

FEEDING OUR CHILDRENS' FUTURE: Lesson Plan for Food Web Mapping

Food Web Mapping for children aged 7 to 11

This lesson plan, which lasts for two hours including a break, was devised and tested out by Schools in Transition with Ardleigh Primary School in Essex and led by Marina O'Connell from the Apricot Centre. We included a baseline survey so that we could assess how the views of children had shifted and we suggest you do the same. The session can be led by a teacher or someone from the local community who has experience of teaching children. Best of all is when school and community collaborate because this programme is all about showing children their local world and how they can make a difference to its long-term resilience.

See the PDF of Primary Schools in Transition Ardleigh for Marina O'Connell's experience of delivering this session

Good morning and Intro (10 mins)

Overview of the ecology, climate change or related work that the children have been doing and how it relates to food and local food. This is about meeting the children with the knowledge that they already have.

Small groups x 4 (15 mins)

Discussion: Ask and record the answers to this baseline survey both at the beginning and end of the session (yes or no will do)

- 1. When I eat my food I know where it comes from*
- 2. I ask questions about where my food comes from*
- 3. I know what food miles are*
- 4. In the future we will need to grow more local food because*
- 5. I know how to work as a team to solve real problems*
- 6. My family cares about climate change*
- 7. I know what I can do to change the way people care for the planet*

N.B. Discuss these questions first with other teachers/adults to make sure they are presented in a positive way. Some children are on low incomes and you need to be careful around the message that local food is of a higher quality when it may also be more expensive. At Ardleigh School the teacher and session leader used thumbs up signs to check if the children understood what they were being asked to do, if they felt excited by it etc.

Make a map on the floor using a combination of ropes, chalk, paper, crayons and large labels (30 mins). You will also need two shopping bags, one of imported food, one of local food.

- Bring in models of a shoe (this can be real!), bike, car, boat, and plane and explain that this is how some of our food arrives.
- Have large cardboard signs for local producers, retailers etc.
- Tip out the first imported shopping basket and have children place items on the map using the appropriate transport.
- Then the second basket of local food, placing those items on the map too.

BREAK *Bring in a local cake that you have baked to eat in break if possible!*

Sort the shopping basket into 5 piles: Foot pile, Bike pile, Car pile, Boat pile, Plane pile.



Group discussion; (10-15 mins)

Why are some things brought in from far away and in the boat / plane pile? (You need heat to grow them in hot places - banana, chocolate, rice, tea. They are out of season here - green beans/ strawberries.)

Is there any thing from the walking / bike pile that we could use instead?

How far have the local foods come? (You will need to have miles to hand)

How is packaging of local and imported foods different?

Why does this matter? Climate change (think how to present this)

Why might we want to or need to buy more local food?

5. Small groups x 4 (10 mins discussion, 20 mins drawing) or Homework

- Can you think of a meal that we might make out of the local walking or bike pile?
- Can you draw a picture of it with description and a recipe?
- What would you miss most from the boat/plane pile if you decided to eat more local food?

N.B. Marina O'Connell reported back after the first session: "What got dropped from this session — as it was simply too much for the children to take in in one morning — was the number of miles the food had travelled. They completely understood that it had come by plane, boat, car/truck, bike or foot, but including the actual number of miles for the New Zealand lamb or the local farm sausages was too much information at this point. We did write food miles on the place names, but distance travelled worked as a series of concentric circles very nicely and that was enough.

Sample shopping list for the two bags

Milk – local	Tea -	Bananas	Biscuits	Tub margarine
Butter - local/ New Zealand	Baked beans	Apples local	Eggs - local	
Yoghurt - supermarket	Tin tuna	New Zealand lamb	Apple juice - local	
	Vegetables - local	Local sausages	Flowers - local	
Bread - local	Out of season veg from supermarket	Chocolate	Rice	

Make a list of local food producers. This list is from Essex, to give you some inspiration

Rookery Farm, Ardleigh – Grows wheat and rape seed that is sold to national grain merchants. Unknown destinations but grain goes for bread and oil goes to make margarine.

Badley Hall Farm — Wheat, potatoes, sheep (Unknown destinations).



Peake Fruit — Soft fruit and apples sold to all supermarkets, goes into national food system with unknown destinations. Some goes to the local farm shops, some to Copella apple juice.

Waters and Page — Organic apples - some to wholefood store in Manningtree, rest goes to Birmingham and Manchester.

Apricot Centre – Market produce is taken to London at weekend to be sold in farmer's market in Stoke Newington

Local allotments.

Richard Tucker, Deputy Head of Ardleigh Primary School and lead teacher for the pilot there of Feeding our Children's Future, in front of the school polytunnel

Ardleigh went on to make a directory of local food that they gave out to parents. They also linked their food web mapping to the Transition Suffolk 30-mile Food Challenge that took place in 2013 and that you can read about [here](http://www.30milefood.transitionipswich.org.uk).
(www.30milefood.transitionipswich.org.uk)

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