



# Gardening at Kitts Green Academy

School gardening projects are more than just opportunities to grow plants. They are blooming hubs of teamwork and community. As students dig in and get their hands dirty together, they are not just nurturing plants, they are cultivating friendships and personal growth too!

# Project Authors and Leads

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Alongside the team at Links Therapy Company



# Why a collaborative Project?

## **Need for Nature**

Kitts Green Academy has limited access to green space

## **Therapy in Curriculum**

We believe therapeutic benefits can be woven throughout the school day, not just therapy sessions

## **Wellbeing Focus**

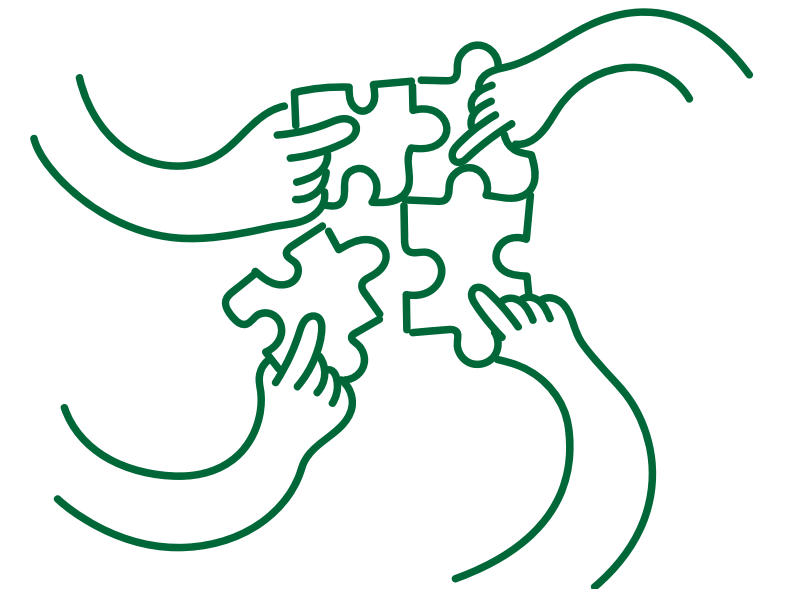
Evidence suggests gardening supports mental health, emotional regulation and physical activity

## **Collaboration**

An opportunity for education and therapy teams working together for greater impact

## **Partnership**

Delivered with Links Therapy Company to ensure expertise and sustainability



# Benefits of working outdoors

“Outdoor learning does not develop in isolation. It can also create opportunities for the development of children’s empathy, cooperation, problem-solving and leadership skills, which has a positive impact on the well-being of classmates”

Mulholland & O’Toole, 2021



Educators who have knowledge of a trauma-informed framework recognise the need to move away from punitive responses to the signs of distress of children. Successive studies show that the most important factor in healing from trauma for children, is the existence of positive relationships.

Gardening activities create a nurturing environment where children experience positive interactions with their educators, facilitating compassionate, open-hearted exchanges.

These activities have been reported to be beneficial for children's learning, health and development, aiding in emotional regulation and well-being.

When open-ended, gardening may also encourage effective interactions, initiated by the young people and be a safe space through which they can challenge themselves.





**“The act of doing things together enhances social and emotional learning. Children develop patience, resilience and problem-solving skills as they face gardening challenges together. Being alongside one another helps them practice listening, negotiating, and offering help, which are essential life skills”**

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2020

**The Doing Together,  
Alongside One Another**



The concept of "doing together, alongside one another" emphasises the importance of collective action and shared experiences in educational settings. Working together in a garden creates an environment for collaborative learning, where students support, teach and learn from one another (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Tasks, such as planting, weeding and harvesting require cooperation - encouraging communication and teamwork. This process of joint participation strengthens peer connections and helps students develop a sense of responsibility, not just for their own tasks but for the success of the group as a whole (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

School gardening fosters community building by creating a space where children, teachers and sometimes families, work towards a common goal.

Shared physical activities in the garden naturally build empathy and understanding among participants (Sobel, 2004). This cooperative engagement cultivates a sense of belonging, where every contribution, big or small, matters.





