

GARDENING GUIDELINES FOR CHILD CARE CENTRES



Gardening is a fun and rewarding way for children to learn about food, nutrition and caring for plants. It encourages healthy eating, physical activity, teamwork and confidence. While gardening has many benefits, it can also carry infection risks. With a few simple precautions, you can create a safe and enjoyable gardening experience for every child.

HYGIENE	SOIL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash hands before and after all gardening activities. No eating or drinking while gardening. Wash hands and produce prior to eating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain soil from a safe source. Do not use soil with manure or fertilizers. Ensure soil used indoors is routinely monitored for pests and pest activity. Pesticide and herbicides are not to be used.
PLANTS & PRODUCE	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some plants are dangerous. Confirm what you are planting is not poisonous or toxic (toxic plant list). Ensure children don't eat plants or flowers. If growing produce, obtain written consent from parents before allowing children to consume. Ensure produce is cleaned prior to consumption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only use safe to drink water for gardening. Ensure water is protected from contamination. Ensure standing water is removed to prevent mosquito breeding sites.
STAFF & CHILD HEALTH	SAFETY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop gardening during outbreaks. Ill individuals are to be excluded from gardening. Complete a daily inspection of the garden prior to entry, look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Animal feces » Sharp objects » Foreign materials Create a written policy that includes maintenance of the garden and who is responsible, a list of plants grown, and a child to staff member ratio during activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools should be age appropriate and maintained in good condition. Children should have appropriate footwear (i.e., closed-toed shoes) and work gloves. Raised-bed gardens, containers, stakes and/or trellises are made of non-toxic and non-leaching materials. Consider sun safety.

Please note that this resource is not a comprehensive guide.

Many factors need to be considered when developing a gardening program at your centre.

For additional information on infection control, call the Infection Prevention and Control Team at 705-721-7520 ext. 5744

