



GARDENING

DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD



ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY:

Invite your child to help with simple gardening tasks like planting seeds, watering plants, and checking them each day by starting a small container garden either indoors or outdoors. Sunflowers and beans are some of the easiest plants to grow and they grow quickly.

Help your child recognize and understand what plants need to grow, like water, sunlight, air, and soil. Notice parts like roots, stems, leaves, and flowers.

As your child cares for the plants, they begin to understand how plants grow and change over time and how their parts help them meet their needs.

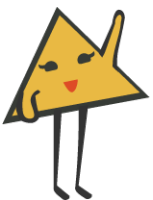
STEM LEARNING AREA:

Life Science: Concepts related to living things

- **Living Things:** Animals, including insects and people, and plants

WHAT DO I NEED?:

- Seeds
- Dirt
- Water
- Light source
- Watering container
- Shovel/Trowel
- Container (bag, egg carton, flowerpot, terrarium)



WHAT CAN I TALK ABOUT?:

- Living Things
- Grow, Change
- Plant parts: Seed, Seedling, Roots, Stem, Leaves, Flower

WHAT CAN I ASK?:

- What do you notice (see, feel, smell) about this plant?
- What do you know about soil? How are plants and soil the same? Different?
- What do you want to know about seeds? What plant do you think this seed will sprout into? How tall do you think this plant will be? How do you know?
- What do you think plants need to grow? Why?



GARDENING

ADAPTATIONS FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested playtime activity. These are only suggested activity adaptations. Consider consulting your child's care team first.



Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.

ENVIRONMENT

- If possible, limit background noise & distractions
- Wear sunglasses or hat if sensitive to bright light
- Use modified or flexible seating
- Place activity items on an anti-slip mat or in a container or tray
- Place objects within reach

MATERIALS

- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device and/or power wheelchair
- Add additional material(s), such as magnets or Velcro, to objects to make it easier to grasp, lift, or turn

INSTRUCTION

- Use a variety of methods of communication (sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage children
- Use pictures or icons to signal next steps (see following page)
- Provide prompts to help the child plant a seed



Need visual cues?

Visit [STEMIE's Visual Cue Library](#) or check out STEMIE's tips for creating and using visual supports with [A Guide to Visual Supports](#).



GARDENING

VISUAL CUES FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

①



Find a container

②



Add dirt

③



Place seed

④



Water

⑤



Move to sunlight

⑥



Watch growth



GARDENING

ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- Create a nature journal, add graphs, drawings, observations, photos, nature items. Bring these out from time to time to compare across the seasons.
- Design and build a bird house, bird feeder, or bug bungalow to add to a garden.
- Visit a garden store, farm, community garden, or orchard.
- Check out these great books about gardens:
 - *Hello, World! Garden Time* by Jill McDonald
 - *Lola Plants a Garden* by Anna McQuinn
 - *What's in the Garden* by Marrienne Berkes

