

In order to address the quality of caloric intake of preschoolers, changes need to be made to food services. Most EEC organizations and family-based day care centers independently purchase the same types of food, buying low-quality affordable products based on convenience, financial constraints and often a lack of nutritional knowledge. Enormous potential exists to create an entire system change through a partnership between preschool organizations, families, local farmers, food banks, distributors, funders, and local and State policy advocates. This robust approach is transformative, testing innovations immediately, improving work processes and creating new relationships and collaborative networks by learning how to work smarter and more effectively. These are the cornerstones for longer term sustainable results.

Our project, in it's fourth year, has four interventions: 1) fresh produce from a local farmer and orchard; 2) non-consumables purchased in bulk, through the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts (FBWM) and the Mansfield Paper; 3) a professional development training series and 4) a Mobile Market at "pick up time" for parents/guardians to purchase local produce. Some highlights include:

- A F2P Committee convenes monthly to assess progress and problem solve
- Eight agencies currently participating (approx. 2000 children served)
- Almost \$25,000 generated for our local farmer in Hadley and orchard in Belchertown
- Almost \$30,000 generated for off-season local distributors
- Some organizations saved almost 32% in produce costs
- Some organizations saved up to 30% in non-consumable costs
- Six professional development trainings as of 12/2011