

Growing Minds @ Market is an extension of ASAP's Growing Minds Farm to School Program that brings Farm to School activities to area tailgates. Previously only offered at Asheville City Market, the series is expanding to North Asheville Tailgate Market and West Asheville Tailgate Market in 2013 thanks to funding from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. For more details about Farm to School in Western North Carolina, visit [growing-minds.org](http://growing-minds.org).



**ASAP's Mission**

*Our mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food.*

**ASAP works to accomplish this mission by:**

- Providing marketing support and training to area farmers
- Connecting area chef and food service buyers with the farmers who suit their needs
- Spearheading a Local Food Campaign, which includes our *Local Food Guide*, local food bumper sticker (have one on your car?), Get Local initiative, and more
- Certifying local products grown/raised in the Southern Appalachians as Appalachian Grown
- Organizing Asheville City Market
- And running **Growing Minds**, a program that provides resources and training to facilitate local food cooking, school gardens, farm field trips, and local food procurement in schools and communities.

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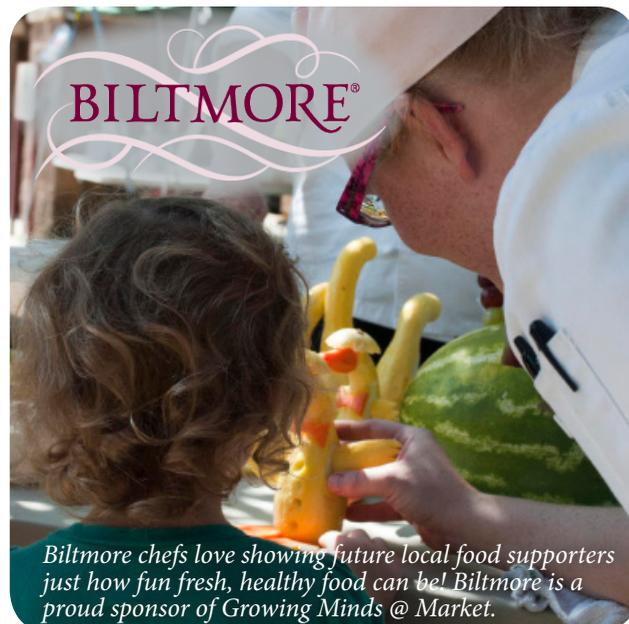
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*Biltmore chefs love showing future local food supporters just how fun fresh, healthy food can be! Biltmore is a proud sponsor of Growing Minds @ Market.*

## What is Growing Minds @ Market?



ASAP created Growing Minds @ Market to attract more families to farmers tailgate markets and to promote EBT (electronic food stamp) programs. Growing Minds @ Market is simply a space at a farmers market set aside for children and families where children are engaged in fun projects focused on local food and farms. It's our Growing Minds Farm to School Program at tailgates instead of schools. Activities include fresh local food tastings, local food and farm-based art crafts, and physical activities and games.

Since 2009, ASAP has offered Growing Minds @ Market (formerly known as Kids Corner Market) at Asheville City Market. We've seen first-hand how the program attracts families to a market and enables a market to successfully engage with the community and a variety of community partners. For families, participating in Growing Minds @ Market quickly becomes a highlight of their market experience.

### EBT at Market

EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) is an electronic system that allows SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) participants to transfer their federal food stamp benefits to a merchant's account to pay for food purchases—in this case, at a farmers tailgate market. EBT cards are swiped through a point-of-service (POS) machine just like a debit or credit card.

### How do I launch Growing Minds @ Market at my tailgate?

In this guide, you'll find all of the information you need to start your own Growing Minds @ Market program. From tips and tools to activity lesson plans, it's all here. We've included a lot of information that outlines the benefits of bringing children's programs to your market and provides suggestions for different ways to sustain them. Be sure to visit our website [growing-minds.org](http://growing-minds.org) for additional resources.

**Step 1:** Decide to offer children's activities at your market and designate a space for the activities and materials storage.

**Step 2:** Recruit volunteers or community partners to lead activities, and create a calendar of activities for the season.

**Step 3:** Watch children and families have a great time!

## How Does Growing Minds @ Market Benefit Farmers Markets?

### Thriving farmers markets engage the community

To be successful and lasting, markets need to interact with individuals, organizations, and businesses in various ways. Holding special events, offering activities for families, and providing volunteer opportunities enables markets to engage individuals beyond the basic exchange of goods from vendor to shopper. Participating in a market in these ways gives shoppers a deeper level of involvement and commitment to the market.

### Families feel welcome

Organizing a Growing Minds @ Market program sends the message to families that they have a valued place at the market and leads to a more diverse base of shoppers. Families shop at the market more frequently and spend more time there when their children are happy and when the market is also a positive, fun experience for them.



