

Overview Questions to Get Started

Why do you want a garden in the first place?

teach skills, attitudes, values; recycle; enhance science, biology, botany lessons; have fun; companionship; connection; spend time outside; spend time with child; get help with your own garden; have an excuse to get dirty; because everyone else is doing it; be part of a community; get exercise, etc.



Why do you want your child in a garden specifically?

Do you have the temperament for having a child in the garden?

Can you allow your child to dig, get dirty, trample, get into things, pick before it's ripe, pick flowers, help without becoming angry, frustrated, irritable, annoyed, loud?

Are you comfortable with barely controlled chaos or do you like everything to stay neat, tidy, and in perfect rows?

Are you comfortable getting dirty, sweaty? How comfortable are you with failure (plants die unexpectedly)?

Consider your child's developmental level. Is this the right age or the right time for your child to garden?

Consider the scale of your garden: children prefer small, cozy spaces. Can you orient items of interest close to the ground, where their visual attention is normally focused?



Can you allow your child to possess the garden? Children should feel free to touch and play with the elements in a garden.

Can you minimize rules and regulations, and provide opportunities for kids to engage in activities unavailable to adults? Make sure

your child knows the rules of the garden. Although you can make up as many rules as you want, I would suggest you only have one: respect the plants, animals, nonliving things and others. You can define that however you want, but for me it just means don't hurt critters or plants, don't do damage, don't leave litter/tools out or in a more positive framework: be kind and considerate to the critters and plants, take care of the space, pick up and straighten up after yourself and before you leave; welcome visitors and anyone helping take care of the garden.

Will the garden be aesthetically pleasing? Children like gardens that are pretty. Incorporate garden features that are attractive to children. Repeat: ATTRACTIVE TO CHILDREN. This may be different than what is attractive to an adult. Frequently children like sparkly, flashy, colorful. Can you add color? Children like lots of color. Red, orange, yellow are favorites.

Can you add landscape elements? Animals and water, elves, fairies, rocks to pick up or climb on, plants to touch, pick, step on, tend, mud, walkways, borders stable enough to balance on.

Can you have private spaces? Kids like to have garden spaces where they can do what they want apart from adults.



Can you make your garden space accessible? Make sure the garden is the least restrictive as possible. Wide rows, accessible areas, easy to reach, etc.

Can you include a place for adults? seating is good. Child visibility is mandatory.