



Contact: Jennifer Brackman  
(516) 358-9250 ext.35

[JBrackman@childcarenassau.org](mailto:JBrackman@childcarenassau.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **LONG ISLAND FARM TO PRESCHOOL WILL CONNECT LOCAL FAMILIES WITH FARM FRESH FOOD**

**June 18, 2014, Franklin Square, NY** – Child Care Council of Nassau (Council) is thrilled to introduce Long Island Farm to Preschool, a program that will increase access to locally grown fruits and vegetables for underserved areas of Long Island by offering farmers markets, cooking demonstrations, gardening, and training for children, parents and staff at child care centers. Sponsored by Council through a grant from the New York State Department of Health, Farm to Preschool's farmers markets will be open from the first week of July through the end of September and will be held once a week at Anna House in Elmont (10:30AM-1:30PM Tuesdays), Young Achievers Learning Experience (YALE) in Hempstead (3:30PM-6:30PM Tuesdays), and Children's Nest in Merrick (3:30PM-6:30PM Thursdays).

LI Farm to Preschool aims to benefit the communities surrounding the farmers market locations. The thousands of people who work on the Belmont Racetrack and their families will have access via the Anna House Market. "Many Long Island families would like the opportunity to purchase fresh, local produce, but do not have the ability to do so due to transportation or time constraints," says Dana Youkilis, Child Care Council of Nassau's Farm to Preschool Manager. "By bringing the produce to the child care centers during dismissal times, we are providing families and staff with an easy way to purchase local produce without having to travel anywhere else."

The fresh food will be provided by Perez Farms from Pine Island and Carucci Greenhouses and Farms from Mattituck. Both are small, family-run farms that grow a variety of produce. Farmers will be present at the markets each week, giving people the chance to meet them, ask questions, and get tips and advice.

The markets will accept EBT (food stamps) and WIC and Senior FMNP (Farmers Market Nutrition Program) checks. Farm to Preschool is also participating in the WIC Vegetable and Fruit program, and will offer \$2.00 incentive coupons for every \$5.00 spent in EBT Dollars.

"Farm to Preschool is an incredible opportunity to change the eating habits of the youngest children and their families and caregivers," says Youkilis. "By increasing access to local produce for families, staff and communities, we are providing people with fresher, healthier food."

Cooking demos and recipes will be provided at each weekly farmers market, and a gardening program is already underway at each child care center. The gardening programs consist of creating an on-site vegetable and flower garden with the children at the centers, who will help tend the garden throughout the summer and be given the opportunity to harvest and eat the produce they grow.

###

### **About Child Care Council of Nassau**

Child Care Council of Nassau is a private, not-for-profit organization that has served the community since 1972. Their vision is for all families living and/or working in Nassau County to have access to quality child care and early learning that fosters successful growth and development for every child. Council is located at 925 Hempstead Turnpike, Suite 400, Franklin Square, NY 11010, and can be reached at (516) 358-9250. The Child Care Resource and Referral line is 516-358-9288. Visit <http://www.childcarenassau.org/>.

### **About Farm to Preschool**

Farm to Preschool is a natural expansion of the national farm to school model and encompasses a wide range of programs and activities. Farm to Preschool serves the full spectrum of child care delivery: preschools, Head Start, center-based, programs in K-12 school districts, nurseries and family home care facilities. Its goals are multi-level and include: influencing the eating habits of young children while their preferences are forming; creating healthy lifestyles through good nutrition and experiential opportunities such as gardening; improving healthy food access at home and within the community; and ultimately influencing policies to address the childhood obesity epidemic through a local food lens. Program activities can take an environmental and systems change approach by serving preschoolers, teachers and child care providers, parents and family members, as well as communities. Visit <http://www.farmtopreschool.org/>.