# The Therapeutic Benefits of Gardening

**“Gardens offer students opportunities for experiential learning, personal growth and a sense of achievement. The act of caring for living things encourages responsibility, patience and reflection”**

Blair, 2009





Gardening is increasingly being recognised as a therapeutic medium that addresses multiple developmental domains such as physical, emotional, cognitive, social and sensory. By engaging in purposeful, nature-based tasks, children not only develop essential life skills but also build resilience, self-efficacy and a stronger connection to their environment.

The structured yet flexible nature of gardening allows children to experience autonomy and success at their own pace, fostering well-being and positive identity development.

Blair (2009) supports these findings, concluding that school gardening programs improve children's behaviour, academic engagement, social relationships, and emotional well-being. The review highlighted how gardening provides a nurturing space where children can thrive physically and psychologically, particularly when traditional classroom settings may not meet all their needs.



# Physical Development and Motor Skills

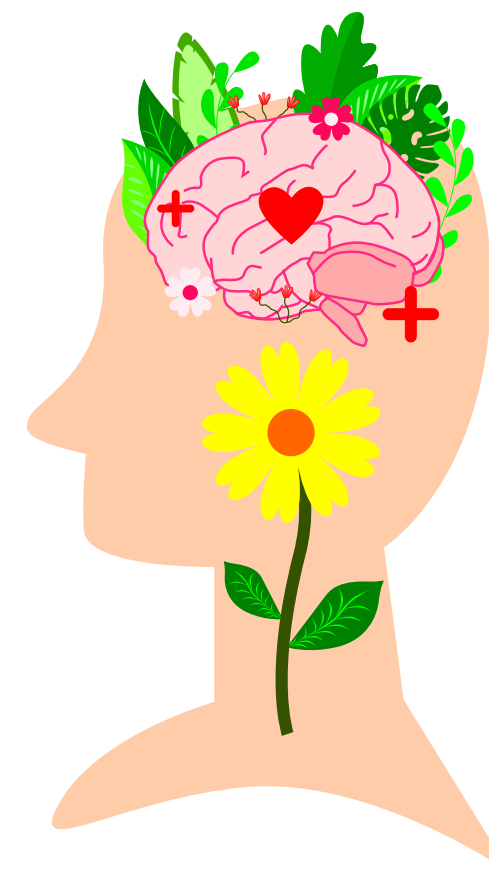
**“Gardening provides an excellent form of exercise for children, helping them to develop motor skills, strength, and endurance through meaningful activity”** (KidsGardening.org, 2023)



Gardening involves a wide range of physical activities such as digging, watering, lifting, planting, and raking, which contribute to the development of both gross and fine motor skills. These repetitive, purposeful movements support muscle strength, coordination and endurance.

Children may carry watering cans, use small tools to dig holes, or sort and plant seeds. These activities promote hand-eye coordination and the control of small muscles essential for everyday tasks that require dexterity, such as writing, holding cutlery and dressing.

# Emotional and Mental Well-being



**“Gardening increases children’s feelings of confidence, self-esteem and satisfaction. It provides a calming space for emotional expression and stress relief”**

(Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), 2023).



**Children who participate in regular gardening are also more likely to demonstrate greater emotional resilience and reduced levels of anxiety and frustration**

(Largo-Wight et al., 2022).

Gardening has calming effects that can reduce stress and promote positive emotions. The cyclical nature of planting and watching something grow fosters patience, nurturing behaviour and a sense of responsibility.

