



Local Foods

In the past, people grew or gathered food from their local area. Today, food is often shipped across the country or even world before it arrives at its destination for consumption. Not only does this result in greater energy usage (from trucks and planes), but it also makes the food less fresh. Since Nebraska is a farming state, it is actually fairly easy to buy local foods, or you can even grow them in your backyard or a community garden! Below are some activities for students to learn about locally grown food. The activities are organized by suggested grade level but may be applicable across grade levels.

Activity Ideas

Pre-School + Kindergarten

- **Read and taste.** You might already know that there are quite a few children's books about produce out there! For this activity, choose one (such as [Jamberry](#) or [The Vegetable Alphabet Book](#)), select a couple of local fruits or vegetables for students to taste (apples, cucumbers and carrots would be good seasonal options for September!), and provide them with bite-sized samples. Read the book to the kids and have them taste as you go along or afterward. [See here for more details.](#)
- **How plants grow.** Teach the kids [The Seed Song](#) along with hand/body movements. This activity helps kids understand the history behind the food they eat, and what plants need to survive.

Grades 1-3

- **Read and taste.** See above. Try choosing books that these students can read themselves.
- **Map your fruits and veggies.** Put up a map of the world, and ask your students to collect stickers from their fruits and vegetables that indicate their country of origin. Students can bring in their stickers and place them on the map in the location their food came from. [See here for more information.](#)
- **Apple exploration.** Read [Apple Picking Time](#) and/or [Apple Farmer Annie](#), introducing the concept of a farmers' market. Bring in a variety of different kinds of apples and have students make observations comparing the apples' appearance and taste. [See here for more information.](#)

Grades 4-6

- **Plant herbs.** You can plant seeds in pots to keep indoors, or if your school has a garden, you can go outside and work there. Choose some herbs that are relatively durable/easy to maintain. Have students occasionally make observations about their plants. Then, when they're ready, you can pick the herbs and talk about recipes that might include those flavors! [Here](#) is a site with more guidance.
- **Map your fruits and veggies.** See above.

Grades 7-12

- **Map your fruits and veggies.** See above.
- **Why eat local?** [This video](#) is a great explanation of the link between the importance of local food and sustainability. Michael Pollan, a prominent writer in the field of sustainable food systems, likes to keep his ideas simple and easy to understand. Watch the clip and discuss.
- **Journey of food from farm to fork.** Start a discussion about the difference between global food transportation processes and local foods/farmers' markets. Spark interest by watching [this video](#) about the journey of a carrot from farm to grocery store (or [this](#) one about bananas and pineapples), and reading [this article](#) about the distance food travels before it reaches its destination.

Additional Resources

1. [Growing Minds](#)
2. [Healthy Planet US](#)
3. [Healthy Eating](#)

Let Us Know What You Did!

Report your progress and earn recognition for your school. Fill out your school's row on the [GSC Tracking Document](#) to let us know which activity you did for this month!

Questions?

We're here to answer any questions you may have, talk through ideas or provide further resources. Just email gogreen@kearneycats.com.

RECOGNITION LEVELS

All KPS schools have the opportunity to earn recognition for their participation in the Green Schools Initiative each year. The more activities you complete, the more recognition you receive! For 2019-2020, the following three levels of recognition are available:

- **Level 1 (Green Performance)** - Participation in 5 activities during the year. Schools receive a framed certificate of recognition, \$50 for Green Team Activities next year, and \$100 for the Principal's budget.
- **Level 2 (Green Achievement)** - Participation in 6 - 9 activities during the year. Schools receive \$150 for Green Team activities next year, an award banner, and \$200 for the Principal's budget
- **Level 3 (Green Excellence)** - Participation in 10 or more activities during the year. Schools receive \$300 for Green Team activities next year, a large award banner, and \$400 for the Principal's budget. In addition, all schools that achieve Level 3 participation are placed into a raffle; the selected school receives \$450 to spend on district-approved items. Approved items could entail smart power strips, vending machine energy misers, native landscaping/trees, rain barrels, native plants for classrooms, and indoor/outdoor recycling containers. All items must be approved by the district office prior to purchase.