Using a food hub to test local food procurement

**Aim:** Remove the barrier of food cost to address ECE programs’ other barriers: ordering and receiving food, storing food, preparing food (recipes and culinary skills), engaging cooks and parents, to increase the likelihood the ECEs will continue to purchase fresh produce from local food hub.

**Measured Improvement:** Developed a system for online ordering with information (facts/recipes) about foods, storage no longer cited as an issue, cooks and directors apply new knowledge and skills, and parents engaged.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PDSA Cycle #</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>What change will you test?</th>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Was anything uncovered that could be an alternative change to test?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Order form with recipe ideas</td>
<td>Will it be clear? Simple to use?</td>
<td>appreciated the recipes; added activity ideas</td>
<td>increased ordering</td>
<td>Adapted, then adopted</td>
<td>add activities related to foods too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Email communication to ECE to order</td>
<td>Is it sufficient to prompt them to order</td>
<td>centers may not be attentive to time sensitivity</td>
<td>Center 1 not able to participate</td>
<td>Center 2 continued through end of pilot. Center 3 needed to be reminded.</td>
<td>additional barriers (e.g., time, adequate staffing) exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Food selected for ordering</td>
<td>Will multiple centers order enough to reach the minimum</td>
<td>not enough food ordered</td>
<td>Large orders placed; repeat ordered food stated not previously familiar with preparing (eg beets)</td>
<td>Center 2 continued through end of pilot. Center 3 needed to be reminded and together met the minimum purchase amount.</td>
<td>It may make more sense for centers to purchase every other week instead of weekly for the quantities of food ordered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Communication with Food Hub</td>
<td>Is the Food Hub responsive</td>
<td>inconsistent information?</td>
<td>Food Hub email on time (Monday); Mgr fairly prompt to inquiries</td>
<td>Phone conversations better than email communication</td>
<td>Food runs out before orders are submitted which requires quick communication to change orders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do they receive food as planned</td>
<td>Does delivery occur as scheduled</td>
<td>likely</td>
<td>All beets went to one ECE, ie food not split by individual ECE orders</td>
<td>Food arrives in quantities at correct locations; “delivery is starting to feel routine” “kitchen expects and anticipates it”</td>
<td>Food Hub changed invoicing which enabled deliveries to be more accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Is food stored safely over the weekend</td>
<td>Does food last for next week’s prep</td>
<td>no prediction</td>
<td>Food was stored on counters, in refrigerator and in storage spaces.</td>
<td>No challenges described. Center 2 described food was stored where previously canned food was stored.</td>
<td>ECEs can handle identifying where to store food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Do they use food</td>
<td>How much food continues to the next week</td>
<td>expect some left over</td>
<td>“Saved for another week”</td>
<td>75-100% of food described as consumed; left overs set out for parents occasionally or used later.</td>
<td>Recipes are very helpful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recipes ideas increased orders**

**Center may order bimonthly since food lasts**

**Informed questions for future PDSA**

**Storage less of an issue than expected**
Next PDSAs:

#1

**Aim:**
Increase ECE use of a food hub with waived delivery fee and no supplementation of food cost.

**Measure:**
Any participation (and frequency) through ECE online orders.
Any ECE program collaboration or coordination with purchasing minimum ($150)

#2

**Aim:**
Increase local food and agricultural literacy into the content of ECE programming.

**Measure:**
Responses of ECE through adaption and enhancement of a curriculum.
Long term plan:

1. The Colorado Food Systems Advisory Committee embraces Farm to Institution, which includes ECE, as a core element as it plans and develops strategic systems.

2. Individuals and organizations interested and/or involved in Farm to ECE have a central location to seek information and resources.