

# The Pennsylvania Farm to School Network Success Story:

## **BROWN'S FAMILY CHILDCARE**

Venango County, PA



"Teaching about farm to early care and education (ECE), healthy habits and nature are my passion. It is my goal to instill as much of my love for these topics into the lives of our youngest learners."

**Lindsey Brown**, director of Brown's Family Childcare in Venango County, PA, has been incorporating farm to ECE practices and activities into her classroom for over 11 years. Lindsey and her husband, Jasen, opened Brown's Family Childcare in 2012 as a family in-home child care on their farm. Currently, ages 2.5 to 12 years old are accepted into her programs, which include preschool, summer camp, and before- and after-school program.

This 2023 season, Lindsey and her students are growing vegetables, herbs and flowers both indoors using a hydroponic system, and outdoors in garden beds. Their gardens are full of pumpkins, tomatoes, lettuce, spinach, zucchini and jalapeño peppers, just to name a few. There is a bed with herbs like spearmint, lemon balm, cilantro, parsley and basil. There are also several perennial plants, including rhubarb, blueberries, horseradish and peaches, and a pollinator garden with wildflowers to attract pollinators and butterflies.

"The students' favorite thing about gardening is visiting the garden every day ... looking for monarch butterflies and caterpillars on the milkweed."

**- Lindsey Brown, director**

"The students' favorite thing about gardening is visiting the garden every day to see the changes, harvesting the produce, seeing bees pollinate and looking for monarch butterflies and caterpillars on the milkweed," Lindsey says.

Lindsey teaches daily gardening lessons, which include garden yoga, plant life cycles, edible plant parts, basic garden care, and the social-emotional elements through teamwork while students plant, water, weed, and harvest together. Lindsey also incorporates art and literacy into her gardening lessons.





Lindsey has an abundance of farm to early care and education (ECE) books and materials and she provides activities that align with the PA Early Childhood Learning Standards for preschoolers. She even developed her very own Nature and Farm to ECE curriculum which has been approved through the state of Pennsylvania.

Lindsey's students love learning about Nature Farm to ECE. Parents of children attending Browns Family Childcare and members of the community appreciate all her work and are grateful for their children trying and liking new foods and experiencing new things such as raising monarch butterflies and growing their own foods.



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