



Healthy at Home Package

For Parents and Youth

OVERVIEW

Encouraging healthy eating habits, promoting physical activity, and nurturing healthy behaviours at home is important for children. For most children, going to school has become part of their routine. With school closures, it is normal for children to be struggling to adapt. During this time, it is important to create new routines and an engaging learning environment at home.

This package provides you with helpful resources on staying healthy at home by eating healthy, being physical activity, and gardening. Information in this package can help you to keep the whole family learning, moving, and eating nutritiously together.

FOOD AND HEALTHY EATING

Cooking at Home

Cooking is a fun activity for children to do at home, but did you know that the kitchen can be a classroom for children to learn?

In the kitchen, children can practice:

- Nutrition by learning about foods and how to cook meals using basic ingredients
- Math by measuring ingredients and understanding fractions
- Language by reading a recipe and learning new cooking terms
- Social skills by sharing utensils and assigning responsibilities for tasks, etc.

Below you will find information on how to help your child feel more comfortable in the kitchen, a list of budget-friendly recipes, and a list of skills that children can practice in the kitchen.

Happy cooking!

How to Teach Children and Youth to Cook

Most people know that we learn better by doing. The best way for children and youth to learn to cook is by letting them try different tasks on their own. Follow these tips to make sure you are making cooking a fun, safe, and engaging experience:

1. **Be aware that cooking could take longer** - One of the main things to keep in mind is that cooking with kids can be messy and may take longer. That is why it is important to be prepared and allow more time than usual.
2. **Think safety!** Keep in mind your child's ability when giving them a task. Young children for example (2-3 years old) like to explore using their senses, so giving them tasks such as washing fruits in the sink, or adding chopped items to a dish can keep them engaged. As children get older, they will be more comfortable with doing more tasks and even completing a recipe by themselves. Check out the handout on age-friendly cooking tasks to learn more.



3. Keep it simple and fun! Choose recipes that your children can help with. Cooking can also be a fun way for children to learn and share family cooking traditions. Choose an old family recipe to keep kids engaged or pick a culture to explore through food.

Before you start, let us review some kitchen basics

Learning to cook safely to avoid cuts, burns, or foodborne illness is an important part of any cooking lesson.

Food Safety

Washing your Hands

Keeping hands clean while cooking is very important. Everyone must wash their hands before and during cooking. It is especially important to wash your hands after coughing or using the washroom.

Teach kids why, how, and when to wash their hands thoroughly before getting started. Check the poster that comes with this resource to teach children the right way to wash your hands.

Preventing Cross-contamination

It is important to separate food to prevent cross-contamination. Cross-contamination is when germs transfer from any food, surface or person to a ready-to-eat food.

Here are some ways you can prevent cross-contamination:

- Wash your hands
- Use separate cutting boards for different foods: one for raw meats, one for fish, one for poultry, and one for produce
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize cutting boards and utensils before re-using them
- Do not put ready-to-eat foods on surfaces (e.g., plates, boards, etc.) that were used for raw foods
- Properly cover all food in the fridge

Cooking Foods to the Right Temperature

Food needs to be cooked to a high enough temperature for a long enough time to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria. The best way to be sure that a food has reached a high enough temperature during cooking is to use a probe thermometer. Checking the temperature of foods can be a good activity to show kids.

Whole poultry	82°C	180°F
Individual pieces	74°C	165°F
Mixtures containing poultry, egg, meat or fish	74°C	165°F
Ground beef and veal	71°C	160°F
Deboned and rolled oats		
All pork products	71°C	160°F
Lamb	71°C	160°F
Ground, deboned and rolled oats		
All fish products	70°C	158°F
Egg dishes	74°C	165°F

Knife Safety

Adults should always supervise children and youth when using knives.

Here are some tips to avoid cuts:

- Make sure knives are properly sharpen. Use sharp knives with care, do not rush
- Use the right knife for the job (e.g., a small pairing knife for vegetables and fruit) and cut on a proper surface



- If a knife falls, do not try to catch it. Step back and let it fall
- Put dirty knives besides the sink and wash them one by one. Do not put them in the sink because you may cut yourself while reaching into the soapy water.

Watch this video for more tips on how to handle a knife safely and to learn about basic cuts:



BASIC KNIFE SKILLS (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-Fg7l7G1zw>)



Recipes

Here is a list of some delicious and budget-friendly recipes that you can use to get children involved in the kitchen.

Spaghetti and Meat Sauce (serves 4)

Cost: \$7 (not including staples like oils and spices/herbs)

Ingredients:

- ½ lb ground beef
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 cups of grated carrots
- 1 can stewed tomatoes
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Cooked spaghetti (roughly 400 grams)

Directions:

1. Turn on stove to medium heat. Cook and stir ground beef and onion in a large frypan until the beef has browned. Drain off fat.
2. Add carrots, tomatoes, and oregano to the frypan. Heat to boiling. Lower heat, cover and simmer 25 to 30 minutes. Stir several times. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Serve sauce with hot cooked spaghetti.

What skills can you teach with this recipe?

How to use a grater

Make sure you supervise children when using a grater to avoid cuts.

Here are some tips for using a grater safely:

1. Always use the grater on a flat surface
2. Keep the food to a medium to large size. This will prevent your fingers from touching the grater because the food was too small
3. Use a simple up-and-down motion and hold the food at an angle
4. Take your time; do not rush.

Source: Basic Shelf Cookbook



Tex-Mex Black Bean Salad (serves 8)

Cost: \$12 (not including staples like oils and spices/herbs)

Ingredients:

- 125 ml (½ cup) olive oil
- Juice of 3 limes (90ml or 6 tbsp)
- Zest of 1 lime
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) sugar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) salt
- 1 ml (¼ tsp) cayenne pepper
- 2-540 ml (19 oz) cans black beans
- 500 ml (2 cups) frozen corn or 3 ears fresh cooked corn
- 2 bell peppers (e.g., red, orange or yellow)
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 medium shallot (optional, if available)
- 125 ml (½ cup) fresh cilantro, plus more for garnish
- 2 avocados (optional, if available)

Directions:

DRESSING:

1. Zest 1 lime and juice 3 limes. Add to a small bowl.
2. Add olive oil, sugar, salt, and cayenne pepper to the lime zest and lime juice. Whisk to combine.

SALAD:

1. If using fresh corn, cook and set aside to cool.
2. Open the can of black beans and place in a strainer. Drain and rinse.
3. Chop peppers and cilantro. Mince garlic and shallot.
4. Add black beans, red peppers, cilantro, garlic, shallot, and corn to large bowl (if using frozen corn, you can add it right into the bowl without cooking).
5. Pour dressing over the salad and toss to combine.
6. When ready to serve, chop avocados and mix gently into the salad. Be careful not to mash avocados.

What skills can you teach with this recipe?

How to juice a lemon/lime

There are other ways to juice a lemon/lime without using a juicer. Follow these easy steps!

1. Wash the lemon/lime and place it on a clean cutting board
2. Roll the lemon/lime back and forth with your palm. This will cause more juice to come out. Cut the lemon/lime in half (width-wise)
3. Insert a fork or spoon in the middle of the lemon/lime while twisting and squeezing it at the same time
4. Enjoy! Watch this quick video to learn more: <https://startcooking.com/video/juicing-a-lemon>



Broccoli, Kale and Lentil Soup (serves 4)

Cost: \$11 (not including staples like oils and spices/herbs)

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/8 tsp smoked paprika
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/3 cup of dried lentils rinsed
- 2 ½ cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 4 cups chopped broccoli (stems and florets separated) can be frozen
- 4 cups chopped packed trimmed kale, can be frozen
- 2 cups heated milk. If using evaporated milk (canned), use 1 cup of evaporated milk and 1 cup of water
- 2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice or white wine vinegar

Directions:

1. In a pot, melt butter over medium heat. Sauté onions, garlic, hot pepper flakes and 1/4 tsp (1 mL) each salt and pepper for about 5 minutes or until softened and starting to turn golden. Stir in lentils, broth, and broccoli stems. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat.
2. Stir in broccoli florets, kale, and milk. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer, stirring occasionally and adjusting heat to prevent boiling, for 15 to 20 minutes or until lentils and vegetables are soft.
3. Use an immersion blender in the pot or transfer soup to a blender or food processor, in batches, and purée, until smooth or slightly chunky, as desired.
4. Return to pot, if necessary. Heat over medium heat until steaming, but do not let boil. Stir in more milk if soup is too thick. Drizzle in lemon juice while stirring. Season with up to 1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt and pepper to taste.

Source: Cookspiration

What skills can you teach with this recipe?

How to mince garlic

Did you know that the smaller you mince the garlic, the more intense the flavor? Garlic can be chopped using a paring knife or finely minced using a Chef's knife. Visit Start Cooking at <https://startcooking.com/video/preparing-garlic> to learn more about preparing garlic!

For other recipe inspiration for the entire family to get cooking together, visit these websites:

- *Freggie Tales* at <https://freggietales.ca/recipes/>
- *Half Your Plate* at <https://www.halfyourplate.ca/recipes/>
- *Unlock Food* at <https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Recipes.aspx>
- *Canada's Food Guide* at <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

Glossary of Cooking Terms

Chop: To cut food into small, bite-size pieces with a sharp knife on a cutting board

Beat: To stir or mix ingredients with a whisk, spoon or a mixer until smooth

Dice: To cut food into small 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) cube-shaped pieces

Fold: To gently mix ingredients by moving food from the center and lifting towards the edge of the bowl

Mince: To cut food as small as you can

Purée: To grind or mash food through a sieve or blender so that the food becomes a smooth, thick consistency

Sauté: To cook food quickly in a small amount of oil in a pan over direct heat

Set: To allow a food to become solid or semi-solid

Simmer: To heat liquids in a saucepan on low heat so that the small bubbles appear on the surface around the sides of the liquid

Slice: To cut foods such as apples, carrots, tomatoes, meat or bread into thin sections or pieces, using a sharp knife

Stiff peaks: Egg whites whipped until the peaks formed stay upright

Stir: To mix two or more ingredients with a spoon, using a circular motion

Toss: To turn pieces of food over several times, until the ingredients are mixed together

Whisk: To mix together by beating with a whisk or mixer

Adapted from: You're the Chef program – Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.



Kitchen Skills at Every Age

Kids learn about food through their senses (sight, touch, smell, hearing, and tasting). Teaching kitchen skills not only helps your child to learn about food, but also teaches them an important life skill.

Since kids develop cooking skills at different rates, introduce your child to skills that match their abilities at each age and stage. Remember to have fun and talk with your child.

<p>2-3 Year Olds Kids this age often insist on doing a task but their attention spans are short. Try simple tasks and supervise them for safety.</p>	<p>Kitchen Skills To Encourage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry lettuce in a salad spinner • Break bread into pieces • Dip foods (e.g. dip bread into egg batter) • Pick fresh herb leaves off the stem • Add ingredients to a bowl • Stir to combine ingredients • Help find ingredients • Carry unbreakable items to the table • Put things in the garbage after cooking • Shake salad dressing in a closed container • Put paper muffin cups in the muffin tin
<p>4-6 Year Olds This is an age where kids vary in their motor skills, independence and the ability to focus. Cooking can help to develop these skills.</p>	<p>Kitchen Skills To Encourage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen skills from the previous age group • Find the tools and equipment needed • Assemble foods: make trail mix or yogurt sundae with toppings you have prepared • Help measure, add and stir ingredients • Help pour batter into baking dish • Slice soft cooked vegetables, soft fruit, cheese or tofu with a plastic dull knife • Crack and beat an egg • Spread butter and/or spreads • Wash and scrub vegetables and fruits • Tear lettuce to make salad • Peel some fruit (e.g. bananas) • Mash soft fruit and vegetables • Juice oranges, lemons and limes • Press cookie cutters • Arrange food on serving plate • Set the table and clear the table • Cook with a friend for a fun play date

7-8 Year Olds

Kids this age can follow simple steps for recipes, can share and take turns. Start to teach cooking vocabulary (e.g. mince, dice, chop, sift, beat, grill, and broil).

Kitchen Skills To Encourage

- Kitchen skills from the previous age groups
- Use simple kitchen equipment (e.g. grater, toaster, blender, can opener or garlic press) after you show them how to do so safely
- Fill and level measuring spoons and cups
- Read a simple recipe out loud and do most recipe steps, except placing items in or out of a hot oven, with adult supervision
- Use the microwave with your help
- Rinse grains and canned beans
- Scoop out baked potatoes or avocados
- Scoop batter into muffin cups
- Form cookies and patties
- Use a grater to shred cheese
- Use a pizza cutter
- Make a breakfast parfait: cereal, fruit, yogurt
- Make tortilla wraps
- Toss a salad with salad dressing
- Invent a fruit salad or smoothie recipe
- Say what food belongs to what food group
- Read kid-friendly cookbooks from the library
- Make a snacks list and post it on the fridge
- Write out the grocery list

9-11 Year Olds

Skills vary widely in this age group. While some kids are not mature enough to work at the stove, most kids are coordinated and able to understand how to use appliances safely.

Kitchen Skills To Encourage

- Kitchen skills from the previous age groups
- Prepare simple recipes
- Use a sharp knife with easy to cut foods (cooked meats, easy to grip vegetables and fruit, cheese, bread)
- Use a timer and thermometer
- Pound chicken or meat
- Slice bread
- Put away leftovers
- Make their own school lunch
- Trim and slice vegetables
- Make a fresh vegetable or fruit platter
- Knead dough and let it rise
- Use the stove, with supervision, to make basic recipes like boiled eggs, pasta, omelets, pancakes, soups or grilled cheese
- Use a food processor, blender and mixer
- Use a panini press or waffle maker
- Store food safely after grocery shopping

12 Year Olds and Older

Kids this age can be more independent in the kitchen with coaching from parents/caregivers.

Kitchen Skills To Encourage

- Kitchen skills from the previous age groups
- Follow a recipe without help
- Use an oven or stove
- Use a chef's knife or other larger knives with supervision
- Use a grater to shred cheese or carrots
- Plan a dinner menu
- Develop grocery shopping skills (selection, cost, label reading, essential ingredients)
- Suggest options for using meal leftovers



Enjoy Family Meals

It is very important to continue with a routine of eating meals and snacks at set times during the day. This will prevent you from mindlessly eating food throughout the day “out of boredom”.

One positive aspect of the recommendations to stay home is that families may have more time to eat meals together. Eating meals with others can bring many benefits including:

- The opportunity to model healthy eating behaviours for children
- The ability to connect with your family and friends
- The opportunity to “unplug” from the world and enjoy some quality time. It’s also great for your mental health.

If you are under self-isolation or live away from your loved ones or friends, technology can be a great way to facilitate family meals. Set a time with your family or friends to share a “virtual” family meal, but make sure technology is only used to connect everyone, not as a distraction. Turn off all other devices or distractions, including TVs, computers, tablets, or phones. Also, remember to keep toys and books off the table.

Do not forget to remind everyone to wash his or her hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after eating the meal.

Activity ideas:

For young kids

Make your own placemat - Children can decorate a large piece of coloured paper using craft supplies, paint or markers. They can draw or use pictures of food from grocery store flyers to add to the placemat. Make a placemat for each member of the family and enjoy a colourful family dinner.

For youth

Have teens in charge of making the family meal. Task them with the responsibility of picking the recipe, helping out with the grocery list, and preparing the meal (with supervision). During the meal, try to ask questions about the recipe, such as what their favourite part was of making it.

For the family

Make a “family meal question” jar. Write down a list of fun questions to answer during mealtimes, put it in an empty jar, and have each member of the family take turns taking and answering questions.

Sample questions:

- If you could eat one fruit or vegetable forever, what would it be?
- What is your favourite meal?
- If you could visit one country in the world, which would it be?
- Use three words to describe yourself

Healthy Eating Education Activities

Looking for ways to foster the understanding and skills needed to identify, prepare, and choose healthy foods?

Below you will find several healthy eating education activities that will address the how, what, and why of healthy eating at home. The activities are labelled as either suitable for grades K-3, 4-6, or 7-12. Visit *Canada’s Food Guide* at <https://foodguide.canada.ca/en/> for resources and information on healthy eating that the family can use and learn together.

Guides made available from Physical and Health Education Canada at <https://phecana.ca/>.

Materials	Chopped vegetables or fruits (or other healthy foods), toothpicks
Learning Outcome	Identify healthy foods and prepare a snack.

Description

Discuss with the child how healthy eating can be fun and brainstorm a vegetable or fruit creation (or other healthy foods) that you could make for a snack (e.g., car, flower, funny face, unicorn, fish, or a building block creation).

Ask the child to select vegetables or fruits (or other healthy foods) to make their creation. Ensure that an adult washes and chops the vegetables and fruits. The child designs their healthy snack creation and then EATS it. Consider taking a picture of the creation before it is eaten and have the child send it to a family member or friend and explain what they created.

Healthy Eating Competencies

THINK



Develop cognitive skills and strategies that facilitate knowledge about healthy foods, food habits, food preparation, and food safety.

FEEL



Develop affective skills and strategies that facilitate healthy food relationships with themselves, with others, and with their environment.

ACT



Practice behaviour skills and strategies that facilitate healthy eating, food habits, food preparation, and food safety.



Reflection Questions

Reflection is important to support learning for healthy eating. Consider asking the child the reflection questions below and discuss the answers together.

- *Can you think of other healthy snacks that are from other food categories of the Food Guide? Refer to Canada's Food Guide if needed.*
- *Did the vegetables or fruits you used for your creation taste good together?*

Activity adapted from PHE Canada's [At My Best Play Day Toolkit](#)

Materials

Available food items, tupperware containers, aluminum foil (optional), toothpicks (optional), access to the internet (optional)

**Learning
Outcome**

Choose healthy foods and create a healthy on-the-go meal.

Description

Bento box meals are very popular in Asian culture and are becoming increasingly popular around the world. Bento means convenient and a bento box is a boxed meal prepared with care. They include a variety of tastes, textures, and food.

A bento box is a great technique to use for school lunches or lunches on-the-go. Provide the child with a tupperware container and invite them to create their own bento box meal. Be sure to wash the food appropriately and support the child with chopping or grating. If needed, create dividers in the tupperware container using aluminum foil or other similar items (e.g., silicone baking cups, etc.).

Gather various healthy foods such as vegetables, fruits (fresh or dried), nuts, meats, whole grains (breads, pitas), cheese, hard boiled eggs, rice, etc. Ask the child to get creative and prepare their bento box.

Consider using toothpicks and cutting the food to make designs - bento boxes are also about presentation! Search the internet for ideas on how to cut and assemble the food if needed.

Healthy Eating Competencies



THINK

Develop cognitive skills and strategies that facilitate knowledge about healthy foods, food habits, food preparation, and food safety.



FEEL

Develop affective skills and strategies that facilitate healthy food relationships with themselves, with others, and with their environment.



ACT

Practice behaviour skills and strategies that facilitate healthy eating, food habits, food preparation, and food safety.



Reflection Questions

Reflection is important to support learning for healthy eating. Consider asking the child the reflection questions below and discuss the answers together.

- What did you do to make sure your bento box had a variety of tastes and textures?*
- *What made your bento box fun to eat?*

Materials	Ingredients of choice, YUMMY app
Learning Outcome	Use available ingredients to prepare a healthy snack or meal.

Description

Explain to the youth that sometimes it can be difficult to figure out a healthy snack or meal with the ingredients or foods that are available. To practice using ingredients that you already have at home, encourage the youth to download YUMMly, a free personalized recipe app. YUMMly is unique because it allows you to take a picture of the ingredients that are available to you, and the app identifies the ingredients and provides a recipe using the ingredients you have available.

Invite the youth to lay out their chosen ingredients on the counter and use the YumMly app to take pictures of the ingredients. Then, scroll through the suggestions and pick one that they would like to make. Supervise the youth while chopping or using the oven or stove. After the youth has prepared their snack or meal, discuss with them how they can use the app to develop food preparation knowledge and skills.

Healthy Eating Competencies

THINK



Develop cognitive skills and strategies that facilitate knowledge about healthy foods, food habits, food preparation, and food safety.

FEEL



Develop affective skills and strategies that facilitate healthy food relationships with themselves, with others, and with their environment.

ACT



Practice behaviour skills and strategies that facilitate healthy eating, food habits, food preparation, and food safety.



Reflection Questions

Reflection is important to support learning for healthy eating. Consider asking the youth the reflection questions below and discuss the answers together.

- *Why is developing food preparation skills important?*
- *How are food preparation skills related to healthy eating?*



Gardening at Home

Starting a fruit or vegetable garden with your children and teens is a great way to foster appreciation of food. Your family will be able to grow vegetables and fruit of your choice, take the time to plant and nurture its growth, and use the food you planted to make a healthy, homegrown meal or snack together. Gardening will not only teach children and teens how to grow healthy food, but will help to encourage a sense of responsibility and self-sufficiency.

Getting Started- A Toolkit

Wondering how to get started? Attached you will find a gardening toolkit composed of resources from FoodShare Toronto and The Compost Council of Canada in partnership with Plant, Grow, Share a Row Toronto (Appendix A). Resources comprised in the toolkit include: *Gardening with Children*, *How to Feed Your Plants*, and *Grow Your Veggie Garden Guide*.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical Activity Guidelines

Physical activity is still as important as ever, and everyone should continue to participate in physical activity for both their physical and mental well-being. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (CPAG) were developed to provide recommendations of how much activity is needed, for different age groups, to support and improve one’s overall health and wellbeing. Do you know how much physical activity you need? Use the chart below to find out!

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines

Age Group	0-4 years old	5-17 years old	18-64 years old	65+ years old
Guidelines	<p>Infants less than a year old: 30 minutes on their stomachs being active throughout the day</p> <p>Toddlers ages 1-2: 180 minutes at any intensity of physical activity with a variety of activities per day.</p> <p>Pre-Schoolers ages 3-4: 180 minutes of physical activity throughout the day with at least 60 minutes being energetic play.</p>	60 minutes a day in moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity and 3 days a week on muscle and bone strengthening activities.	150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more and also to add at least 2 days per week of muscle and bone strengthening activities.	<p>Older adults (65+) should spend 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more and also to add at least 2 days per week of muscle and bone strengthening activities.</p> <p>Those with poor mobility should perform physical activities that will enhance and improve balance and prevent falls.</p>

Play Package

Looking for activities to do with your family at home? See Appendix B for a physical activity package that highlights different activities to get the whole family moving!

Appendix A: Gardening Toolkit

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, 2020



Gardening with Children

Children learn from watching and doing, so explain what you're doing and why. Keep it simple and involve them in the work and encourage them to not only look, but to touch and smell and to appreciate all the different forms of life in your garden.

Leave your adult notions of gardening success aside. For children, it is the process, not necessarily the product that is important.

If many members bring their children to the community garden, it may make sense to have a special children's area, with smaller plots, where they can do what they want. If this is not possible set aside a small area of your own plot.

Base the plot's size on the length of the child's reach: it should be no wider than twice a comfortable reach, provided the plot is accessible on both sides. Edge the plot with bricks or small stones to define the boundaries of the plot and help the child to feel that it is his or her own.