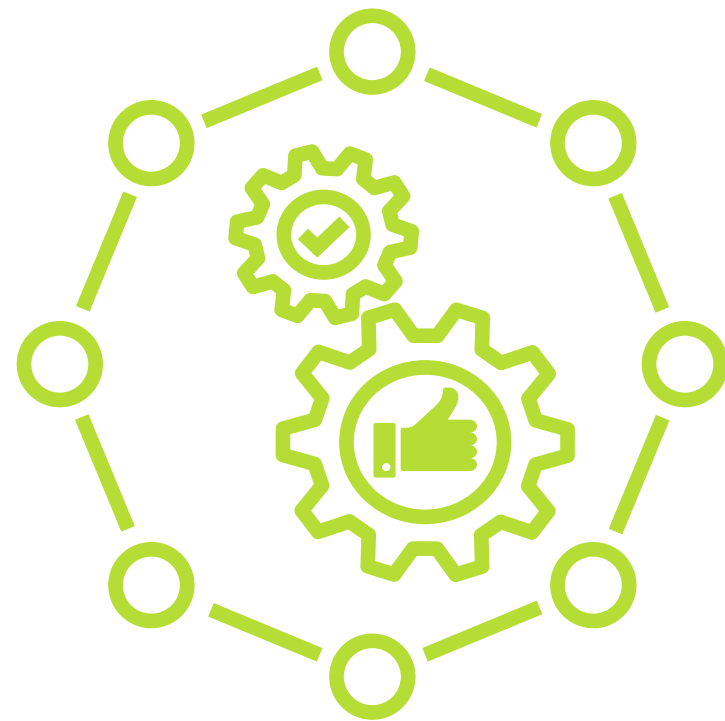
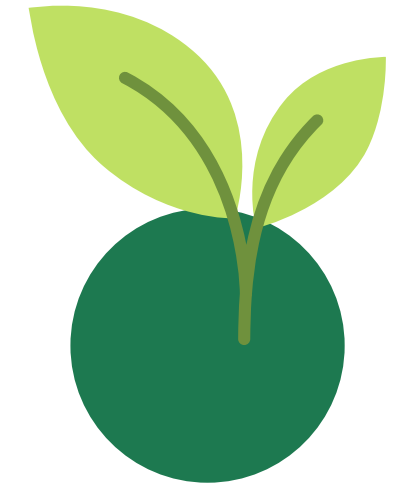
# Sensory Integration and Regulation



**Gardening naturally engages multiple sensory systems such as touch (soil textures), smell (flowers and herbs), sight (plant colours), sound (birds and wind), and movement (carrying, bending, balancing). Digging, raking, shovelling, pulling weeds, and lifting soil bags and watering cans give joints and muscles deep input (proprioception).**

These help the body register pressure and movement, reinforcing spatial awareness and motor planning. Bending, squatting, kneeling and stretching to reach plants gives the brain cues about joint position and muscle use. Moving from kneeling to standing or reaching and turning repeatedly helps the brain process changes in head position and body alignment. Working on uneven ground, walking across a garden bed or stone path or navigating around plants and tools trains balance and coordination. Tasks like watering from a can, gently pruning or slowly moving through a garden path provide regulated vestibular input which can calm or alert the nervous system depending on what's needed.

For children who experience *sensory sensitivities* or need help processing sensory input, gardening offers controlled and meaningful exposure in a non-threatening environment. Examples include the *squishiness* of compost, the soft texture of leaves and the earthy smell of freshly turned soil, all helping to enhance sensory awareness and regulation.



For young people with sensory processing challenges (including Autism, ADHD, Developmental Coordination Disorder) and/ or trauma backgrounds, gardening offers grounding and regulating sensory input. It's a structured yet flexible environment to explore and practice sensory responses. Also providing opportunities for self directed sensory experiences which are often more effective and meaningful.

# Cognitive and Executive Functioning

**Children cultivate essential life skills such as planning and perseverance by engaging in planting and growing activities, which also enhance their memory and ability to concentrate**  
(RHS, 2023)



Gardening encourages planning, sequencing, observation and problem-solving. Children must remember steps, identify when plants need watering and evaluate which conditions support plant growth. These processes help build executive functioning skills like working memory, cognitive flexibility, and attention control. For example, when carrying out a class project where children grow vegetables and record their growth weekly, reinforcing scientific thinking and cause-effect reasoning.

# Communication and Social Interaction

Gardening projects often involve collaboration where children discuss what to plant, take turns with tools and share successes. These shared experiences foster communication skills and social bonding. It becomes a natural setting to practice listening, speaking, and negotiating with peers.

