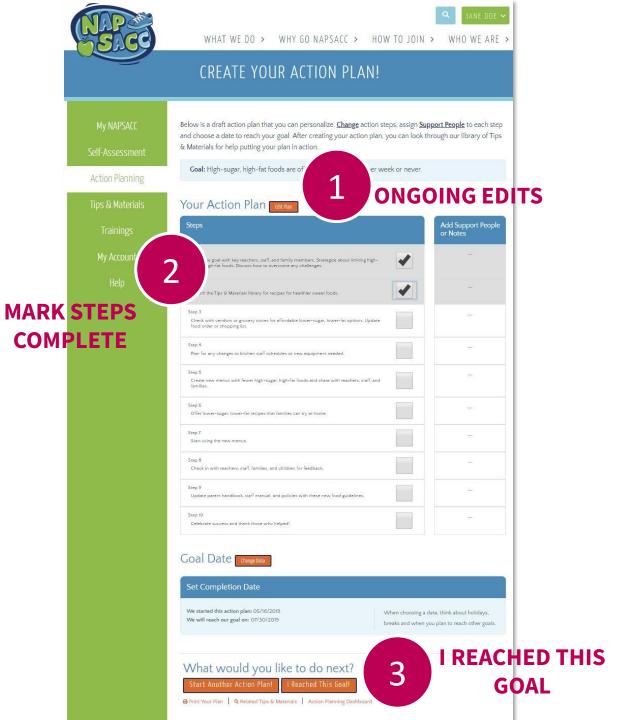


ACTION PLANNING

Action Planning



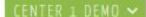
Action Planning



Tips & Materials









WHAT WE DO > WHY GO NAPSACC > HOW TO JOIN > WHO WE ARE >

TRAININGS

Training

My NAPSACC

Self-Assessment

Action Planning

Tips & Materials

Trainings

My Account

Help

Go NAP SACC Online Trainings Currently Available:



Supporting Healthy Eating with Go NAP SACC and CACFP Please note that you must complete our evaluation in order to document your participation in this training. Find the link to the evaluation in the "Web Links 4" box at the bottom of the screen.



Supporting Physical Activity in Early Care & Education Settings Please note that you must complete our evaluation in order to document your participation in this training. Find the link to the evaluation in the "Web Links 2" box at the bottom of the screen.

More trainings to come...stay tuned!

Other Great Online Training Options:

On Demand Distance Education from Penn State's Better Kid Care

LS2 Action Period



Team Reflection

What ideas have we learned that we would like to implement in our program?

Action Period

- Please complete by Learning Session 3:
 - Finalize 3-5 Goals and Action Plans with staff members
 - Onsite Visit with Trainer

Next Session Date

March _____, 2021

Local Garden Resources

- UAH Community Garden
 - https://www.uah.edu/sustainability/studen
 t-organizations/community-garden
- CASA of Madison County
 - https://casamadisoncty.org/casa-garden/
- Huntsville Botanical Gardens and Classes
 - https://hsvbg.org/
- AL Cooperative Extension
 - https://www.aces.edu/blog/category/lawn-garden/



Local Partners





- Alabama Cooperative Extension System
 - Nutrition classes and cooking demonstration programs
 - Color Me Healthy
 - Master Gardeners- Garden education
- Farm Food Collaborative
 - Support to purchase locally grown foods



Trainer Information

Darmeshia West dwest@tcrchildcare.org (256) 542-8767





Alabama Partnership for Children

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