### Shoppers talk about Growing Minds @ Market

Organizing children's activities related to market products (such as honey bee crafts, spinach smoothie making, or carrot tastings) provides opportunities to highlight and feature vendors' goods. Markets can promote Growing Minds @ Market activities and related products through local radio and print materials and through social media. By giving customers new experiences and by giving them something to talk about, markets maintain shoppers' excitement and interest in returning each week.

### Community partnerships attract shoppers

When organizations, schools, clubs, and businesses get involved in a farmers market, they often promote the market to their clients, friends, and supporters. This leads to a more diverse and growing base of shoppers.

### Growing Minds @ Market means healthy kids

Growing Minds @ Market activities should introduce families to healthy market products through taste tests, cooking demonstrations, games, and craft projects. When children have positive experiences with healthy food, they are more likely to request it and eat it. Growing Minds @ Market activities should teach children and parents how to identify and prepare new fruits and vegetables and should encourage children (and parents!) to try new foods. A successful Growing Minds @ Market works to remove the barriers families often have in eating and buying fresh vegetables.



*Children love cooking their own food and are more willing to try vegetables and new foods when they are a part of the preparation. Consider offering taste tests and cooking activities at your Growing Minds @ Market.*

# Ways to Organize a Growing Minds @ Market Program

There are several easy ways to implement Growing Minds @ Market. Consider the following models for launching and running a Growing Minds @ Market program:

## Collaborate with community partners

Contact local organizations focused on children's health, food and farms, education, and children's services and invite them to lead a Growing Minds @ Market activity for one or two weeks of the summer. Examples of partner organizations include: Cooperative Extension, YMCA, county health departments, Girl and Boy Scouts, Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, faith-based organizations, food banks, and public and private schools. Participating in a Growing Minds @ Market gives organizations the opportunity to highlight their work and connect with new constituents. Provide organizations with examples of the types of activities that are appropriate, and let them know how many children and families to expect. Remember to communicate that the activities should promote the market, local food, and farms. The organization should send one or two individuals to lead the activity. Consider providing partners with a small stipend (\$25) for materials. Ideal partnering organizations serve families and low-income community members, because they will often also tell clients about the market and encourage them to shop there. If your market accepts EBT, this is a great way to reach low-income families and provide them with a reason and invitation to visit your farmers market.

## Recruit market volunteers

Network with your market shoppers and ask for volunteers to assist with Growing Minds @ Market activities. Offering shoppers opportunities to engage on a deeper level develops buy-in and commitment to the market. By participating in Growing Minds @ Market, shoppers can show off their talents in teaching children arts and crafts, cooking, gardening, and physical activities, and vendors and market managers learn more about the individuals who support their businesses. Please keep in mind that managing individuals as volunteers, and especially those who work with children, requires a high level of screening and supervision. Consider running background checks or asking for references. If you take volunteer "jobs" seriously, your volunteers will, too.

## Collaborate with local schools or universities

**Schools:** Contact teachers, garden club participants, and PTA/PTO members and ask if they would like to help lead a Growing Minds @ Market program. Identify one leader who can recruit other parents and children to participate.

**Universities:** Set up opportunities for local college students to volunteer or intern with your market. Create a Growing Minds @ Market intern/volunteer job description and send it to professors, service learning offices, and career centers to help recruit students to participate. "Hire" one student volunteer intern to lead the Growing Minds @ Market activities each week and additional student volunteers to assist with the activities.



*Biltmore Estate sent a team of chefs to Asheville City Market to teach children how to make beautiful and delicious food sculptures. The activity was a huge hit with shoppers of all ages.*



Examples of partner organizations include: Cooperative Extension, YMCA, County Health Departments, Girl and Boy Scouts, Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, faith-based organizations, food banks, businesses, and schools.

# Guidelines for Running a Growing Minds @ Market Program

## Make a commitment to local food education

Growing Minds @ Market programs are dedicated to teaching children about local food, farms, and physical activity. They welcome families to the farmers market environment and provide children with positive associations with healthy foods. By using the Growing Minds @ Market name and brand, you are committing to working with children and families in this way.



## Make a commitment to community partnerships

Growing Minds @ Market programs are specifically designed to give community partners a meaningful role at farmers markets. By collaborating with organizations, schools, clubs, businesses, and market volunteers to run a Growing Minds @ Market booth, you are helping to create connections and meaningful relationships in your community.

## Make a commitment to access

Everyone should have access to fresh local food, but farmers markets can be intimidating, foreign places to many people. Organizing a Growing Minds @ Market program provides you with a way to reach out to new community members and invite them to your market. Advertising and outreach for Growing Minds @ Market should involve communication with families of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities.

## Make a commitment to communication

We hope you will tell us how your Growing Minds @ Market program is going. Has the program helped your market? What challenges have you encountered? Count on ASAP as a source of support, and let us know how we can help you! If you are a market in the Southern Appalachians we can also help you spread the word about your Growing Minds @ Market Program. Email [growingminds@asapconnections.org](mailto:growingminds@asapconnections.org).