Whether working in pairs or larger groups, children learn to work together toward a common goal, which enhances cooperation and empathy.



**“Gardening activities naturally stimulate conversations and social interactions, allowing children to build relationships and confidence” (Aspris,2024).**




A UK school for students with additional needs implemented a garden project aimed at improving student well-being and engagement. Aspris (2024) commented, “The gardening project appears to have had a calming impact on students and boosted their self-esteem”. Students actively participated in planting, tending and harvesting crops.

Teachers observed improvements in students' mood, confidence, ability to work alongside peers and their willingness to try new sensory experiences such as touching soil or smelling herbs


# Gardening Activity Analysis


The following gardening activity analysis provides a step-by-step overview of the tasks involved. It helps the facilitator understand the sequence, required materials, safety considerations and skill levels needed. This ensures smooth guidance and effective participation throughout the gardening process. The analysis supports successful learning outcomes and engagement for all participants.



Activity	Aim Of the Activity	Activity Analysis (step by step breakdown)	Skills Used & Links to Curriculum
<p><b>Planning Our Garden Together</b></p> <p>Deciding what to grow, where to grow it and how we will work together.</p>	<p>Explore what plants need to grow and survive.</p> <p>Practice observation and identification of gardening tools and materials.</p> <p>Encourage discussion and decision-making on where and how to grow vegetables.</p> <p>Introduce food origins and dietary knowledge in follow-up discussions.</p> <p>Introduce the idea that people have different food preferences, linking to taste and sensory exploration.</p>	<p>Explaining to children, the idea of growing our own vegetables and engaging them in meaningful discussion to find out what they need to survive.</p> <p>Children spend time looking at and identifying containers, tools, seeds, plants.</p> <p>Discussing where the plants will grow. Talk about sun, water access, and shelter.</p> <p>Asking questions such as how often should we water? Why?</p> <p>Activity facilitators would help the children divide into smaller groups. They will also assign different roles to children such as observer, drawer, speaker, etc while ensuring each group can work cooperatively.</p> <p>Activity facilitators can also make adaptations to support the children's level and needs by making the activity easier. This can be done by offering simple choice prompts such as sunny or shady? Teachers support with group decisions.</p> <p>Discuss and reflect on the following questions:</p> <p>Where does food comes from? (Kenyan beans etc.)</p> <p>Why we need vegetables?</p> <p>Food types, tastes, and preferences?</p> <p>Explore a sensory activity such as tasting different crisps. Can you guess the flavour without seeing the packet? Do all children like the same taste?</p> <p>Talk about the meaning of having a "sweet tooth" and how food likes and dislikes vary among people.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication:</b> Sharing ideas, asking questions, explaining decisions.</li> <li>• <b>Self-regulation:</b> Taking turns, managing frustration during discussion or waiting.</li> <li>• <b>Fine Motor skills:</b> Handling tools and small seed packets.</li> <li>• <b>Gross Motor Skills:</b> Moving to garden areas, helping carry items.</li> <li>• <b>Problem Solving and Reasoning:</b> Choosing where to grow plants based on environment. Making connections about what plants needs.</li> <li>• <b>Social Interaction and Teamwork:</b> Working together in groups, supporting peers, and negotiating group decisions.</li> <li>• <b>Sensory Skills:</b> Touching tools, seeds, soil (with gloves if needed). Tasting and smelling foods and discussing preferences.</li> <li>• <b>Maths and Science:</b> Estimating time and volume; understanding plant life cycles, diet, and food supply.</li> <li>• <b>Bilateral Skills</b> Children will use both hands together in a coordinated way when drawing garden plans, digging, planting seeds, and handling tools such as watering cans and spades. These tasks require the hands to work together smoothly.</li> <li>• <b>Hand-Eye Coordination</b> Precise tasks like placing seeds into small holes, watering specific areas, and arranging plants according to the plan will develop children's ability to coordinate their visual input with their hand movements.</li> <li>• <b>Planning and Sequencing:</b> Deciding what to grow first, where each plant should go, and in what order tasks should be completed. Tasks such as digging, planting and watering will help children develop their ability to plan steps logically and follow a sequence.</li> <li>• <b>Midline Crossing:</b> Activities such as reaching across the body to grab tools, moving soil from one side to another, or stretching to plant seeds across a row will encourage children to cross their midline, which is important for body awareness and brain coordination.</li> </ul>



