

# GROWING GARDENS, BODIES, AND MINDS



When spring fever strikes, children are eager to go outside and discover the world around them. A great way to help children explore their surroundings is to grow a garden with them. Not only does this teach children about their environment and promote physical activity, they are also more likely to eat the vegetables they helped grow. Try these ideas to help involve children in gardening.



1. While the weather is still cold and the soil frozen, show children seed catalogs, learn about some of the plants, and select a few you would like to grow.

2. Discuss the plants you will grow and what recipes you will be able to make with them.



3. Get a head start on warm summer vegetables by planting them indoors. Have the children plant tomatoes, broccoli, or cauliflower in starter pots and watch them grow inside. Once the weather is nice enough, the children can plant these starters outside.



4. Once the snow melts and birds are chirping, let the children help prepare and play in the dirt for planting.

5. The size of the child and garden do not matter. Find something each child can do according to his/her age and ability. Allow children to help sow, plant, water, and tend to the garden. They can help level the dirt, plant seeds or starters, weed, and water.



6. When it is time to harvest after months of hard work, help the children choose a recipe that uses the produce they grew. Let them help prepare the recipe. Then enjoy the fruits or vegetables of your labors - delicious, fresh food and growing minds.

Source and photos: [www.keeperofthehome.org](http://www.keeperofthehome.org)

## Michigan Office

139 W Lake Lansing Rd, Suite 120 • East Lansing, MI 48823  
Telephone: (800) 234-3287 • Fax: (517) 332-5543

## Association for Child Development

[www.acdkids.org](http://www.acdkids.org)

## Illinois Office

4415 W Harrison St, Suite 535 • Hillside, IL 60162  
Telephone: (800) 284-5273 • Fax: (708) 236-0872

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or, (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider. (Rev. 10/2015)