



Skills Key



Cognitive Skills

Cognitive Skills are your thinking skills. Gardening encourages active learning such as observing changes, seeking information, reasoning, planning, organisation, and information processing – all the basic intelligence skills a child will need to progress in academic subjects at school. Studies¹ have shown that children exposed to nature have improved concentration including those with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder. Gardening also stimulates children's imagination and creativity skills which in turn promote language development.



Motor Skills

These are your children's physical skills – motor fitness, coordination, balance, and agility. Gardening will improve your child's overall level of fitness and muscular strength. Older children will be able to carry out intricate and fiddly tasks, which will help improve their fine motor skills and hand-to-eye coordination.



Personal Skills

When children begin their school career, their need for self-discipline increases. The responsibility of caring and maintaining their own section of the garden promotes a child's independence – the accomplishment of nurturing a plant and seeing it flourish under their care will instill a real sense of achievement, justified pride and a feeling of 'Wow, I did that!'

¹ (Wells, Nancy M. (2000). At Home with Nature, Effects of "Greenness" on Children's Cognitive Functioning, Environment and Behaviour, 32(6), 775-795) (Faber Taylor, A., Kuo, F.E. & Sullivan, W.C. (2001). Coping with ADD: The surprising connection to green play settings. Environment & Behaviour, 33(1), 54-77)



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Social Skills

Working with peers and siblings in the garden helps a child learn essential teamwork skills and promotes social interaction. Research has shown² that children who are exposed to and interact with nature have more positive attitudes towards other children. It also reduces a variety of anti-social behaviours such as bullying, littering, vandalism, violence and absenteeism.

Activities that can complement your child's progress at school

- The mapping and plotting out of the garden site help children's maths skills
- Observing and recording changes in plants, learning about the interdependence of plants and insects help science skills
- Gardening helps to develop children's artistic skills – their interaction with plants will help them identify colours and patterns and appreciate different textures
- Getting your children involved in growing edible plants and vegetables will help them learn about where fresh food comes from, how it's produced and good nutrition

² (Moore, Robin (1996). Compact Nature: The Role of Playing and Learning Gardens on Children's Lives, Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture, 8, 72-82)