

Farm to Family (F2F) Initiative, Boston, Massachusetts

Program Partners: Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. Head Start
Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures
The Food Project

Program Components

Each week during the pilot period, TFP delivered farm shares to participating Head Start sites. The farm shares contained \$15 worth of produce grown by TFP at their farm in Lincoln, MA. Head Start families and staff members were offered the opportunity to buy the farm shares for just \$5, and could pay with SNAP (food stamps), cash, check or money order. Participants were asked to pay for a month's worth of farm shares at a time, and to commit to one or more months of enrollment in F2F. The \$10 difference between the value and cost of each share was covered through grants and donor funds raised by TFP, as well as through a sponsorship option added to the cost of full-price farm shares. In addition to receiving the produce in the farm shares, participants also received bilingual educational materials across key health messages related to childhood obesity prevention, farm newsletters, and recipes featuring the produce in the shares. School-based activities included classroom field trips to the farm, as well as the use of some of the box contents in school meals.

Over the course of the pilot, 42 Head Start families and 45 Head Start staff members received farm shares, for a total of 87 program participants. A mixed-method program evaluation was conducted to examine:

1. Participation rates, including sign-ups, drop-outs, and weekly pick-ups;
2. Program strengths/challenges from the perspectives of staff from TFP and Head Start;
3. Families' perceptions of the program; and
4. Preliminary short-term changes in family health behaviors.

For a summary of evaluation results, click [here](#).

Overall feedback on the F2F pilot was positive, with 71% of parent participants reporting that the initiative made a difference in their families' eating behaviors, and 86% reporting that they would be willing to participate again next year. Staff from TFP and Head Start also reported that they would like F2F to continue. Program partners are currently taking part in a planning process to examine evaluation results and implement changes to strengthen and expand the initiative in 2012.