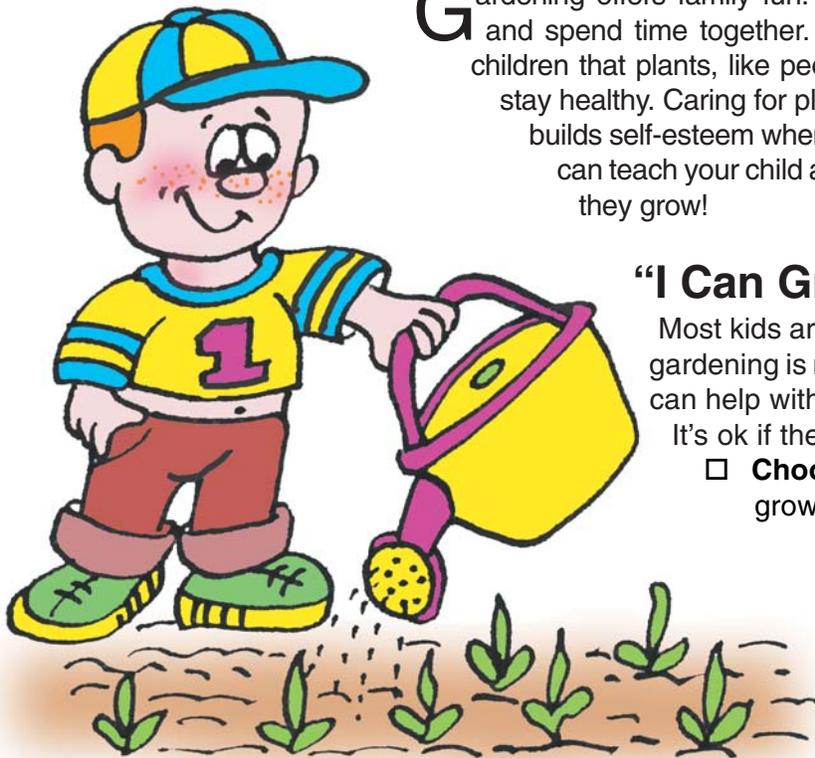


GROW A FAMILY GARDEN!

Literacy, Eating, and Activity for Preschoolers


for Health


Gardening offers family fun. In a garden, you can be active, relax, and spend time together. Growing vegetables or herbs teaches children that plants, like people, need food and water to grow and stay healthy. Caring for plants helps develop responsibility. It also builds self-esteem when kids see what they can grow. A garden can teach your child about new foods. Kids usually taste what they grow!

“I Can Grow Things!”

Most kids are proud of what they grow. Even when gardening is messy, your child is learning. He or she can help with almost any gardening task.

It's ok if the garden isn't planted perfectly.

- Choose** the vegetables or herbs you will grow.
- Find** a sunny place.
- Make** the soil ready in a container or in the garden.
- Plant** seeds or small plants in the soil.
- Water** plants when they are thirsty.
- Measure** plants as they grow and vegetables form. Talk about it.
- Pull** the weeds.
- Pick** vegetables or herbs when they are ready.
- Wash** the food.
- Make** something to eat with your family. Use the food you pick.
- Eat and enjoy it!**

LEAP over
to your
local library for...
*The Surprise
Garden*
by Zoe Hall

Fresh from the garden produce tastes better. Gardening can also provide the healthy food your family needs for little cost. Extra produce can even be preserved for use during the winter months. Take a look at some of the vegetables that you can grow and how they can promote the health of your family.

Color: GREEN

Green vegetables: broccoli, asparagus, cabbage, green beans, cucumbers, lettuce, peas, spinach, and other leafy greens

Health Benefits: Green vegetables help build a strong immune system, strong bones, and teeth and promotes heart health and good vision. They also lower the risk of developing some cancers, cataracts, rheumatoid arthritis, and other chronic diseases.

Color: RED

Red fruits and vegetables: strawberries, watermelon, beets, red peppers, radishes, red onions, rhubarb, tomatoes

Health Benefits: Red fruits and vegetables promote heart health, urinary tract health, and improve memory. They also lower the risk of developing some cancers.

Colors: YELLOW and ORANGE

Yellow and orange fruits and vegetables: cantaloupe, butternut squash, carrots, yellow peppers, pumpkin, yellow squash, yellow tomatoes, sweet corn

Health Benefits: Yellow and orange fruits and vegetables are good sources of Vitamins A and C and also promote good vision, heart health, and a strong immune system. They also lower the risk of developing some cancers.

Color: White, Tan and Brown

White, tan and brown vegetables: cauliflower, garlic, onions, parsnips, potatoes, turnips, white corn

Health Benefits: White, tan, and brown vegetables help to maintain healthy cholesterol levels and lower the risk of developing some cancers.

COLOR: Blue and Purple

Blue and purple fruits and vegetables: blackberries, blueberries, purple grapes, eggplant

Health Benefits: Blue and purple fruits and vegetables promote healthy aging, urinary tract health, and memory function. They also lower the risk of developing some cancers.

Including many colors of fruits and vegetables in your garden allows you to enjoy all of the health benefits while enjoying the good flavor and variety of fresh, homegrown food!

Easy foods for kids to grow:

- Beets,* carrots,* cherry tomatoes,* collard greens,* cucumbers,* green beans,* herbs,* lettuce,* okra, onion,* peppers,* spinach, tomatoes, zucchini (**These grow easily in a container.*)
- In windowsill pot: herbs or seeds to replant as young plants in the garden.

What would your child like to grow?

What you'll need:

- Containers for city gardens: milk or juice cartons, empty cans, empty bleach bottle, dishpan, plastic bucket, fish bowl, bushel basket
- Garden plot: a 2-foot plot is big enough. Hint: Preparing soil may be difficult for young children.
- Child-size tools: watering can, hose, small shovel, old spoon and fork, small rake, digging stick, hoe and spade, sticks to label plants
- Seeds or seedlings (young plants)
- Water from your hose or watering can
- Soil for container gardens
- Fertilizer: compost, manure, chemical types

No Garden?

Volunteer as a family to plant, help care for a community garden, or visit local farmer's markets. In the city, vegetables and herbs can grow in a sunny place on the roof, fire escape, or balcony.



Resources: NIBBLES FOR HEALTH 34 Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children, USDA, Food and Nutrition Service

UK UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
Health Education through Extension Leadership

www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL