



Comfort, Play & Teach: A Positive Approach to Parenting™

Comfort, Play & Teach: Gardening With Your Child

Spring time offers a perfect opportunity to spend some time outdoors with your child and enjoy some comfort, play and teach time in the garden. Here are some ideas to try out:



COMFORT

- ◆ Take a walk with your child and spend time noticing the changes in the ground, on the trees and in the sky. Talk together about what they are sensing, e.g., green shoots or buds on trees, birds singing, the smell of early spring flowers or rain.
- ◆ Snuggle up together with books like *One Bean* (by Anne Rockwell) or *Planting a Rainbow* (by Lois Ehlert). Together you can look at the pictures and ask questions about where seeds come from and how plants grow. Your child can proudly share how much she knows already about plants and colours while learning new things with you!



PLAY

- ◆ Whether you live in a house or apartment, your child can grow plants! Look at garden catalogues together. Show your child the variety there is to choose from - does he like flowers or vegetables or herbs? Let your child decide where his selection should be planted in the garden, or which spot on the window sill is the best! Then go out and buy the seeds or the plants together.
- ◆ Let your child prepare the garden bed or flower pots for the new plants. Encourage her to turn over the hard soil, dig up roots, pick up dead leaves and get the soil tilled. Or allow her to spoon topsoil into planting containers. Your child will learn so much by handling and working with the soil. As he encounters garden friends outside like worms, ladybugs and butterflies, he can hold them gently and let them go again!





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TEACH

- ◆ Your child can learn lots about how plants grow and what plants need (i.e. sunlight and water). By caring for a plant or garden, she can watch the sequence in which seeds grow into plants. She can make discoveries about what happens when plants get too much or too little light or water. Gardening can help your child develop skills like observing and problem-solving.
- ◆ Try cooking together, using different kinds of plants. A salad has leafy lettuce, carrots from under the ground and tomatoes from plants above the ground. Try adding herbs like chives or dill. A simple activity like this helps your child to compare vegetables – their shapes, their colours, their textures, their tastes and smells. Your child can see what his plants could become and begin to understand different ways people use plants.

For more Comfort, Play & Teach™ tips, visit www.investinkids.ca

