

Gardening With Kids: Discover the Magic

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What is Gardening With Kids?

- Growing plants in some location (space)
 - Sharing stories, experiences, knowledge, passion, love
 - Curiosity and wonder
- "The 4-H Children's Garden is a magical place of learning."
12-year-old boy

How do you create the magic?

- Start with Curiosity
- Think like a kid (be a kid)
- Think outside the garden bed lines
- Use Theme Gardens
- Create magical programs and activities
- Connect to the 4-H Children's Garden

What do you need to know about kids?

- Kids are curious and full of wonder
- Kids are concrete thinkers
- Kids like things that are familiar
- Kids don't care about adult "gardening rules"
- Kids want and need hands-on
- Kids love to be surrounded by plants
- Kids experience things intensely
- Kids are amazed by little things
- Kids will meet or exceed expectations
- Kids like to learn
- Kids learn based on what they already know
- Rules are made to be tested (broken)
- Kids notice the details NOT the vistas

What do you need to know about gardens?

- Garden "rules" are made to be broken
- Gardens come in all shapes and sizes
- Gardens appeal to all the senses
- Gardens should be hands-on (touched, smelled, hidden in, picked, ...)
- Gardens are amazing!
- Gardens are FUN!!
- It is OK to have garden failures

Curiosity - the key!

Curiosity - Exploration - Discovery - Pleasure - Repetition - Mastery

Think like a kid

- As a kid, you need to feel, smell, walk in, be a part of ... the garden
 - Straight paths are to run down
 - Grass is to walk on and roll in
 - Flowers are to smell
 - Everyone needs a place to hide
 - A maze is to get lost in
- Ask "What would happen if I broke that rule?" ... stepped on the grass??
- Focus on the details NOT the vistas

Involve kids

- Garden planning
- Planting
- Maintenance
- Activities

Think outside the garden bed lines

- What is a garden?
- Gardens come in all shapes and sizes
- All plants "go together"
- Show the entire life cycle
- Add 'stuff' to your garden

Use Theme Gardens

- ABC Garden
- Teddy Bear and Animals Garden
- Crayon Color Garden
- Pizza Garden
- Peter Rabbit Herb Garden
- Michigan Garden
- My Favorite Foods Garden
- Harry's Herbology
- Grandma and Grandpa Garden
- Grand Kids Garden
- Mike Garden

Encourage questions, curiosity and wonder

Connect to the 4-H Children's Gardens

- Pete & Sally Smith Schoolyard Demonstration Garden
- Collaborating Classrooms
- Wonder Wall
- Programs
- On-line experiences
 - <http://4hgarden.msu.edu>
 - <http://4hgarden.msu.edu/kidstour>
 - <http://4hgarden.msu.edu/wondercast>
- Virtual gardening: <http://kidscom.com>

Integrate technology:

- Digital photos
- Web pages, blogs
- Web cams
- Collaborating Classrooms
- Wonder Wall

What can happen?

- Questions
 - Why do we even have aphids?
 - Where do plant smells come from?
 - Do Poinsettias have red chlorophyll?
 - Do the leaves of Sensitive plant close when it rains?
- Comments
 - Just look at all of this . . . all for us!
 - It (Pizza Garden) has everything you need to make pizza. Mom showed me all the stuff.
 - I like the view from the bridge. The bridge makes me feel peaceful.
 - We pretended that the Queen of Hearts was chasing us.
 - I just did it, by myself, not with my sisters or my mom. I was the first one to notice and do it (weaving).
 - I don't want to leave!

**Look at a garden
Through a child's eyes
It's magic, it's wonder
It's full of surprise!**

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