Activity	Aims of the Activity	Activity Analysis (step by step breakdown)	Skills Used & Links to Curriculum
<p><b>Grow and Observe: Discovering What Plants Need to Survive</b></p> <p>Learning about plant life cycles, plant needs, and starting planting activities.</p> 	<p>To engage children in hands-on gardening by planting seeds and observing the stages of growth.</p> <p>The focus is on encouraging collaborative decision-making, turn-taking, and peer support, while developing an understanding of how to care for living things and notice signs of thriving or struggling plants.</p>	<p>Show real plants or images of plants.</p> <p>Ask simple questions: What do you think plants need to grow?</p> <p>Explain that you will all grow plants and check on them over time.</p> <p>Use visuals or cue cards to let children pick what to plant.</p> <p>Make group decisions and assign jobs such as watering, planting, checking.</p> <p>Discuss rules: listening, helping, turn-taking.</p> <p>Provide soil, pots/trays, seeds, water.</p> <p>If a child finds the texture of soil uncomfortable or distressing, use alternative soil handling methods provided at the end of this document.</p> <p>Demonstrate step-by-step. For example, Fill pot, check planting depth on the packet, plant the seed, cover with soil, water gently. Discuss: "How deep should this seed go? How do we know?"</p> <p>Let children take turns or work in small teams.</p> <p>Use visual charts or journals to record plant progress.</p> <p>Encourage children to check if the plant looks healthy.</p> <p>May be asking questions such as the plant look happy or sad today?</p> <p>Discuss and reflect using photos, drawings, or verbal prompts. Ask questions such as what helped the plant grow? Or what could we do differently?</p> <p>What happens if we plant the seed too deep? Too shallow? What happens if we forget to water it? Discuss differences in seeds and how these affect planting steps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication:</b> Develops verbal and non-verbal communication through cooperative tasks, sharing observations, and discussing plant growth.</li> <li>• <b>Self-Regulation:</b> Encourages patience, emotional regulation, and responsibility through routine plant care and waiting for outcomes.</li> <li>• <b>Fine Motor Skills:</b> Handling seeds, soil, pots, and watering equipment promotes fine motor development and hand-eye coordination.</li> <li>• <b>Gross Motor Skills:</b> Lifting, carrying, and moving soil, water cans, and gardening tools supports body movement and spatial awareness.</li> <li>• <b>Problem Solving and Reasoning:</b> Builds reasoning through identifying plant needs, solving challenges like struggling plants, and understanding life cycles.</li> <li>• <b>Social Interaction and Teamwork:</b> Promotes cooperation, turn-taking, task sharing, empathy, and collaborative decision-making within group activities.</li> <li>• <b>Sensory Skills:</b> Supports sensory exploration and tolerance, including options for alternative handling for children with sensory sensitivities. Heavy work and resistance carrying water, soils, digging.</li> <li>• <b>Maths and Science:</b> Encourages observation, sequencing, life cycle understanding, and comparison skills to differentiate thriving and struggling plants.</li> <li>• <b>Bilateral Skills:</b> Using both hands together for tasks such as holding a pot while scooping soil, steadying a plant while watering, or using garden shears with one hand while supporting the plant with the other. Tying support strings or assembling plant markers also encourages bilateral coordination.</li> <li>• <b>Hand-Eye Coordination</b> Precise movements like planting seeds at specific depths, gently handling delicate seedlings, pouring water without spilling, and measuring plant growth develop visual-motor integration. Drawing or marking plant growth on observation charts strengthens this coordination further.</li> <li>• <b>Planning and Sequencing:</b> Understanding the step-by-step process which is selecting seeds, preparing soil, planting, watering, and daily care requires children to plan ahead and follow a logical order. Tracking plant growth over time builds sequencing skills, as they must observe, record, and adjust their care routines.</li> <li>• <b>Midline Crossing:</b> Reaching across the body to grab tools, water plants on either side, or write observations on a chart placed across their workspace naturally encourages midline crossing. Transferring soil or water between containers on opposite sides provides additional opportunities to develop this skill.</li> </ul>

