

Gardening with Kids

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It is not always easy preparing healthy meals that your entire family will eat without complaining. If you have fussy eaters, it makes that job even more difficult. One tool to help children establish life-long healthy habits is growing a garden.

Nutrition: There have been numerous studies that show children who help with gardening are more likely to consume what they planted. They are also more likely to help choose more fresh produce at the grocery store. This makes it a little easier to prepare meals if you can find more vegetables to offer that they will eat. Increased nutrition at meals and snacks is a plus.

Physical Activity: One of the many advantages of gardening with your children is the physical activity it offers. Instructing them on how to work the soil, as well as plant, weed, and water, provides excellent opportunities for movement and engages muscles that may not be frequently used. Activities like bending, squatting, and hoeing activate large muscle groups, making them beneficial for everyone. Additionally, tasks such as hauling soil, harvesting tomatoes, and picking beans impart valuable life skills that your children will carry with them throughout their lives.

Family Time: Finally—spending time with your children outside in the sun away from video games and the television is fun. You are building memories and working together to provide food for your family.



Need more info? Here are helpful gardening resources:

- This site has ideas and activities for gardening with children:
<http://kidsgardening.org>
- Your local Extension office has fabulous resources for beginning and experienced gardeners!

Sources:

- Growing and Cooking Fruits and Vegetables at Childcare Centers, North Carolina State Extension:
<https://bit.ly/3aRWRuH>
- Hughes, L., DiClaudio, D., Savoca, L. (August 2013). Learning Through the Garden, Rutgers Cooperative Extension:
<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1211>

This article has been peer-reviewed. For more information check out Family Fun on the Run:
<http://go.unl.edu/familyfun>