Lay down boards, stepping stones, or have a grass or bark path so that it is very clear where it is okay to walk

TOOLS AND RULES

- Teach your child that tools are not toys and can inadvertently hurt someone if they are not used carefully.
- Teach your child to use the appropriate tool for the task (i.e. don't dig with a rake or try to rake with a spade).
- Teach your child to clean all the tools when finished.
- Never leave tools in the garden over night. Have a special place to keep your tools.
- Most adult sized tools, with the exception of trowels, are too big or heavy for children to use comfortably. Many garden tools come in child sized version and can be an acceptable substitute.
- Stay away from plastic tools designed for sandbox play. They are too flimsy for gardening and don't often look like the real thing.
- Teach your child basic community gardening etiquette: Don't walk in anyone else's garden, unless invited and don't pick anyone else's plants, unless invited.
- Teach your child to observe essential safety rules: Never taste any parts of any plant unless an adult says that it is safe to do so. Teach them to recognise poison ivy, stinging nettles and any other poisonous plant. Don't touch fertilisers, pesticide containers, or brightly coloured seeds (these have been chemically treated).

THE GARDEN

Soil Preparation: Depending on the child's age, you may have to do a lot of the initial soil preparation for them, especially in the first year. But, every child likes to dig, so let them dig and break up clods of dirt with hand tools so that they feel they have prepared their own garden bed.

Seeds: Look through seed catalogues with your child and guide them toward choosing fast growing, tougher than usual plants that can stand over or under watering such as radishes, beans, peas, nasturtiums, onions and sunflowers. Make suggestions, but let your child make the choice.

Planting: show your child how to plant by starting with large seeds like beans, peas or sunflowers. Clearly mark out a furrow where seeds are to go and help place the seeds in the bottom and firmly cover with soil. As your child becomes more experienced, move on to medium sized seeds (radish and spinach) and let them measure and mark the row themselves.

Watering: Stress the importance of water to growing plants and that without careful and regular watering, the seeds won't grow into plants. If your child is too small to carry a watering can, give them a glass to water some or all of their plants.

Observing: Once the plants are up and growing, encourage your child to observe the changes to their plants as well as the growth of "unintentional" plants (weeds). Also have your child observe the soil, bugs, animals and other life in the garden.

Harvesting: The best way for a child to learn about where their food comes from, is from harvesting and eating the food they have grown in their garden. Supply your child with a basket, a hose and bucket for washing off the dirt and have them carefully pick their vegetables!

How to Feed your Plants

From Foodshare Toronto

www.foodshare.net

Along with sun, water and soil, plants need **NUTRIENTS** to truly thrive! Most of our soils don't quite have enough of what our plants need to grow up big and strong, so here's some tips on how to feed them throughout their life cycle!



Compost: Compost, whether it's animal waste or decomposed organic matter, has a great general mix of nutrients to offer your plants. Once in the spring and once in the fall, add a 1 inch thick layer of compost to your whole garden bed/container, and turn it in to the soil. Throughout the season, you can add compost around the base of each plant, 1-2x month.



Foliar Spray: Did you know plants can take in nutrients through their leaves as well as their roots? It's true! Nutritious foliar spray (made from either seaweed or fish) is a space saving way to feed your plants, as you only need a little bottle of it to last all season. There are general nutrient foliar sprays and specific ones for plants like tomatoes. Use to spray on 1 month old seedlings and plants 1x week throughout the season.



Soil/Nutritional Ammendments: There are many products that are made to help deliver specific nutrients that plants are often lacking. 3 commons ones are Epsom Salt Spray for Magnesium (will make your plants GREEN!), Blood Meal for nitrogen, Bone Meal for phosphorous, and Lime to help raise the Ph level of acidic soil.



Companion Crops/Cover Crops: There are many companion and/or crops you can plant along side your plants throughout the growing season, or at the beginning or end of the year to help add nutrients to your soil. Anything in the legume family takes nitrogen from the air and fixes it into the soil. CLOVER is a great crop to plant alongside/underneath your other plants to help support healthy, nitrogen rich soil.

PLANT • GROW
SHARE A ROW



UN RANG POUR
CEUX QUI ONT FAIM

Grow Your
Veggie Garden

GUIDE



THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO



This veggie gardening “how to” guide has been a labour of love, written and illustrated with the passionate belief in the power of veggie gardening to provide solutions to many issues of our time.

A handful of seeds, a bit of space – whether in a front or backyard, in a container on a balcony, a plot in a community garden or space where once was a lawn --- and the involvement of children, families, neighbours and friends are the ingredients to a harvest of possibilities, ranging from home-grown food for the family and those in need, an appreciation of Mother Nature and a learning network that will last a lifetime.

Nothing compares with a season of gardening experience. And to kick it off, this guide is designed to be a companion in the garden, full of tips and suggestions that help you dig in to the joys of veggie gardening.

Special thanks are extended to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their tremendous support and care. As well, many garden writers, environmental and community advocates have generously contributed to the content of this workbook.

Wishing you a bounty of veggie gardening success!

The Team at The Compost Council of Canada and Plant • Grow • Share a Row

What is Plant • Row • Share a Row?

Plant • Grow • Share a Row is a people-helping-people program encouraging gardeners to plant an extra row of veggies and to share The the harvest with those in need. program is spearheaded by The Compost Council of Canada and the Garden Writers Association, with support from local food banks.

For more information visit www.growarow.org or call 1-877-571-GROW(4769)

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Planning Your Garden

Like anything, spending time at the beginning to develop a plan for your garden will help serve as a guidepost as you set about creating your garden dream.

Among the things to consider in your plan are:

Where's the sun? You need lots of sun for a vegetable garden (at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day). Before you finalize your location choice, take a couple of days to observe how the sun "visits" your space during the day and make sure there's enough sunlight to help your veggies grow.

Where are you going to get the water? Rainy days take on new meaning as they help with the watering needs of your garden. It's likely, though, that you will need to supplement Mother Nature's watering efforts with some of your own. Setting up your garden close to an accessible source of water will provide an extra measure of convenience for you as the season progresses.

How much space do you need? Even the smallest of spaces can become a great place for the start of your veggie gardening "career." Growing in containers is a good option for those who live in apartments, and growing veggies such as beans and peas that can climb upwards on walls can help you squeeze lots of gardening into a small area.

And if you have a lot of available space, you might want to think about a "more than one year" plan for how your garden will develop over time.

What's the quality of your soil? Much of the success of your gardening efforts will depend on your soil's quality. A simple way to figure out the type of soil that you have in your garden is to scoop a handful of soil and give it a squeeze. If you have sandy soil, it will be crumbly and won't hold its shape in your hand; sandy soils don't retain much moisture. If you have clay soil, it will form a lump when you squeeze it; clay soils get sticky when wet and turn very hard when dry. Loam, the ideal garden soil, will form into a ball when you squeeze it but will break apart easily. To improve any soil – sand, clay or loam – add compost. Compost is food for the critters of the soil, responsible for improved soil structure and helping to enhance soil health and productivity.



Designing Your Garden

Map out such things as the space available and what is around it. Write down what and where you are going to plant your various vegetables, considering not only the space on the ground but how you can take advantage of vertical gardening ("growing upwards") to increase your garden yields.

Plan for spaces between the rows to allow you access to your plants and the work that will have to be done throughout the season (e.g., weeding, watering, harvesting).

As one year follows another, remember that your garden's design will need to reflect the rotation of crops throughout your garden's space. The same crop should not always be planted in the same location in your garden every year. Rotating crops will help renew the soil, keeping it healthy and preventing diseases and pest infestations.



Plants to Grow with Kids

The following plants are very easy to grow—ideal for planting with kids:

Radishes
Basil
Dill
Parsley
Kale
Potatoes
Sunflowers
Jerusalem artichokes
Pumpkins
Zucchini
Watermelon



Plants That Tolerate Part Shade

Although most vegetables require full sun, the following food plants will tolerate part shade:

Arugula
Beets
Kale
Lettuce
Parsnips
Spinach
Radishes
Garlic
Peas
Parsley
Rhubarb



Every Vegetable Garden Should Include:

By all means experiment, but the following food plants are very easy to grow and are great for the novice gardener:

Tomatoes
Beans
Peas
Lettuce
Basil
Carrots
Garlic



Herb Hints

- Pinch off the flowers as they start to form. This will direct the herb's energy into the leaves.
- Some herbs tolerate drought and are good choices to grow in dry areas: oregano, thyme, rosemary, chervil.

Vegetables that can be started from seed planted directly in your garden bed:

Beans
Peas
Lettuce
Carrots
Spinach

Vegetables that should be started as seedlings indoors or purchased from a garden centre as Seedlings:

Tomatoes
Broccoli
Cabbage
Eggplant
Squash
Peppers



Edible Flowers

Many ornamental plants have deliciously edible flowers that can be planted in your vegetable garden to provide colour and beauty—and a tasty treat:

Nasturtiums
Marigolds
Violets
Borage
Bachelor's Buttons
Daylilies
Hyssop
Lemon Verbena

Warm-season Crops

The following vegetables thrive in heat and should be planted when the soil warms up—that is, late in the spring.

Tomatoes
Okra
Peppers
Eggplant
Squash
Basil

Cool-season Crops

The following vegetables do best before it gets really warm in summer. They should be planted in the early spring.

Peas
Radishes
Lettuce
Spinach
Arugula



Planting a Seed

Your role is to get the seed started, which means planting it so that it can grow.

Seeds can last for many years in their original condition, provided that they are kept cool and dry. To spark germination, seeds need to be put into the right medium and environment.

If you have received seeds from a friend who might have dried and saved them from last year's harvest, you should also get their advice on how to get the seeds started.

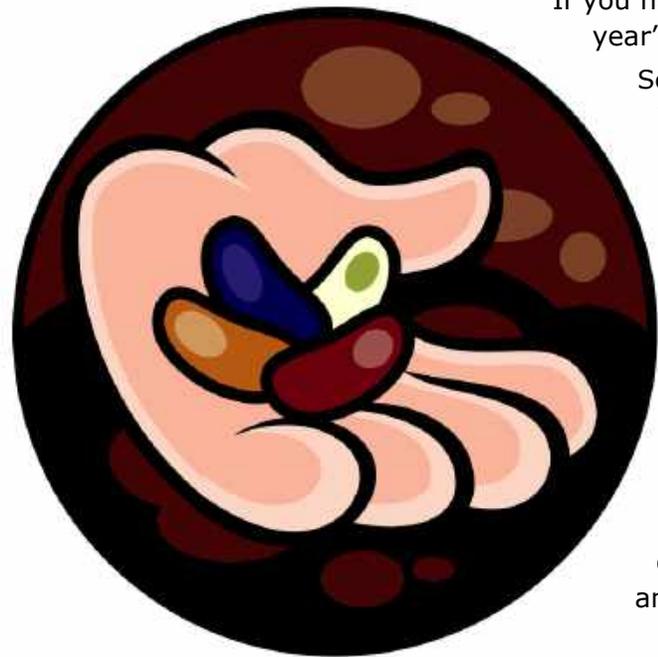
Seeds purchased from the garden centre will usually have directions right on the package. Read the instructions carefully, paying attention to when and how to plant the seeds, and the spacing needed between them.

Some seeds can be planted right into the ground during spring once the last frost has passed.

Other seeds can be started earlier by planting them indoors.

To figure out when to start planting indoors, you must know when you will be able to take your seedlings outside and plant them in the garden. This timing is based on when your area will be frost-free--that is, when temperatures stay above freezing. Working backwards from there, you will then need to count the number of days needed for their growth from seed to seedling to ultimately being planted in the garden.

Some seeds need to be soaked in water, put in the fridge or scarified (which means gently loosening the shell with something like a nail file or sandpaper) before being planted. Again, check the instructions on your seed package for these details, as well as for planting depth and spacing.



Container Planting



Seeds can be planted in many different kinds of containers. Special trays or flats can be purchased or you can look around your home to find something suitable like egg cartons, plastic containers or cut-off milk containers.

The container needs to have a depth that will allow room for roots to develop. Look for something that is at least 5 to 8 cm deep. There needs to be some kind of drainage at the bottom of the container. If you are using a plastic container, make sure that there is a hole in the bottom to allow water to drain. Placing your container on a saucer or tray will help to catch any water that flows through.

After years of gardening, you might decide to save pots or containers from one year to use for the next season. If you go this route, pay particular attention to making sure that they are clean before using them to plant again. Clean them with hot water and soap, making sure to rinse and dry them well before adding soil.