Activity	Aim of the Activity	Activity Analysis (step by step breakdown)	Skills Used & Links to Curriculum
<p><b>Watering and Transplanting: Keeping Plants Happy and Healthy</b></p> <p>Practical care, watering, transplanting, estimating water use.</p>	<p>Learn about the importance of water for plant survival.</p> <p>Understand how frequency, weather, and timing affect watering.</p> <p>Develop patience when waiting for watering cans to fill.</p> <p>Explore estimation and volume using watering cans.</p> <p>Support understanding of biology, weather patterns, and the global vegetable-growing industry.</p> <p>Prepare potted plants for transplanting through correct watering.</p> 	<p>Explain to the group of children about why plants need water, when they need it, and how we know if they had enough. Show a thirsty and a healthy plant if available.</p> <p>Discuss how often we water plants and what happens if they don't get enough. Use visuals like a plant cycle chart or weather symbols.</p> <p>Let children help water the plants in pots before transplanting. Emphasize why this is important.</p> <p>Encourage each child to guess: How long will it take to fill a watering can? How much water is inside it?</p> <p>Let them try timing and feeling the weight of full vs. empty cans.</p> <p>Use small groups or stations for children to fill watering cans and water plants.</p> <p>Observe and discuss questions such as how do we know the plant has enough water?</p> <p>Carefully move plants from pots into the soil/containers. Explain how this helps the roots grow by giving space and water.</p> <p>Discuss and reflect about what would happen if we did not water today? or why is it important we look after our plants?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication:</b> Explaining guesses, asking questions, sharing tasks in groups.</li> <li>• <b>Self-Regulation:</b> Practicing patience while waiting to fill or use watering cans.</li> <li>• <b>Fine Motor Skills:</b> Pouring water carefully, holding watering cans, digging small holes for transplanting</li> <li>• <b>Gross Motor Skills:</b> Lifting, walking with watering cans, moving between stations.</li> <li>• <b>Problem Solving and Reasoning:</b> Estimating water volume and time; deciding how much water is needed.</li> <li>• <b>Social Interaction and Team work:</b> Collaborating on tasks, turn-taking, helping peers, and carrying heavier items together such as watering cans or compost.</li> <li>• <b>Sensory Skills:</b> Hearing water flow, seeing wet vs. dry soil, feeling water weight, heavy work lifting and carrying. Smell, touch.</li> <li>• <b>Maths &amp; Science:</b> Understanding volume, time, measurement. Applying knowledge of water cycles and plant biology</li> <li>• <b>Bilateral Skills</b> Using both hands together to hold a watering can, steady a pot while scooping soil, or carefully lift a plant while adjusting its new position. Supporting the plant with one hand while loosening soil or using tools encourages controlled bilateral movement.</li> <li>• <b>Hand-Eye Coordination</b> Pouring water carefully to avoid overwatering, placing plants accurately into new pots, and adding soil around roots all require precise visual guidance of hand movements. Measuring water levels or filling containers to a specific point further develops this coordination.</li> <li>• <b>Planning and Sequencing:</b> Deciding the order of steps such as when to water, when to loosen soil, when to transplant helps children build strong sequencing and organizational skills. Estimating the amount of water and remembering regular care routines support cognitive planning abilities.</li> <li>• <b>Midline Crossing:</b> Reaching across the body to water plants, carry pots, or transfer soil from one side to another naturally encourages midline crossing. Lifting and moving plants from one location to another may also require crossing midline as children work within a larger gardening space.</li> </ul>



# Gardening Project Instructions

Welcome to our school gardening project. The most important thing is to enjoy spending time outside, working together, and learning as we go. Whether our plants thrive or not, every step is a success because we are trying and discovering along the way. Every time you water, plant, or set something up, you're growing your gardening skills.



