

A Letter to Families

Send families a letter introducing the study. Use the letter to communicate with families and as an opportunity to invite their participation in the study.

Dear families,

The children have begun to show an interest in plants and the fruits and vegetables that grow on them. For example, whenever we go outside, the children are curious about the plants they see around them, and, during mealtimes, they have shared their observations about the fruits and vegetables we eat. These interests have inspired us to begin a study of gardening. We will use children's questions as the basis of our investigations and learn how to plan and care for a garden, how gardens grow, who helps gardens grow, how gardens help people and the environment, and how to harvest a garden.

If you can, we'd appreciate your help gathering materials related to gardening. Below is a list of suggested items, but we welcome any items that you think might add to our explorations. Please label all items with your name so we can return them to you at the end of our study. We promise to take good care of them! Also, please let us know if someone in your family has a job or hobby related to gardens (e.g., gardener, farmer, florist, landscaper) and would like to share his or her expertise with the class. We would love to arrange a time for special guests to join us in our investigations.

Supplies

Planters, pots, planting containers
Baskets
Small, clean containers to use as seed pots
Empty water bottles
Pretend play food
Gardening tools, e.g., shovels, trowels, hoes
Potting soil

Compost

Watering cans
Spray bottles
Seed packets
Books about gardening
Books about fruits and vegetables
Cookbooks featuring healthy recipes that use fruits and vegetables

Pictures or videos

Children gardening
Chefs or family members using fruits and vegetables to prepare meals
Fruits and vegetables
Garden plants, e.g., flowers, shrubs, grasses, ornamental trees
Gardens

What You Can Do at Home

Take walks around your neighborhood with your child to look for gardens. Examine any gardens you find and talk about the different types of plants they contain. If you are unable to find a garden in your area, visit a local garden center to look at plants and gardening supplies. Invite your child to share what he or she is learning about gardens by caring for a plant in your home or garden. Herb plants such as basil and chives are generally easy to find and care for, but feel free to choose whatever kind of plant you'd like.

At the end of our study, we will have a special event to share what we've learned. Thank you for playing an important role in our learning.