Your garden centre should have a variety of soil-less planting mediums that can be used for your planting (usually sold in bags labelled "potting mix"). Try not to use garden soil as your starter as it might contain diseases, weeds or bugs.

Before putting your soil in containers, water it. It shouldn't be too sappy but just wet enough to be moist. Once you have added water, grab a handful of soil and squeeze it. If water drips out, it's too wet. Just add more soil till the water is absorbed.

Fill your containers with soil and place seeds on top of the soil. Sprinkle a thin layer of soil to cover the seeds. Then water the soil.



Caring for your seedlings indoors

Put the containers where they can get heat and light. The top of your fridge is often a good spot to use for warmth. Once the seedlings emerge, you should relocate them to a sunny location – a south- or west-facing window is helpful.



Warm (not hot) water can be used for watering during the first couple of days. After that, use water that is slightly above room temperature. A spray pump or mister is a good way to soak the soil.

Once your seedlings have grown to the point where they are showing a couple of leaves, you need to transplant them to give each of them more space. Be gentle! The seedlings are very delicate --- don't handle them by their stems.

If there are too many seedlings, you will need to thin them so that there is enough space for continued growth. You can do this when they are still in their original container, clipping the weaker seedlings at the surface of the soil by using a pair of scissors or your fingers. It's not necessary to pull out the roots that remain - they will decompose in the soil.

Approximately two weeks before the seedlings are to be planted in the garden, you can start to get them accustomed to their outdoor life through a process called "hardening off." Basically, you set the seedlings outside in a sunny spot that is protected from the wind and elements for a couple of hours each day. The amount of time can be lengthened every day.



When you are transplanting your seedlings to the garden, gently remove each seedling (water them in advance to help loosen the soil), being careful not to squeeze the stems or hurt the roots.

Place each seedling in a hole allowing enough room for its roots. Generally, the hole should be slightly deeper and wider than the plant's root ball. Place the seedling somewhat lower in the hole than the depth at which it was growing in its container.

Fill in the space with soil and pat the soil around the seedling to firm up the area and support the plant. Add water immediately after planting each seedling.





Space the seedlings according to their planting directions. Avoid planting them too close together. What looks like a lot of space between them at the beginning of the season will quickly be filled in with their growth in the weeks and months ahead.

While your plants will grow up and out, the location of your plant's growth is dependent on where you first place it in the garden. To get your rows straight, you can use your hoe to mark out a path. A string tied at both ends of the garden or a long piece of wood can help guide you.

It is important to keep the soil moist until the seedlings are established. When the seedlings have emerged and developed their second or third set of true leaves, thin them as needed so that you keep the strongest plants, leaving the remaining ones spaced as directed on the seed package. It is best to thin seedlings while they are still small, so that you aren't disturbing the roots of the plants which will remain.

Direct Planting in the Garden

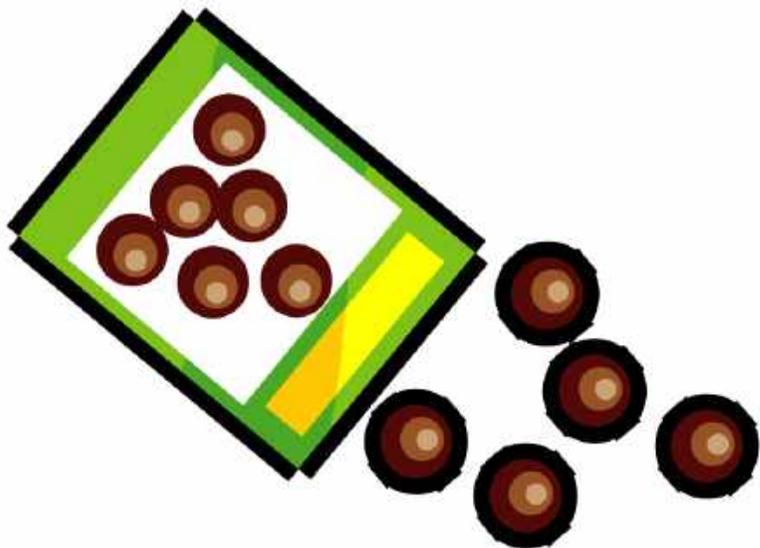
Many seeds can simply be planted directly in the ground once the danger of frost is gone. Again, follow the directions on the seed package to guide your planting.

Sometimes the seeds are so small that it is hard to place them individually in the ground. You might want to just keep them in the opened package and carefully tap the package, allowing a couple of seeds to fall at a time.

Cover the seeds with a thin layer of soil (avoiding clumps and rocks).

A thorough spray of water needs to be done before your work is complete (be gentle so that the seeds remain covered).

Besides starting from seed, you can buy also already-started vegetable plants at garden centres during the spring. If you go this route, inspect each plant carefully to make sure that it is healthy and free of disease and insects. Select those that have good root growth and sturdy, well-developed leaves.



Tools of the Trade

Garden tools help make gardening easier.



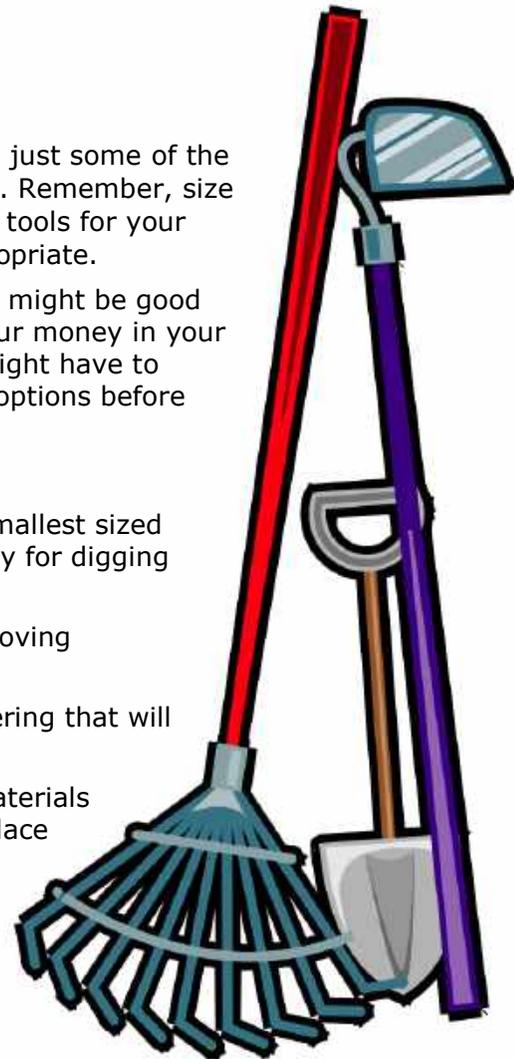
Comfort, durability, and ease of handling are just some of the attributes of a quality, functional garden tool. Remember, size does matter. If you are getting some garden tools for your child, make sure that the tools are size-appropriate.

Garage sales, auction sales and flea markets might be good places to start your search and help keep your money in your pockets. For child-specific equipment, you might have to spend a lot of time searching through these options before finding what you need.

For the very basics, you will want to get a:

- Spade ... to dig and loosen the soil (the smallest sized spade is called a trowel; it is extremely handy for digging small holes for your plantings);
- Hoe ... to move the soil around plants, removing weeds and creating furrows for planting;
- Watering can ... for the all-important watering that will be needed throughout the season;
- Bucket or container ... to carry all your materials back and forth from your garden, and as a place to store your tools between visits.

But most importantly, get some well-fitting garden gloves ... to keep your hands clean and dry and to help protect them from scrapes and scratches.



Appendix A- Gardening Toolkit

As your days in the garden lengthen, keep a lookout for good deals on shovels, rakes, brooms and wheelbarrows to add to your equipment collection.

And remember, your garden tools are an investment. If you put them away clean and dry after each use, it will prevent rust and keep them sharp and ready for your next trip to “the patch.”

Handy and Helpful Extras to Make Gardening Easier

As a gardener, you are going to find that you will start to collect things for a rainy-day or not-so-rainy-day to use in your garden. Often things that might otherwise be destined for the garbage bin can be saved for use in the garden. One person’s trash can become a fabulous garden treasure.

- CDs can be strung in the garden to serve as a modern-day scarecrow to ward off unwanted feathered and furry visitors.
- String can be used to gently tie-up growing plants.
- Wire Clothes Hangers can, with a little imagination and determination, be fashioned into wire cages for tomatoes or as stakes for climbing plants such as beans and peas.
- Pantyhose can help as garden ties as well as being used as an insert in pots to contain the soil and help with drainage.



The Real Dirt On Soil

Many of us take soil for granted. More often than not, we call it “dirt,” and we don’t think of it as anything more than the ground we walk on, and the place in which our plants grow.

The real secret to having a great garden is to pay attention to the quality of the soil. For a plant, it’s the soil in which it lives that most strongly affects its life and growing abilities.

Paying attention to the quality of your soil will pay off when your garden yields a bountiful harvest. So let’s dig into the soil and learn more about the properties and how to improve it for your plants.

What is Soil?

Soil is a combination of many materials including:

- particles of rocks and minerals;
- decaying and decomposed (humus or compost) organic matter;
- living organisms including microscopic bacteria and fungi as well as larger creatures such as earthworms;
- air and water.

A good quality soil is a balanced combination of all of the above materials.

Soil Texture

Soils contain a mixture of different-sized mineral and rock particles. The texture and physical properties of a soil are affected by the size of its rock and mineral particles.

The soil’s description is based on the most abundant sized particles present.

Sandy soil is composed of large particles which allow for lots of space between them. Water drains very quickly through sandy soils, often taking valuable nutrients with it.



Appendix A- Gardening Toolkit

Clay soil is composed of very small particles with very small spaces between them. Clay has the ability to hold water and nutrients but air cannot penetrate between these spaces, especially when they are filled with water. Poor drainage and aeration are characteristics of clay soils. Wet clay soil is difficult to work while dry clay is very hard.

Silt is composed of particles sized between those found in sand and clay. Silt particles are small enough that they can cause drainage problems. Wet silt is difficult to work, and unlike clay soil, silt tends to be dusty and powdery when dry.

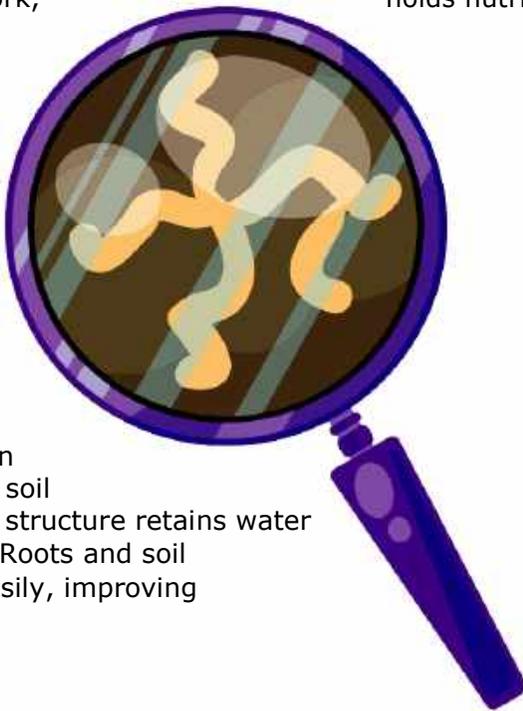
Loam is the ideal blend of particle sizes. It is a balance of sand, clay and silt. Loam has the ability to hold water while still allowing excess water to drain away, allowing air into the soil in order to provide the necessary oxygen to the roots and to the organisms found in the soil. Loam is easy to work, holds nutrients, has good aeration and good water-retention capacity.

The easiest way to improve a soil's texture is to add compost. Compost improves water- and nutrient-retention in sandy soils, and improves drainage and aeration in clay soils and silt.

