



Racial Equity in Farm to School and Farm to Early Care Education

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What is Farm to School and Farm to ECE?

Farm to school k-12 (F2S) connects schools, local agriculture, and communities to improve student nutrition, health, and academic performance. Implementation of farm to school is asset-based so varies from program to program, but farm to school include one or, ideally, all of three components (as FoodCorps organizes them):



Healthy School Meals:

Local foods purchased, promoted and served in the cafeteria as meals, snacks, and taste-tests;



Hands on Learning:

Active education integrated into the curriculum including teachings on agriculture, food systems, food preparation, and nutrition as well as visits with farmers and chefs; and



School-wide culture of health:

Communities come together to work collectively creating a whole school environment where health and food are culturally valued

Farm to Early Care and Education (F2 ECE) addresses the same three components to increase local, fresh food access and consumption as well as enrich the educational experience in all ECE sites, from large centers to small home-based facilities.

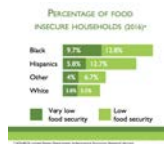
Farm to School and Farm to ECE efforts are most rooted in Racial Equity when teachings and practices are place-based and programs incorporate structural strategies to interrupt inequities.

Why Racial Equity?

Although many communities suffer from food system inequities, communities of color suffer disproportionately. Racial disparities in health, wellness, education, environment, economics, etc. mean that people of color are even more adversely affected by inequities in our food system.

In NC, 1 in 4 children is food insecure but for children of color that percentage is 1 in 3. The challenges are not only race, but they are always race.

Learning to unpack systemic racism leads to work which can help examine all forms of marginalization and undo food system inequities to the benefit of all. Racial Equity is a vital issue across the food system, and urgently needed where food systems most directly impact children.



Racial Equity Outcomes =

when outcomes & opportunities are not dependent on zip code or skin color.

Racial Equity Lens =

- acknowledge the presence of structures that shape life options and outcomes;
- analyze the impact of structures on a specific issue, condition, or population; and
- develop structural strategies to interrupt inequities and improve outcomes and opportunities for all.

Further RESOURCES

CEFS C.O.R.E. website
<https://cefs.ncsu.edu/food-system/initiatives/food-system-committee-on-racial-equity/>

Michigan State University, An Annotated Bibliography on Structural Racism Present in the U.S. Food System: Fifth Edition
http://www.cnar.msu.edu/resources/structural-racism_in_us_food_system

The Food Opportunity Research Collaborative (FORC)
<http://bitniansstitute.org.edu/research/strategic/initiatives/the-food-opportunity-research-collaborative-forc/>

Dismantling Racism Works web workbook
<http://www.dismantlingracism.org/>



RACIAL EQUITY trainings

Trainings are simply a starting point. What they provide is a grounding for understanding and communication so that we can work collectively to unpack entrenched thought processes, narratives, and behaviors to shift power inequities.

Begin your efforts with local organizations already doing this work. Our gratitude goes to endless individuals and orgs for their commitment and teachings and the groundwork they have laid. Two organizations—dRworks and Open Source Leadership—have consulted with us for 3+ years, providing trainings and helping us build trainings to share with our food system and farm to school and ECE partners.

These trainings build a

SHARED LANGUAGE

around racial equity

According to Critical Race Theory, Racism is...

- Race prejudice + Social and Institutional Power
- A system of oppression based on race
- A system of advantage based on race

Structural Racism is how policies, practices, procedures, and systems operate to perpetuate and promote the advantages of white people and the oppression of people of color.

SHARED HISTORY on the construction of race and the impact of structural racism on our food system with a focus on land, food, & education



SHARED ANALYSIS of institutional impact of structural racism on our food system, and seeing that racism works on multiple levels: individual, institutional, and cultural

plus a collective plan for

APPLICATION for addressing structural racism in our Farm to ECE, Farm to School, and general Food System work

"I loved being a part of it and being there definitely reinforced our organizational equity commitment and focus on inclusion. We have completely revamped how we hire and train our farm to school interns, and our interns are now also playing a vital role in training the interns who come after them. Thank you!" - non-profit ED

"We still struggle on getting from the theoretical to the practice, but we are now all in conversation about how to do this, together, and that is new and powerful."
 - ECE center director

"It is a lot, and deeply embedded. We all pretty much agree though that this is work necessary for our goals and work at Extension, so that is why we brought it into our monthly staff retreat. It is a need."
 - Cooperative Extension director

Equity Principles and Questions

Taking action for racial justice can be guided by these 7 principles (see <http://www.dismantlingracism.org/action-tools.html> for full discussion of each):

1. Use organizing mind; focus on your circle of influence
2. Identify explicit goals
3. Speak to, serve, empower, engage those on the margins
4. Think and act collectively
5. Be accountable to people and to principles
6. Know yourself
7. Work on all three interdependent levels - personal, institutional, cultural

THEORY of CHANGE

Adapted from Linda Stout's *Collective Visioning*, this model offers a framework for making sustainable change. Design work that addresses all four quadrants, and always work collectively.



ECE Learning Session building a network of practitioners



Strategic Planning for FoodCorps NC program



Sourcing locally AND providing the farmer a CSA drop-off site for families and staff

The connections between people and organizations, including both personal and structural bonds



The practices and rules that define how a group or organization operates (little p) as well as our nation's laws and the education needed to explain their context and impact (P)



Racial Equity training addressing power analysis tool



Food System Education for ECE staff

Programs and projects that provide tangible examples of both successes and failures, of doing things differently

Shared learnings and teachings that provide education on how tos & laying the groundwork required to think and act differently



Walking Fieldtrip to Farmers Market AND parent pickup location



Cultural shift Collards = cool



Taste Test prep with kids in the school kitchen



Promoting POC and women farmers through educational posters and purchasing



Elementary School Garden Club

An equitable society would be one where all experience improved opportunities and outcomes. Race would no longer be a determining factor for health, wage, employment, life expectancy, and other disparities.

Equity TOOL

for accessing programs & goals

Strong racial justice goals and strategies are based principles of action, and support people and communities in meeting urgent needs as well as making long-term, sustainable change.

- Step 1: Identify key outcomes (*How do these outcomes produce equity or racial justice? How do you know?*)
- Step 2: Determine how the work comes from and involves community stakeholders at all stages
- Step 3: Advance opportunity those most directly impacted. Minimize harm. (process)
- Step 4: Determine benefit and burden.
- Step 5: Evaluate. Reflect. Raise racial awareness.
- Step 6: Report out. Revise. Continue connections with all partners.