

# Gardening: Well-Rounded Nutrition and Activity All Rolled in to One!

Good nutrition plays a pivotal role in promoting childhood growth, health, and learning, as well as in reducing the risk for chronic diseases of adulthood. Children learn from everything they experience, whether at home, on the playground, or in the classroom. Gardens offer an excellent opportunity for children to learn about nutrition and caring for the environment, while at the same time giving children a chance to be physically active. Being involved with gardening also teaches children about patience and responsibility and promotes self-esteem.

If you've always wanted to start a garden and don't know how or don't think you have enough outdoor space, think again. Gardening can be done indoors or outdoors, in small areas or in large areas, with flowers or vegetables, and with an inexpensive set of equipment. If you want to start small, consider an indoor herb garden. Think about some of the common spices you use in your food at home and consider growing the spices yourself. You can try oregano, basil, dill, rosemary, mint...the list is endless. Another option is container gardens. Containers might include small or large flower pots or possibly even hand-made raised beds. Visit your local library or hardware store with your child for ideas on indoor and/or outdoor container gardening.

For children, part of the fun is in the planning of the garden. Sit down and map out a plan. What will you grow, what kinds of containers will you use, will it be outdoors or indoors, will it contain flowers or vegetables, will you start from seeds or buy starter plants, what shape will it be, and who will be responsible for the gardening tasks? It's also very important to consider a planting guide so that you are planting the right types of plants in the right temperature and at the right time of the year. Once you have answers to these questions you are ready to gather your materials, friends, and family and start building and planting your garden.

In addition to the fun you'll have creating your garden, children will also gain exposure to reading, mathematics, science, and history through their gardening experiences. You'll discover so many exciting adventures and bonding opportunities with children through gardening. Give it a try today!



**Roxanne Moore**  
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*Gardens offer an excellent opportunity for children to learn*

**Roxanne Moore** is a Registered Dietitian and past spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association (ADA). She completed her undergraduate work in Dietetics at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, and her Masters in Health Science and Business at Towson University in Towson, Maryland. Roxanne has over 15 years experience developing nutrition education programs and providing nutrition education for individuals, groups and the community-at-large. She is certified as a Child and Adolescent Obesity Counselor and a member of ADA Sports, Cardiovascular and Wellness Nutritionists dietetic practice group.

Sodexo is proud to partner with your school district to provide nutritious school meals for your children. Our unique approach provides students with a variety of healthy menu choices designed specifically to satisfy their taste preferences. To learn more, visit [www.sodexousa.com](http://www.sodexousa.com) or call 800-354-7000.