Soil Structure

A soil's structure reflects how its' particles hold together. Soil structure is described by words such as crumbly, clumpy and loose.

Good soil structure means that the soil has a loose, crumbly appearance. The spaces between the clumps allow water to be absorbed into the soil and any excess to drain away. Soil with a good structure retains water and nutrients while allowing for good aeration. Roots and soil organisms are able to move through the soil easily, improving aeration and allowing roots access to nutrients.



Living Organisms in Soil

Healthy soil is alive, teeming with micro-organisms such as bacteria and fungi as well as larger creatures like earthworms. These organisms depend on the availability of air, water and nutrients in the soil to live.

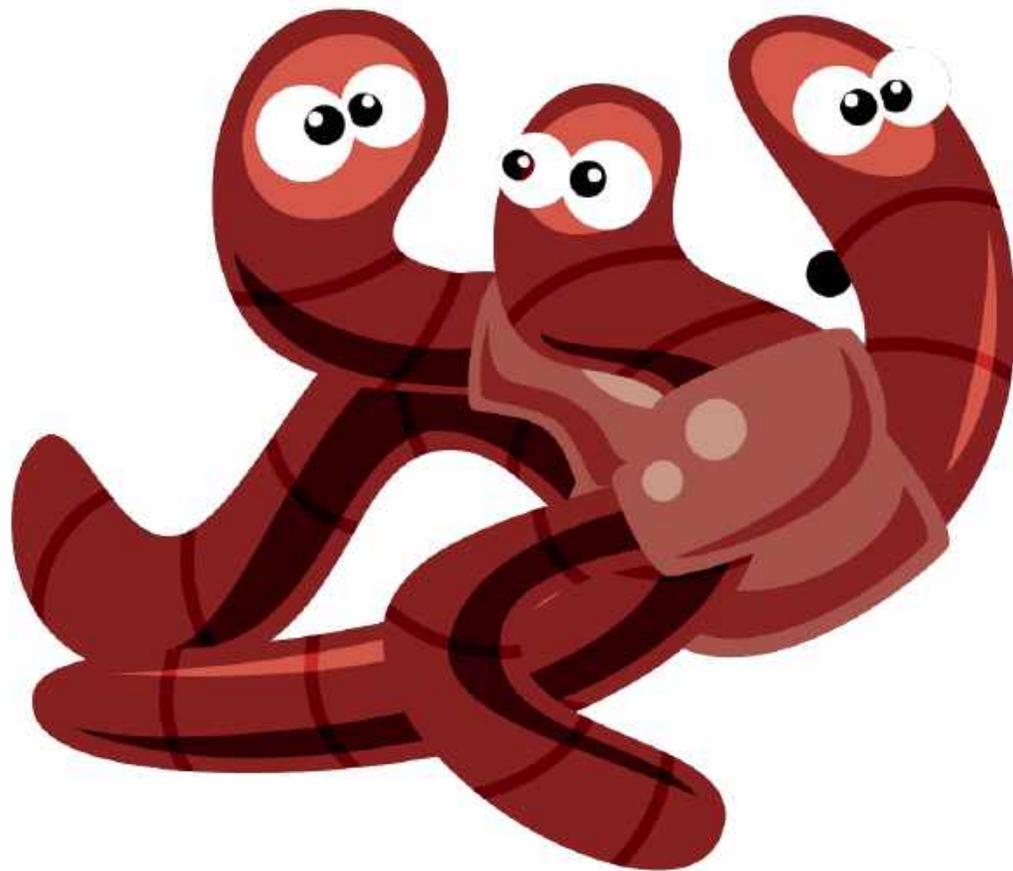
In return, they are the ultimate recyclers - breaking down organic matter to release nutrients for root development and plant growth while mixing the soil to improve aeration, texture and structure.

Feeding Soil (and Plants)

A fertile soil is comprised of both macro and micronutrients, plants require both to thrive. The macronutrients include nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P), potassium (K), calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg) and sulphur (S), and they provide the main nutrients for plants.

The first three - N, P, K - are the elements most consumed by the plants. Each element provides specific benefits including leaf and stem growth (N), root growth (P and K), flower and fruit development (P) and overall vitality (K).

Plants need micronutrients, also called trace elements, such as iron (Fe), magnesium (Mn), copper (Cu) and zinc (Zn). Their presence in very small quantities is essential for plant life. The balance and level of these micronutrients is critical as excesses are harmful to plants. Compost provides a balanced supply of these micronutrients, and most soils contain these micronutrients in adequate amounts.



The Essential Ingredient to Healthy Soil - Compost

Organic matter is the soil's conditioner and food supply. Compost or humus is decomposed organic matter. Vegetable and fruit scraps, lawn and garden trimmings, manures, wood and soiled papers are all examples of raw materials which can be composted.

Finished compost can be applied to the soil in many different ways such as a soil amendment (turn it into the soil) or as a topdressing or mulch (spread compost on top of the soil and it will "disappear" over time). Two centimetres (about 1 inch) of finished compost is a good amount to include in your spring and fall gardening routine.

Over time, quality soil can happen naturally if you follow one piece of advice: what you take out, you must put back in.

The ongoing addition of organic matter and compost provides soil with the texture, structure and nutrients needed to create a positive environment for plant growth. Compost feeds the soil, builds structure and helps provide nutrients for your plants.



Soaking It All In ... How to Quench a Plant's Thirst

Vegetable plants have a great need for water. Water helps plants to absorb nutrients, gives structure to plant cells, and helps plants transpire (which is how they breathe).

The success of your growing efforts is tied directly to making sure that your plant has enough water throughout its growth. Too little water will wilt and stunt your plant's growth. Too much water will drown the plant's roots. So, like everything in life, it's all about finding the right balance.

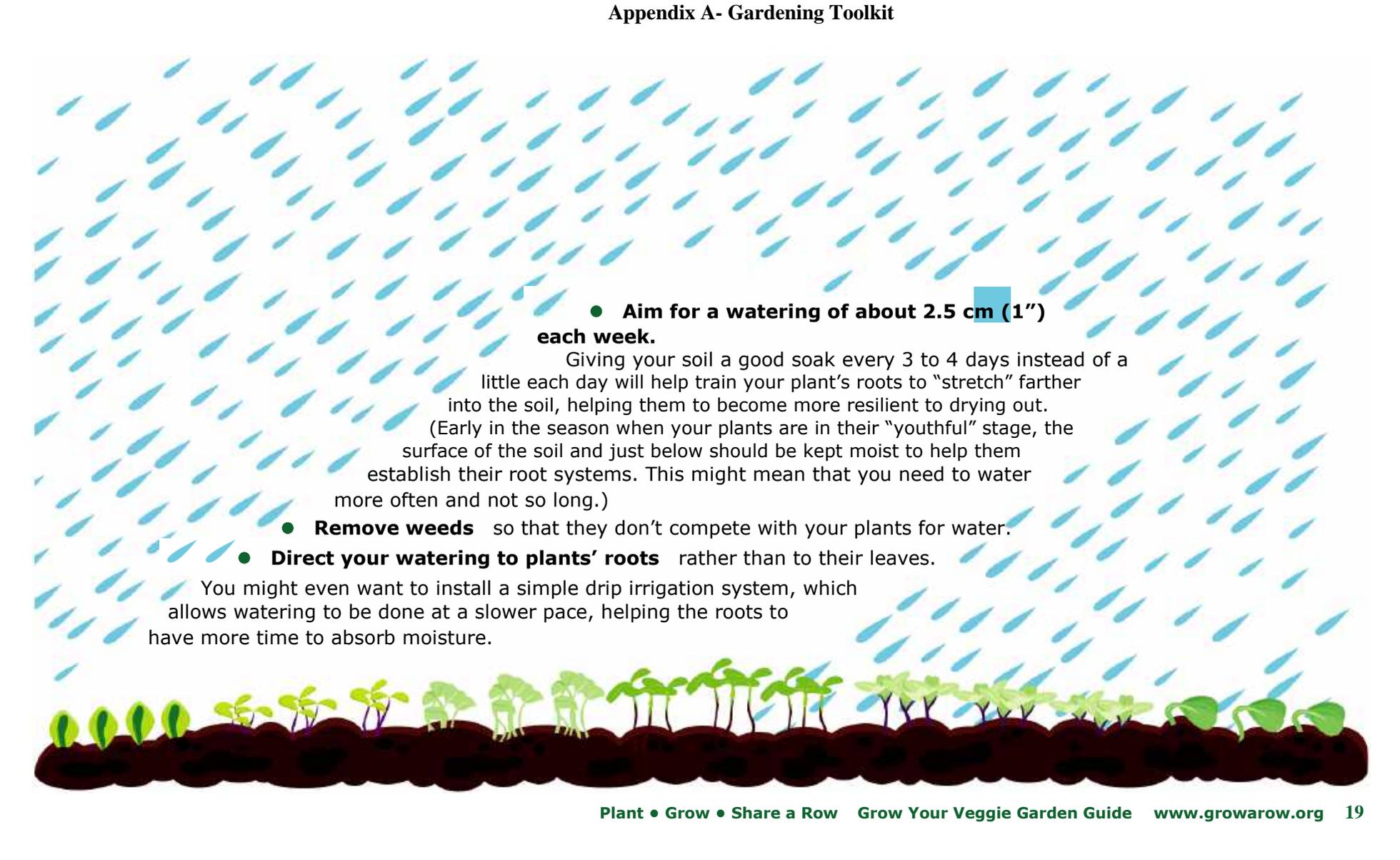
The best watering routine starts even before you start planting -- during your soil preparation stage. Understanding the type of soil you have and improving its' texture and structure through the addition of compost will go a long way to helping the soil retain moisture. At the same time, well-conditioned soil will help ensure that it will have good drainage, thereby minimizing the potential for the soil to become over-saturated and drown plant roots.

A good way to conserve moisture in the soil is to use mulch. Mulch (at least 8 cm in depth) between the rows and plants provides a physical barrier to slow evaporation.

During the gardening season, soak in some of these tips to make your watering efforts effective and conservation-wise at the same time:

- **Take advantage of rainwater.** Add a rain gauge in your garden to keep track of rainfall to help you figure how much you need to supplement natural rainfall. And install a rain barrel to collect rainwater that would otherwise become wasted runoff from your roof.
- **Water early in the day.** Getting your watering done in the morning allows the water to be absorbed by the plants before the sun's heat is at its' prime in midday, when a lot of water evaporates before soaking deep into the soil.
- **Avoid windy days** when water sprays can head in directions other than intended and the possibilities of evaporation is greater.
- **Don't allow your soil to completely dry out before watering.** To decide when it's time to water, put your fingers in the soil to about 2.5 cm in depth and feel it. If it's dry, it's probably time to water. If not, you can put watering on your to-do list for another day.
- **Try to avoid watering at night** as any dampness overnight might lead to plant diseases and rot.



- 
- **Aim for a watering of about 2.5 cm (1") each week.**

Giving your soil a good soak every 3 to 4 days instead of a little each day will help train your plant's roots to "stretch" farther into the soil, helping them to become more resilient to drying out. (Early in the season when your plants are in their "youthful" stage, the surface of the soil and just below should be kept moist to help them establish their root systems. This might mean that you need to water more often and not so long.)

- **Remove weeds** so that they don't compete with your plants for water.
- **Direct your watering to plants' roots** rather than to their leaves.

You might even want to install a simple drip irrigation system, which allows watering to be done at a slower pace, helping the roots to have more time to absorb moisture.

Weed and Be Merry

Weeds compete with your vegetable plants for space, sunlight and water as well as nutrients.

As a lot of the time that you spend in your garden throughout the summer will be spent on weeding, you might as well treat it as a fun and even therapeutic thing to do.



You are going to have to learn to recognize which plants are the ones that you planted and which ones came without an invite to your garden party.