## Step 1: Choosing Containers

Where to Place Them:

Make sure containers are placed where the children can easily see them and where the plants get plenty of light.

Which Containers to Use:

Large Grey Vegetable Tubs:

Use these for clematis, runner beans, tomatoes and peppers.

Wooden Planters:

Use these for smaller plants like radishes, lettuce, spring onions, and herbs. Even one packet of seeds can go a long way.



## Step 2: Filling the Containers

For Large Grey Vegetable Tubs:

Base Layer:

Start with flat sheets of cardboard at the bottom.

Middle Layer:

Add shredded paper on top of the cardboard to fill most of the container. Aim to fill up to about 30 cm from the top.

Top Layer:

Add compost, leaving about 3 cm of space from the top edge.

Suggestion: If you don't have enough shredded paper, you can use polystyrene to fill space. Always finish with a layer of cardboard and shredded paper on top of the polystyrene to stop compost from falling through.

For Wooden Planters:

Line the Planters:

Use the felt provided, or make liners from compost bags or bin bags. Cut them to fit the base and sides. Punch a few holes in the base of the liner to allow for drainage.

Fill with Compost:

These planters only need compost. No cardboard or shredded paper required.



### Step 3: Watering

The compost should be moist but not soaked. After watering, squeeze a handful of compost. If water droplets come out and it holds its shape, it's perfect.

#### Watering Tips:

Avoid watering every day. Start with twice a week and adjust depending on sun, wind, and rain.

Use watering cans with a rose spout attachment to create a gentle shower. If you don't have one, hold the can no more than 5 cm above the compost to avoid washing seeds or seedlings away.

You can use a hose from the outside tap (under the brown cover on the wall).

You can also fill water butts if you have time. Make sure they are on a stand so a watering can fits under the tap.

#### Important Water Butt Notes:

Place water butts behind locked gates or in less accessible areas to prevent them from being tampered with.

We can't connect to the school drainpipes because they are metal.



### Step 4: Sowing and Planting

Follow the instructions on seed packets or plant labels for how deep to plant seeds.

#### Planting from Pots:

Press the pot into the compost to make the right-sized hole.

Gently remove the plant from the pot by squeezing the sides and supporting the plant at its base.

If roots are stuck, carefully rub or trim them so the plant can come out.



#### Planting Notes:

##### Runner Beans

Sow seeds directly into the compost.

Push long support poles into the compost first.

Plant two beans about 2 cm away from each pole.

Beans will grow and twist towards the sun.

##### Tomatoes & Peppers:

These need warmer weather and can't go outside until the end of May.

Keep an eye out. They may take longer to be ready this year.

##### Courgettes:

These grow quickly and are fun to watch!

Instructions will come when they are ready to plant.

# Facilitator Support Guidance for Gardening Activities



The following guidelines are designed to support children during gardening activities. These tips aim to make the experience easier, more enjoyable and accessible for all skill levels.

## General Support Strategies :

- Provide visual schedules and clear step-by-step instructions.
- Use visual aids such as photos, symbols, or real-life examples for each task.
- Prepare clear role assignments to reduce anxiety over who does what.
- Allow for flexibility and pacing. Some children may need extra time to process, move, or engage.
- Offer choices within activities to give children a sense of control.
- Use calm, consistent routines at the start and end of each session to build predictability.

## Practical Resources to Prepare in advance:

- Visual instruction cards for each step.
- Pre-filled watering cans, smaller sized cans, or buckets for easier handling.
- Lightweight or smaller bags of compost or buckets for sharing the load.
- Alternative soil handling materials (e.g. gloves, scoops, hand tools) for children who dislike soil texture.
- Tables or trays at various heights to support physical access for all.
- Quiet, shaded space for children who need sensory breaks.



