Gardening for Food and Fun

Working in a garden together as a family can help you grow healthy foods for your family. This is a great way for families to get healthy together. Exercise, fresh air and sunshine can help reduce stress. Keep the garden space small and expect less than ‘perfect’ plantings with small children. Children love to play in the dirt. Do not worry about keeping rows straight and neat.

Plan

- **A container garden:** Use a window box or a few large buckets on the porch. Tomatoes, lettuce and herbs grow great in containers.
- **A backyard garden:** If you have more space, you can divide it up. Let the kids have their own special areas. Peas, beans, carrots and summer squash are easy for kids to grow.
- **A community garden:** Neighborhoods, schools and churches may have garden plots available for free or for a small rental fee. Ask about family programs.

Play

- Here is a list of ways to turn garden activities into fun for children. Show them that you are having fun. They will enjoy just about anything you do.
  - **Rake leaves.** In the garden or on the lawn, piles of leaves are fun for jumping.
  - **Build a compost pile.** Kids are fascinated by turning food waste into soil.
  - **Prepare the soil.** Outdoors or in a container, it is a lot of fun to mix stuff together.
  - **Hoe the rows.** Once everything is mixed, it’s time to get ready for planting.
  - **Bike to the garden center.** Use pedal power to go pick out your seeds.
  - **Walk around a greenhouse.** Stroll around to pick out seedlings or flowers.
  - **Dig some holes.** Old serving spoons and spatulas make great tools for kids.
  - **Water the plants.** Water the plants with hoses and buckets.
  - **Pull the weeds.** Children can help with this activity.
  - **Pick the fruits and vegetables.** The best part of gardening!

Enjoy

- Make it fun! Do it together! Enjoy the time spent with your family. Turn off the TV and be active together.