- Start off early in the season and remove weeds when they are small before they become established. This will save you a lot of time in the long run. Use your hoe to remove weeds. With your hoe, use a chopping motion and run it along and just slightly below the surface of the soil. This should help you cut or surface (especially when they are small) weeds.
- Use a mulch. A cover about 8 – 10 cm thick between the rows and plants can be made from materials such as bark, compost, dried leaves, newspaper clippings and straw. A plastic film cover can also be used (with openings for your plants). Just remember to remove the plastic cover after a couple of months so that your soil can breathe again.
- Water before weeding or weed right after it has rained as it's easier to pull out the weeds from moist soil.
- Don't get discouraged and think that you have to get the weeding done all at once. Section off your garden in appropriate chunks of time so that you can complete an area, heading to the next upon your return.

- While you can use your compost bin to dispose of weeds that have yet to go to seed, it's best to avoid adding weeds that have gone to seed. (Most compost piles are not hot enough to destroy weed seeds. If they are not destroyed through the heat of the compost pile, they will likely come back to life when you return the finished compost to the garden.) For those weeds that have gone to seed, place them in your green bin or yard waste collection container for pick up by your municipality.
- At the end of the season, plant a cover crop such as red clover. Known as green manures, these types of crops are "turned under" (that is, ploughed back into the soil) and add organic matter back to the soil and help reduce weeds.



Compost-a-Peel

Composting is one of the most significant ways to reduce the amount of waste created by each of us and to create a wonderful soil amendment for your garden. Composting can benefit your soil and plants in many ways. It increases the soil's organic matter content and its' moisture-holding capacity. Compost improves soil porosity and helps to control soil erosion. It also enhances plant and flower growth and helps plants develop a sound root structure. Use it on your lawn, in your garden, around trees or combine it with potting soil for your plants.



Home composting can be done with the use of either a "build your own" or commercial unit such as the Earth Machine, often available through your municipality. It's always good to give your municipal recycling department a call to find out what support materials they might be able to offer you as you begin your composting journey.

Composting is basically the recycling of organic materials. Anything that used to be a living entity, be it a carrot, leaves or an apple, can be recycled through the composting process.

To make composting happen, you need to put a basic recipe into action. For backyard composting, the two best sources of these ingredients can be found in your kitchen and your garden. The ingredients come from two categories: the "greens" and the "browns."

Common "greens" are materials like fruit and vegetable trimmings, tea leaves, coffee grounds, prunings from plants and grass clippings.

Browns include dried leaves, coffee filters, shredded paper and small branches.



COMPOST-A-PEEL



It's best to completely avoid including meat, fish and bones, fats and oils, dairy products, sauces and pet waste in your compost as these will smell bad and attract rodents.

The composting process works best when the organic pieces are small. Chopping up a banana peel or shredding the leaves before adding them to the compost pile will do wonders to speed things up.

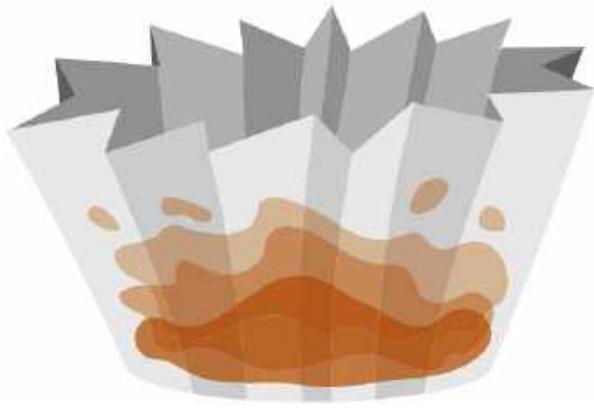
In filling up your bin, think of it as if you were making lasagna. Alternate your greens and browns. Adding some finished compost or soil from your garden provides a start-up crew of micro-organisms to speed up the composting process. Don't add thick layers of any one kind of organic material.

Grass layers should not be more than 6cm deep, and layers of leaves no more than 15 cm deep (think about cutting, chopping, drying and crumbling them before putting them in your bin). If you can, let grass dry first or mix it with dry, coarse material such as leaves to prevent compacting.

Turn or mix the contents of your bin every couple of weeks or each time that you add new materials. This helps keep the compost well aerated and mixes up the materials.



Appendix A- Gardening Toolkit



Always make sure that you cover up your food scraps. Consider keeping a bag of leaves from the fall clean-up next to your bin for this use as the year progresses.

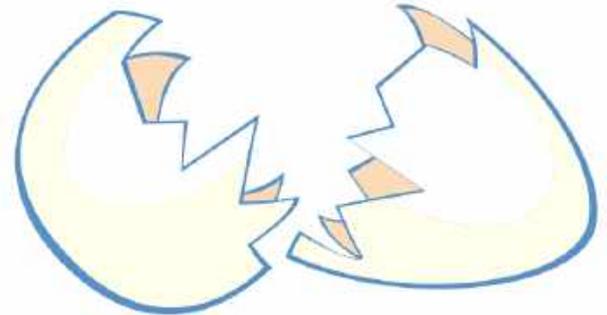
The compost contents should be moist, like a wrung-out sponge. If the contents are too dry, they will take too long to compost; and if they are too wet, they may begin to smell.

To make things more convenient, consider keeping a container in your kitchen to collect the scraps destined for your compost bin. This will help reduce the number of trips out to your compost bin.

The composting process can take from two months to two years, depending on the materials used and the effort involved. To accelerate the process, the pile must be a balance between green and brown materials and be turned frequently.

Compost is ready for use when it is dark in colour, crumbly and has an “earthy” smell. You can sift the compost through a screen and put the larger chunks of recognizable materials that haven’t fully “broken down” back into your bin to be further composted.

And once your compost is ready, you can spread it on your lawn, in your garden, around trees or combine it with potting soil for your plants.



What's Bugging You?

Resist the urge to kill every bug that appears in your garden! Most insects are, in fact, beneficial.

Welcome! Bugs & Creatures

Ladybugs – Don't let those black-on-red polka dots fool you! Not only are they cute to look at, but they are hungry critters that love a good feed on aphids and other insects. Ladybugs perform a valuable service in the garden.

Sowbugs – At home in a compost bin, they help break down organic matter.

Spiders – They control other pests in your garden, and are food for the birds. Spiders are hugely beneficial because they catch numerous other insects in their web.

Dragonflies – Beautiful, beneficial predators, they feed on many insects, especially pests such as mosquitoes. They can often be found near ponds or slow streams, and woodlands. If you don't live near a wetland, you can consider building a dragonfly pond.

Butterflies – Butterflies are magnificent. To attract them to your garden, plant nectar-producing flowers and bushes. Butterflies like colourful flowers and sunlight. Butterfly-friendly gardens also need a shallow watering hole for the butterflies to drink from.



Go Away! Bugs & Creatures



Aphids – Aphids love to suck the juices from your plants.

Slugs and Snails – They usually show up at night to feast on leaves and plants. Pick them up each morning and drop them into your compost bin.

Caterpillars – Caterpillars eat your plant's leaves. Gently pick them off your twigs and branches and place them in the grass away from your garden.

Weevils – Weevils are white grub-like larvae that can be found in the ground, and have an intense fondness for roots as a food source. Prune off the infested area, bag and dispose of it. Also provide plenty of habitat for natural predators such as wasps and flies.

Red Spider Mites – Itty-bitty in size, the colour description gives them away. They are usually found munching on the underside of leaves.

What do I do to make the uninvited go away?



- Mix liquid soap detergent (choose a natural, phosphate-free version) with water (about 2 tablespoons of soap for every gallon of water) and spray it on plants. The soap acts as a deterrent or creates critter discomfort, helping to deter insect visits. This soapy spray is especially effective for dealing with an aphid infestation.
- Spread diatomaceous (pronounced: dye-a-toe-may-shus) earth around your plants. A very fine, white powder, diatomaceous earth is made up of the very small, fossilized remains of ancient sea critters. It basically cuts the skin of snails and slugs that crawl over it. As an alternative, you could also spread crushed egg shells around plants. Snails and slugs will tend to avoid slithering over them. At the same time, the shells provide an added benefit by adding calcium to your soil.
- Rotate your crops yearly. Changing planting locations within the same garden plot (and making sure that you replenish the soil each year with the addition of compost) helps create fertile and healthier soil conditions.
- Some plants repel garden pests and can be planted alongside your vegetables to keep insects away. For example, plant marigolds in your tomato patch.
- Some plants such as fennel, dill, clover, coriander, and sunflowers are especially good at attracting beneficial insects into your yard.
- Plant more than you need so that if you do have some losses, there is still plenty left over.
- Time your spraying so that you avoid hot sunny days when leaves could be burned in the process.
- Pick up larger, unwanted bugs and squish them with your fingers or pop them into a jar of water.
- Plant a variety of different vegetables in your garden for diversity. Pests tend to cause most problems when there is a lack of diversity in the garden.
- Be mindful about the use of pesticides as they usually don't discriminate between bugs that you want out of your garden and those which are welcome.



The Life & Times of your Garden

Join the thousands of gardeners growing food for the hungry as part of the Plant-a-Row • Grow-a-Row program. All the information you need to start a project is contained in this workbook

JANUARY:

- Start planning your garden. Decide how large a growing space you can maintain—it's better to start small and expand rather than get overwhelmed by too large a space in the early days.

- Consider the sorts of food plants you'd like to grow: vegetables, herbs, fruits, nuts—maybe a combination of all types!
- Begin researching various food plants and what they need to thrive. Visit your local library and check out gardening books (see Source list). Search the web, reading the wealth of material on popular gardening sites (see Source list).
- Compile a list of food plants you'd like to grow. Separate the list into plants you can start from seed and those you'll purchase as seedlings.

FEBRUARY:

- Start contacting local nurseries to order seeds.
- Draw up a plan for your garden, detailing size dimensions and what plants you'll put where. Evaluate the sun/shade conditions of your garden plot. Most vegetables require lots of sun, but there are some you can grow in part shade.

MARCH:

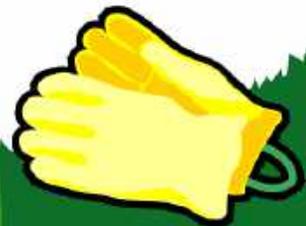
- Start seeds indoors in pots, under grow lights or in a sunny, warm window.
- Aerate the materials in your compost bin—use a pitchfork to “turn” materials and mix them up thoroughly.

APRIL:

- Prepare the ground for your planting.
- Dig out all weeds. Add compost and rotted manure to your garden bed. Dig compost and manure into the ground thoroughly.
- Plant seeds of cool-weather crops such as spinach and peas.

MAY:

- After the danger of frost has passed, plant seeds of heat-loving crops.
- Purchase seedlings; plant after danger of frost has passed.



JUNE:

- Water all plantings.
- Weed all plantings.
- Mulch around plants.
- Add compost around plants.

JULY:

- Continue to water and weed and thin out crops as necessary.
- Harvest early-season crops such as peas.
- Give your plants a nutrient boost by feeding them compost tea.

AUGUST:

- Continue to water and weed.
- Harvest.
- Apply more compost.
- Plant a second planting of cool-season crops.

SEPTEMBER:

- Continue to water and weed.
- Harvest.
- Evaluate what worked and what didn't. Keep notes for next year's garden.

OCTOBER:

- Finish harvesting all crops before the first frost.
- Remove all spent plants.
- Dig compost into your garden beds.
- Cover the soil with mulch.

NOVEMBER:

- Turn your compost one last time before winter.

DECEMBER:

- Take a well-deserved rest from gardening and start dreaming of next year.



PLANT • GROW

SHARE A ROW



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www.growarow.org

1-877-571-GROW(4769)

As part of your garden this year, plant and grow an extra row of your favourite veggies and donate the harvest to your local food bank. Help us help all those in need.



