

Gardening 9-1-1: Kids in the Garden

#PandemicHomesteading

Children thrive when outdoors as they have the opportunity to observe, explore, and interact with their surroundings. Gardening with children is a great way to *grow* their development!

Growing Development

Gardening supports holistic learning, or what is known as “whole body learning.” While gardening, children can strengthen developmental skills including:

- **Motor Development:** The use and control of small and large motor muscles.
- **Cognitive Development:** How children think, explore, figure things out.
- **Self-Regulation:** The ability to control emotions, behavior, impulses, and attention.
- **Language and Communication:** The ability to comprehend and express words.
- **Social/Emotional Development:** How children react and interact with their environment.
- **Health and Safety:** The ability to practice personal hygiene and become aware of danger.

Kids in the Garden

Children can be involved in all stages of gardening from designing the garden space to tending the plants. What’s great about gardening is the ability to adapt how children help depending on their age and ability. A few gardening activities could include: germinating seeds, preparing soil, labeling plants, watering produce, pulling weeds, gathering produce, and tasting the produce.



While engaging in gardening activities, it is important to set limits with children. Talk with them about the difference between a weed or new plant growth. Discuss the importance of watering and caring for plants. For example, offer a watering can for young children to assist with watering duties. Children need guidance to learn about their surroundings while having fun.

Don’t forget, gardening is a sensory experience. Call attention to the tactile feeling of the soil, the warmth of the sun, the sounds of the birds, the smell of the flowers, and the taste of fresh-picked produce. Each of these senses will be engaged while outdoors in the garden. Take advantage of these teachable moments to explore the world around you.

For more resources on gardening, visit: ksre.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/home/



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