



Gardening in Early Childhood Settings

California Kindergarten Association



Want to engage children and raise enthusiasm? Gardening – in the classroom or outside – improves children’s academic performance, boosts their development of environmental understanding and awareness, and fosters their dispositions to care for the natural world (Committee to Review and Assess the Health 2007). It’s also a great way to involve families.

Developmentally Appropriate Guiding Principle #7 -- *Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as on culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them* (from The National Association for the Education of Young Children).

Development of the Whole Child: Need support for gardening? You may reproduce this document for parents, administrators, community leaders, and fellow teachers to build a gardening program that enables children to learn authentically.

Research

- In the last 20 years, international research efforts confirmed that nature is good for people. “Nature” includes parks, views of trees and other vegetation, woods, fields, bits of green environments, yards, neighborhoods, and common outdoor spaces. See “[The Relationship Between Nature and Human Health](#).”
- Researchers have also identified particular features of natural environments that help children thrive. See “[Features of Natural Environments That Support Children’s Resilience and Strengths](#).”

Lesson Plans & Activities

Resources

1. [Letter to Families](#)

2. **Getting Started** For tips about how to start an outside garden or growing plants inside the classroom, [click here](#).
3. **Funding Sources for a Garden** For funding ideas, [click here](#).
4. [Print & Media Resources](#) for educators.
5. [Books & Technology for Children](#)

Media Tools

1. **Vegetable Gardening: How to Plant a Vegetable Garden for Children, Step by Step – YouTube** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDfe9fRvs04>
2. **Children’s Gardening – YouTube** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IK03fqMkEmU>
3. **STEAM activities** – A blog to help children learn to innovate at <http://www.kiwicrate.com/>
4. **UC Cooperative Extension: School Gardens in Los Angeles County** – links a slide show, Master Gardener tips, and a Start-Up Guide in English & Spanish at http://celosangeles.ucanr.edu/UC_Master_Gardener_Program/School_Gardens/



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