**PLANT • GROW
SHARE A ROW**



**UN RANG POUR
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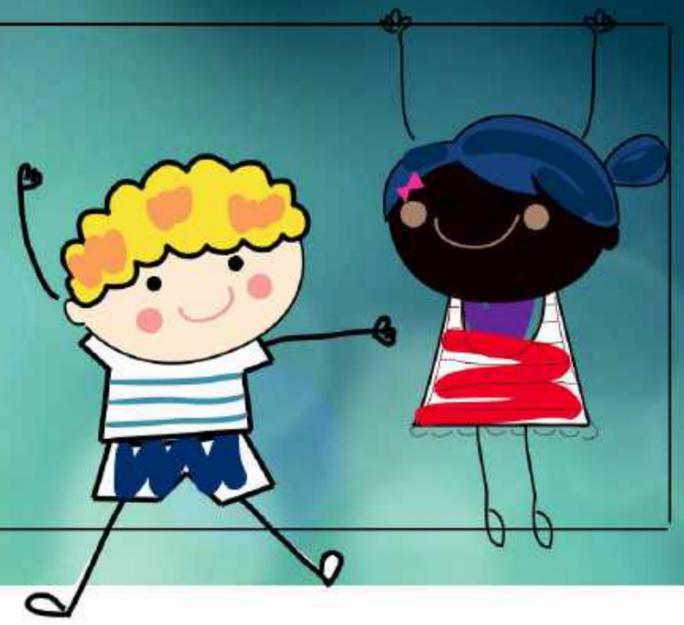


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Appendix B: Play Package

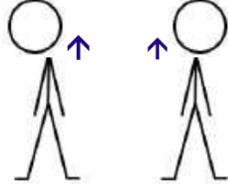
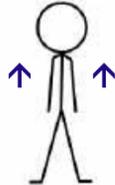
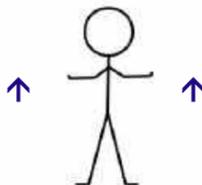
Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, 2020

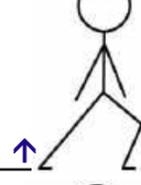
STRETCH IT OUT



INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL STRETCHES:

- Hold for 15 – 30 seconds
- Make sure to perform stretch on both arms / legs, where appropriate
- Instruct children to breathe slowly and deeply while stretching
- Hold the stretch to the point you feel some tension, but not pain
- Don't bounce while holding the stretch

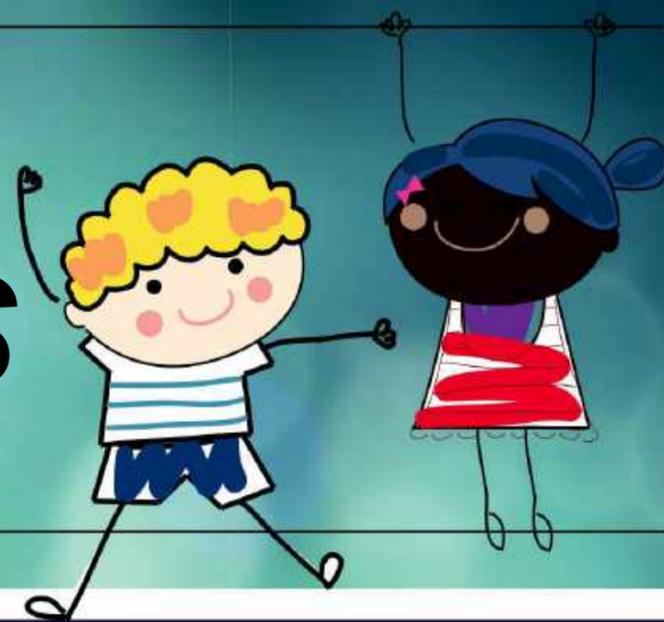
<p>REACH FOR THE SKY Stand on toes and reach arms fully up.</p>	
<p>REACH FOR THE FLOOR Bend at waist and reach arms to the floor.</p>	
<p>NECK Gently look down, look up, look right, look left.</p>	
<p>SHOULDER SHRUGS Bring shoulders up towards ears and hold for five seconds, release down.</p>	
<p>SHOULDERS Bring right arm across front of body, hold with your left hand.</p>	
<p>CHEST Arms behind back.</p>	
<p>UPPER BACK Arms in front and lower chin to chest.</p>	
<p>BICEPS Push arms straight out from sides, “push walls away”.</p>	

<p>TRICEPS Reach bent arm overhead, gently holding elbow, reach down back.</p>	
<p>FOREARMS Extend right arm out in front and use your left hand to gently pull fingers back.</p>	
<p>SIDE REACH Slide the right arm down the right leg and reach the left arm overhead.</p>	
<p>LOWER BACK Bring one leg up in front, hug knee towards chest.</p>	
<p>LUNGE Begin with feet out wide, lean towards one side bending the knee, keeping the other knee straight.</p>	
<p>QUADS Heel to buttocks, holding top of foot.</p>	
<p>CALF Step one foot back and push heel to the ground.</p>	
<p>ANKLE ROLLS Keep toes on the ground and roll foot to the right, then the left.</p>	
<p>SEATED LOWER BACK Sitting in a chair, twist upper body to the right.</p>	
<p>SEATED HAMSTRING Sitting in a chair, extend right leg out straight, bend at the waist and reach for toes.</p>	
<p>DEEP BREATH Reaching arms up, take a deep breath in, lower arms down and exhale. This can be done sitting or standing.</p>	

Adapted From Fitburst Toolkit



MOVEMENT SUGGESTIONS



Movement Description

Example Images

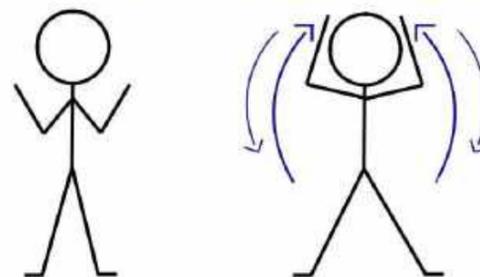
BENT ARM JUMPING JACKS

(Similar to traditional jumping jacks, but arms stay bent at the elbows).

Children begin with feet together and arms bent.

They will jump up and land with feet wide and move elbows up, away from their body.

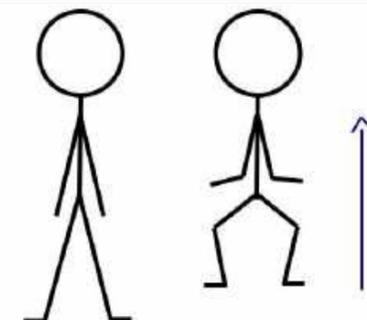
Keeping the arms bent takes up less space, making it safer for classroom use.



IMAGINARY JUMP ROPE

Children begin in standing position with their feet together, arms by their sides.

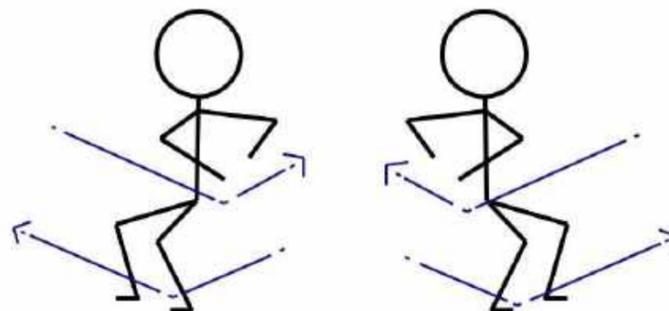
As they jump, they will rotate their wrists as though they were turning a skipping rope.



TWIST JUMPS

Children begin in a standing position, facing the front. They will bend their knees, then jump up and turn their body to face the back, bending their knees as they land for safety.

If they are unable to complete the half turn, they can turn a quarter of the distance.

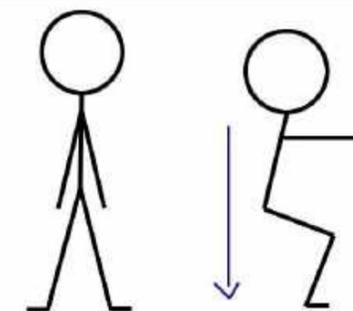


STAND AND SQUAT

Children begin in a standing position with their feet under their hips, arms by their sides.

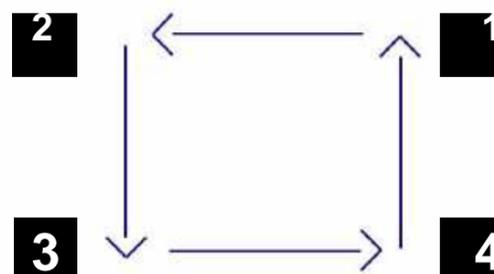
They will squat down, like they are sitting back in a chair, and then stand up again.

To help with balance, they can have their arms out in front, at shoulder height.



4 POINT SQUARE HOPS

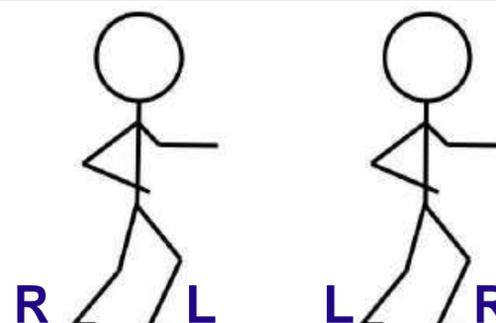
Children begin in a standing position, facing the front, with feet together. They will look at the floor and imagine a square drawn on the floor. Children will jump in the shape of the square, hitting all four corners. Instruct which direction to go so children move in the same pattern and avoid bumping into each other (top right, top left, bottom left, bottom right). Start slow and speed up as they get the pattern; make it more difficult by jumping on one foot.



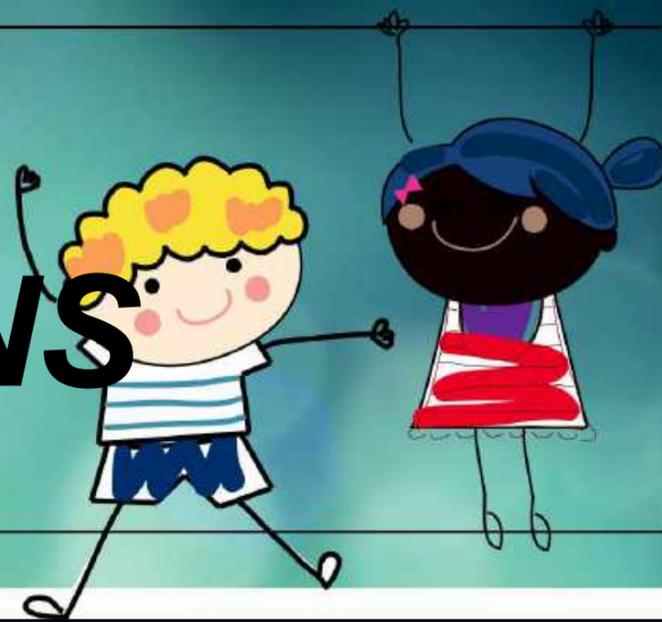
SHUFFLE

Children begin in a standing position with feet together. With a small jump, they will put the right foot in front, and the left foot back.

With another jump, switch feet so the left foot is in front and the right foot is back. Arms move similar to running – opposite arm to foot. Start slow and speed up as they get the pattern.