## Emotional / Energy Regulation Support:

- Model and encourage self-awareness of energy levels (high, amped up, settled, low, calm, overexcited).
- Provide calming strategies: breathing exercises, sensory fidgets, or stepping away briefly, carrying something heavy. Activities to change their energy levels (up and down)
- Reinforce self-regulation language such as I need a break, can I switch tasks? how am I feeling right now?
- Regularly check in about how is everyone feeling? Who needs help? Does anyone want to swap tasks?



## Group Management Tips

- Plan small group rotations to reduce overstimulation.
- Facilitate pairing or buddy systems to encourage cooperative working.
- Encourage children to swap roles such as waterer, carrier, digger so everyone can try different tasks.
- Use team decision-making tasks such as who waters first, who carries next to practice negotiation and compromise.
- Be prepared to mediate gently if children struggle with turn-taking or sharing.



## Alternatives to Handling Soil for Sensory Sensitivities:

- Let the young person observe first. Allowing them to watch others can help them gradually feel safe.
- Offer choices such as would you like to use a spoon or gloves? Provide soft, appropriate-sized gloves with some fun designs (if possible). This would empower them with control.
- Introduce texture gradually. Let them explore soil in a small sensory tray over time, rather than during the main task.
- Respect avoidance and if someone firmly dislikes soil, find meaningful activities around it to help them get involved.
- Activities such as watering, labelling pots, placing plant markers, or drawing the garden map.



# Cultivating Social-Emotional Regulation Through Gardening

Throughout the gardening sessions, facilitators should consistently promote self-awareness, self-regulation, prosocial behaviour, and teamwork. The following principles and strategies will help children develop key life skills while engaging in meaningful, practical gardening activities.



## Appreciation of Self-Regulation

- Encourage children to regularly reflect on whether they need to be more alert or calmed down.
- Accept and celebrate that children working together may have different skill sets, energy levels, and needs.

### Teamwork and Decision-Making

- Guide children to delegate tasks according to each group member's strengths and preferences.
- Facilitate discussions about:
- Who will be responsible for checking on plants during different times of the day?
- Creating realistic care plans for the plants that everyone can follow.
- Encourage problem-solving and group planning to help children feel ownership of their tasks.



## Communication and Literacy Development

- Build discussion, listening, and turn-taking skills in group conversations.
- Support writing skills where possible, such as listing care steps, recording observations, or planning rotas.
- Use visual supports like charts or photos to aid sequencing and memory where needed.

## Self-Awareness and Emotional Management

- Help children develop an awareness of their own feelings, energy levels, and skill confidence.
- Teach them to recognise when they need to pause, ask for help, or switch tasks if they feel overwhelmed or under-stimulated.
- Use positive reinforcement to promote independence in managing emotions and participation levels.

### Skill Development Focus

- Throughout the activities, facilitators should help children practice and develop:
- Teamwork, collaboration, and compromise
- Problem-solving and empathy
- Processing skills and working memory
- Attentional flexibility (shifting between tasks or roles)
- Prosocial skills (supporting peers, being kind, offering help)
- Critical thinking skills (analysing what went well and what could improve)
- Planning, organization, and delegation skills

### Prosocial Skills and Empathy

- Model and encourage collaboration, sharing, empathy, and compromise.
- Support children in:
- Choosing who is best suited to different jobs based on skills.
- Deciding who will go first when multiple children want to do the same task.
- Swapping roles fairly so everyone has the chance to participate in preferred activities.



## Cross-Activity Integration

- Encourage children to:
- Reflect across activities on what seeds and plants need to survive (light, warmth, water, space).
- Decide who will check on the plants and when fostering responsibility and independence.
- Recognize that gardening is also a form of self-regulation and calm-focused activity that can help them feel grounded and in control.

### Debriefing and Reflection

- Hold regular whole-group debrief sessions to:
- Discuss what they found easy, hard, or surprising.
- Use a whiteboard to record shared reflections.
- Explore options such as If you had the chance to do this again, what would you do differently?
- Emphasize that:
- Different brains have different strengths.
- Some children may excel in practical tasks, reading instructions, or planning, while others may shine in social or hands-on tasks.
- It is okay to realize that a job may not match the skills they thought they had. This is part of learning and growing.





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