



# NUTRITION EDUCATION AND FOOD ACCESS COMMUNITY BRIEFING

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# ABOUT US

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The Hand, Heart, and Soul Project is a not-for-profit organization that provides children and families access to nutrient-dense foods and works with early childhood education programs to develop holistic programs focused on health, wellness, nutrition, and education. We celebrate with, advocate for, and advance the needs of our community. The overarching goal of the Hand, Heart, and Soul Project is to build strong, healthy communities through people development, policy and advocacy, best practices, and wellness. Our programming uplifts not only the community we serve at model demonstration sites, but impacts the lives of socially and economically marginalized young children and their families across Clayton and beyond. To learn more about the Hand, Heart, and Soul Project, visit [www.HandHeartSoulProject.org](http://www.HandHeartSoulProject.org) or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube.

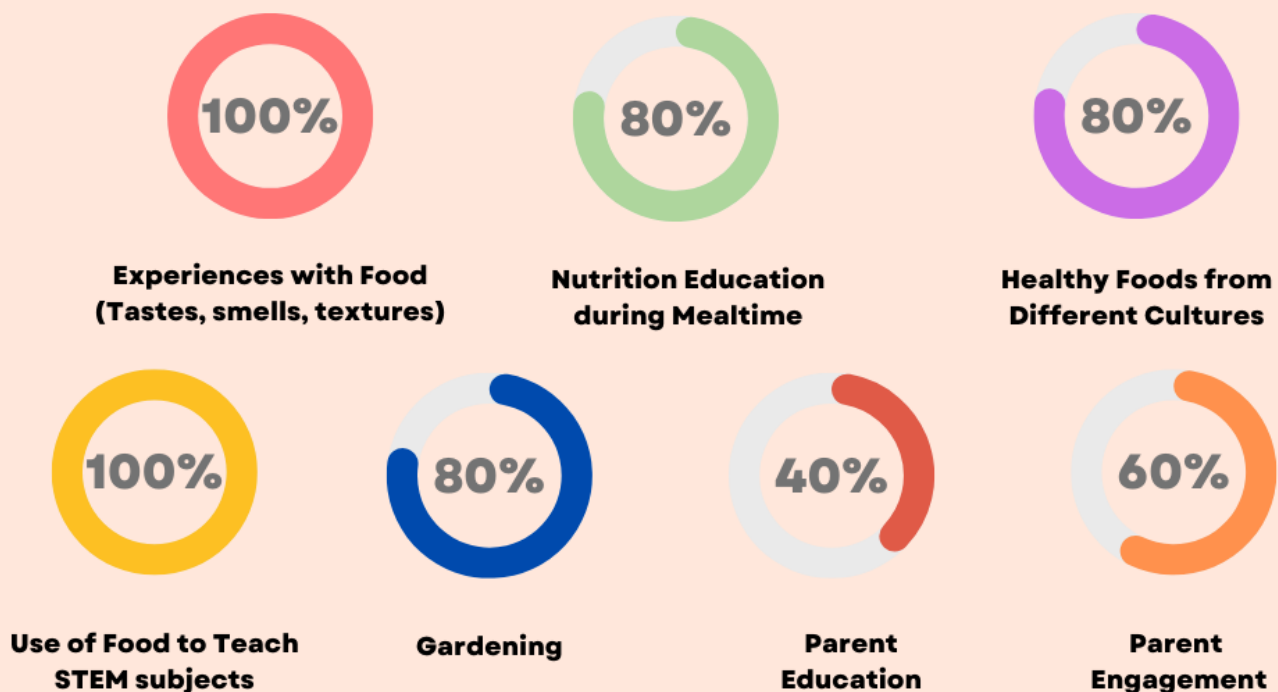
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Prepared by:  
Caree J. Cotwright, PhD, RDN

# PROJECT RESULTS

## Table 1. Teacher Confidence to Use FTECE Approaches (N=5)



% of Teachers at 5 ECE sites that were Confident to Extremely Confident about Implementation of FTECE Approaches  
Based on 7-point Likert Scale from Not Confident to Completely Confident

Teachers at ECE sites reported on their confidence to implement FTECE approaches. Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents that were very confident to confident that they could implement approaches in specific topic areas. Teachers reported the most confidence in providing experiences with food.

Conversely, teachers reported lower confidence with providing FTECE parent engagement (60%) and parent education (40%).



# HAND, HEART & SOUL PROJECT

## 2022 Qualitative Findings

### + WHY THIS PROJECT:



Clayton County is a high need, under resourced area. Clayton County School System's FRP Meals Rate in the school system is 92.98% and within the City of Forest Park 45% of children live in poverty (Source: United Way).



In 2020, Over 38 million Americans are food insecure, including 12 million children. COVID-19 has increased rates of food insecurity.



ECE sites can employ Farm to ECE (FTECE) practices and increase agricultural education improve the knowledge and self-efficacy of ECE teachers, children, and families.



## + Parent Focus Group Themes

Parents from ECE Site in Clayton, County, GA (N=12)  
Recommendations to Increase FV Consumption among Families

### Accessing healthy food locally



"You know, going to the grocery store and stuff is a bit expensive trying to buy healthy food. Like it's very expensive. So I kinda do like the fact that little ones has the farm stand where we have access to the fruits and vegetables." -ECE Parent

### Addressing food insecurity through community efforts

"Community resources like transportation... sometimes it could be a shuttle that could actually give the families access to going to a farmer's market or to a grocery store." -ECE Parent



### Increasing use of ECE Farm Stand and Community Gardens



"My children are the ones who bring more fruits and vegetables into my household because at Little Ones, they feed them a variety of fruits and vegetables when they come home and they're talking about it and they want a lot of it, like recently...all my kids wanted Strawberries, strawberries, strawberries." -ECE Parent

### Empowering families to build skills

"More people would be willing to use a fresh food stand if they had more recipes. When you go to market in your mind, you wanna eat healthy, but by the time you get home, you like, what do I do with this? So you just let all of it spoil in the refrigerator and you just grab a bag of chips and keep going." -ECE Parent



### Promoting fruits and vegetables through social media



"Social media kind of rules the world. People will see, wanna share, let other people know. A cooking class would be great because when we grew up, we wasn't taught how to cook the proper way or how to cook with less oil and stuff like that." -ECE Parent



# SUMMARY

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Teachers at participating ECE sites are confident about engaging in Farm to ECE approaches. Teachers highlighted resources that would be helpful in the successful implementation of these approaches. Teachers indicated needing more assistance with gardening, engaging parents, and advocating for wellness promotion through a policy council. The HHSP team will continue to work in partnership with community members to engage in the promotion of wellness and FTECE approaches. Gardening education and farm stands provide an essential link for tying what children learn in the classroom into the lives of families. Parents and teachers reported life changing progress from being a part of the Little Ones community. Future projects may involve comprehensive interventions to benefit ECE sites, children, teachers, and families.

**"It's [the garden] a big influence..my daughter, she loves fruits and vegetables. I don't have to make her eat fruits and vegetables." -ECE Parent**