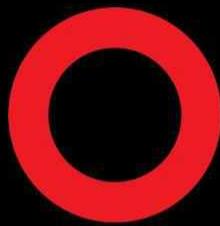
MOVEMENT SUGGESTIONS



Movement Description	Example Images
<p>HEEL KICKS Children begin in a standing position. They will bring the right heel towards the buttocks, lower back to the ground, and repeat with the left heel. As they get used to the movement, it can be done at a higher level of difficulty by speeding it up to a jog, where they bring their heels up. Arms move opposite to feet – similar to running.</p>	
<p>BOXER BOUNCE Children begin in a standing position with feet hip width apart and knees slightly bent. Keeping their weight on the balls of their feet, students will start bouncing up and down (small movement). Add in movement from left to right, and bring fists up in front of their faces, elbows bent – like a boxing guard.</p>	
<p>SWIMMING Children begin in standing position, spaced out with an arms width between each other. Children will swim with the front stroke (making big arm circles to the front), or the back stroke (making big arm circles to the back). Increase intensity by having students march or jog on the spot at the same time.</p>	
<p>CALF RAISES Children begin in a standing position with their hands on their hips. They will rise up onto their toes, and lower back down onto their heels.</p>	
<p>FULL REACH Children begin in a standing position. They will reach down and touch their toes (or reach for them), and then straighten up and reach for the sky with arms overhead. The movement can be made bigger by adding a squat when reaching for their toes, and doing a calf raise as they reach for the sky.</p>	

Adapted from Fitburst Toolkit





TRUE SPORT
lives here

Living True Sport:

Helping Families Keep Active While Staying Home

Introduction

Families can use these activities to develop their [physical literacy](#) and [ethical literacy](#) with the ultimate goal of being active while staying at home. Each of the seven activities focuses on a different [True Sport Principle](#), includes simple set-up instructions, requires minimal equipment and provides opportunities for families to engage in meaningful conversation. The seven Principles are fully compatible with the need to always put safety first. When performing the activities described below choose an appropriate space, be sensible, be cautious – stay safe. Originally designed for children aged 6-9, the activities are adapted from a developing True Sport Experience resource and offer fun for the whole family.

All seven of the principles need to be in play at all times working in perfect balance with one another.



Living True Sport: Go For It

Rise to the challenge – always strive for excellence. Discover how good you can be.

Activity Description: Keep a large ball from crossing a boundary.

Equipment:

- Boundary line marker (e.g., rolled up towel or sheet to divide a room, hallway or backyard)
- 1 oversized ball (e.g., exercise ball, beach ball)

Activity Instructions:

- Set up in an open space in your home or backyard.
- Depending on how many people are with you at home, each team can be made up of one or more people. The fewer people on a team, the more physically challenging the game.
- The object of the game is to move the oversized ball across the boundary line onto the other team's side, without physically crossing the line.
- Each time the large ball enters one team's side, the other team is awarded a point.
- Each round, the ball can be kicked or thrown, but not both.
- Modify skills depending on the size of the space (e.g., underhand throw vs. overhand throw).

Activity Reflection

What does the True Sport Principle “**Go For It**” look like, sound like and feel like? Ask your child(ren) to express what this principle means to them.

Ethical Literacy Objectives:

- Direct efforts purposefully towards general and specific goals.
- Problem solve.
- Take responsibility for actions related to effort and doing your best.

Physical Literacy Objectives:

- Engage in fundamental movement skills: overhand throw, underhand throw, kick, overhand catch, underhand catch, and agility, balance, coordination & speed.

Let's Talk:

- How did you feel when you almost had the ball to the other side but it came back to you? Did you want to give up? What made you keep going? Think about when you demonstrated good and/or poor effort. Share why you think you chose that level of effort.
- What physical skills helped you the most in this activity? In what other activities are these skills helpful?

Living True Sport: Play Fair

Play honestly – obey both the letter and spirit of the rules. Winning is only meaningful when competition is fair.

Activity Description: One team places objects upright while the other team tries to knock them down.

Equipment:

- Small objects to knock over – at least one per participant (e.g., plastic cups, water bottles)

Activity Instructions:

- Set up in an open space in your home or backyard.
- Divide your family into two teams. One team is called Builders and the other team is called Wreckers.
- On the count of three, the builders place their objects upright and the wreckers try to knock them over.
- The aim of the game is to have all the objects standing up (if Builders) and all the objects knocked over (if Wreckers).
- Practice using different locomotor movements (e.g., run, skip, gallop or hop). Challenge yourselves to use only one skill per round.
- Take a tally at the end of the two-minute round: if more objects are left standing, the builders are awarded a point and if more objects are knocked over, the wreckers are awarded a point.

Activity Reflection

What does the True Sport Principle “**Play Fair**” look like, sound like and feel like? Ask your child(ren) to express what this principle means to them.

Ethical Literacy Objectives:

- Understand that even when it is tempting to ignore the rules, it feels best to know that the game was played fairly and everyone followed the rules.
- Consider individual values related to fair play.

Physical Literacy Objectives:

- Understand that agility is something that will help in a variety of sports and games.
- Engage in fundamental movement skills: agility, balance, coordination and speed, run, skip, gallop and hop.

Let’s Talk:

- Why is it important to always play by the rules, even when it would be easy not to? How might you feel if you make decisions that result in you not playing fair?
- Did you ever want to resort to running when you were asked to move a different way in this activity? Why do you think we would rather do what we are good at when we are challenged?

Living True Sport: Respect Others

Show respect for everyone involved in creating your sporting experience, both on and off the field of play. Win with dignity and lose with grace.

Activity Description: A group activity that involves effective communication, agility and coordination.

Equipment:

- Shoes (one pair per person)
- Timer (e.g., stopwatch, cell phone, second hand on a clock)

Activity Instructions:

- Set up in an open space in your home or backyard.
- Each member of your family removes one shoe and places it in a pile.
- Start the stopwatch.
- Each of you picks up someone else's shoe and, while holding the shoe (any way you choose), join hands to form a circle.
- Locate the owner of the shoe you are each holding and then work to exchange the shoes without breaking your joined hands.
- If the link is broken, the game starts over.
- Once all shoes have been returned to their owners, start the activity again, trying to beat your time.

Activity Reflection

What does the True Sport Principle “**Respect Others**” look like, sound like and feel like? Ask your child(ren) to express what this principle means to them.

Ethical Literacy Objectives:

- Understand how respecting one another can help you experience success in physical activity experiences and in life.
- Demonstrate teamwork and cooperation through the practice of skills and activity.
- Consistently respect yourself and others during the activity.

Physical Literacy Objectives:

- Understand how to apply agility, balance, coordination and speed in a game setting.
- Engage in fundamental movement skills: agility, balance, coordination and speed.

Let's Talk:

- Did you listen to each other during this activity? Do you think listening made it easier to work together? Who showed you respect in this activity and how did it make you feel? How did you show respect to others in this activity?
- During this activity, you had to use balance, problem solving and coordination in order to be successful. Was this difficult? Why or why not?

Living True Sport: Keep It Fun

Find the joy of sport. Keep a positive attitude both on and off the field of play.

Activity Description: An obstacle course activity.

Equipment:

- A variety of household items to build an obstacle course (e.g., pillows and couch cushions to jump on, chairs to climb over, stacks of books to jump over, tables to crawl under)

Activity Instructions:

- Set up in an open space in your home.
- Divide your family into two teams.
- Assign each team household items and a space to design an obstacle course that solicits certain fundamental movement skills (e.g., run, land, hop, jump).
- Each team approves the other team's course.
- Once the courses have been approved, each team moves through their own course, and then moves through the other team's course.
- Provide feedback on how to make the courses more fun, modify the course and then move through them again.

Activity Reflection

What does the True Sport Principle “**Keep It Fun**” look like, sound like and feel like? Ask your child(ren) to express what this principle means to them.

Ethical Literacy Objectives:

- Demonstrate a focus on learning and having fun.
- Understand the importance of having fun.
- Demonstrate positive attitudes during the activity.

Physical Literacy Objectives:

- Demonstrate competency in fundamental movement skills: run, land, hop and jump.

Let's Talk:

- Did helping to design the obstacle course make it more fun? Why or why not? How can the choices you make designing this obstacle course make it more or less fun?
- Did the feedback you received make the activity less fun or did it help you get better and therefore make it more fun?

Living True Sport: Stay Healthy

Place physical and mental health above all other considerations – avoid unsafe activities.

Respect your body and keep in shape.

Activity Description: An activity that allows families to be creative and demonstrate what they know about safe physical activities.

Equipment:

- Dependent on the skills performed, likely to include a ball.

Activity Instructions:

- Set up in an open space in your home or backyard.
- Divide into two teams.
- Each team designs a fitness routine that they will perform in front of the other team (or your child(ren) can perform for you).
- Each team should be instructed to include the same required skills in their routine and chose from the following fundamental movement skills: run, hop, skip, gallop, overhand throw, catch above the waist, dribble with hands and dribble with feet.

Activity Reflection

What does the True Sport Principle “**Stay Healthy**” look like, sound like and feel like? Ask your child(ren) to express what this principle means to them.

Ethical Literacy Objectives:

- Develop physical skills through a combination of structured and unstructured play in safe and challenging environments.
- Make reasoned decisions about which option(s) for a safe, health and active routine align with your values.

Physical Literacy Objectives:

- Demonstrate competency in fundamental movement skills: run, hop, skip, gallop, overhand throw, catch above the waist, dribble with hands and dribble with feet.

Let’s Talk:

- Do you think about safe behaviours more than you did before we did this activity? If so, how? Why did you choose the options you did for your safe, active routine?
- Which skills did you find the most difficult? How could you practice these more in your spare time in an attempt to decrease their difficulty?

Living True Sport: Include Everyone

Share sport with others. Ensure everyone has a place to play.

Activity Description: A volleyball-related activity that requires collaboration and dedication to the task.

Equipment:

- Ball (e.g., beach ball, balloon, volleyball, soccer ball)

Activity Instructions:

- Set up in an open space in your home or backyard. Consider using a balloon if limited to indoor space.
- Play as a whole family and assign everyone a number (e.g., 1-4).
- Try to keep the ball in the air by hitting (e.g., volleying) it up, in the order of your numbers.
- Play begins with number 1 underhand tossing the object to the center of the circle then number 2 is to hit/volley the object to number 3, and so on.
- Try not to catch the ball.
- Award yourself a point each time you keep the ball in the air following your number sequence.

Activity Reflection

What does the True Sport Principle “**Include Everyone**” look like, sound like and feel like? Ask your child(ren) to express what this principle means to them.

Ethical Literacy Objectives:

- Understand how including everyone in physical activities can increase enjoyment of physical activity.
- Participate in a modified fashion according to ability.
- Encourage each other to try various positions, techniques, and skills and help create opportunities to do so.

Physical Literacy Objectives:

- Demonstrate competency in fundamental movement skills: underhand toss, volley, and agility, balance, coordination and speed.

Let's Talk:

- Name examples of when you saw someone helping someone else. Did we all have the same skills? Or did you need each other's help in order to be successful? What do you think would happen if not everyone had to touch the ball each round?
- How could we change this game to help further develop our skills?

Living True Sport: Give Back

Find ways to show your appreciation for the community that supports your sport and helps make it possible.

Activity Description: This activity focuses on acknowledging community members who contribute meaningfully to a family's life.

Equipment:

- No equipment needed.

Activity Instructions:

- Set up for a jog on the spot in your home or backyard.
- In pairs (e.g., you and your child), jog at a moderate, talking pace for five minutes. Verbalize how you plan to thank a community member, parent, or leader (e.g., teacher or coach).
- Have a “moving meeting” and turn a normally inactive activity into an active one. Take turns sharing a few sentences in your pairs.
- Upon completion of the five minutes, stretch as a family and share your plans for thanking your community (e.g., display a sign in your window or write a message in chalk on your driveway).

Activity Reflection

What does the True Sport Principle “**Give Back**” look like, sound like and feel like? Ask your child(ren) to express what this principle means to them.

Ethical Literacy Objectives:

- Express thanks to members of your community.
- Act consistently with values related to the Give Back principle.

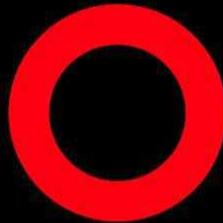
Physical Literacy Objectives:

- Demonstrate competence in the fundamental movement skill of running.
- Demonstrate competence in maintaining a moderate intensity pace.

Let's Talk:

- Why is it important to say “thanks” as soon as you think of it? Other than saying “thanks,” how else could you recognize others who are helpful to you?
- Why do you think I wanted us to move our bodies while we discussed ways we could show our appreciation?

keep it fun play fair
go for it respect others
include everyone
stay healthy
give back



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