What is Gardening With Kids?
- Growing plants in some location (space)
- Sharing stories, experiences, knowledge, passion, love
- Curiosity and wonder
  “The 4-H Children’s Garden is a magical place of learning.”
  12-year-old boy

How do you create the magic?
- Start with Curiosity
- Think like a kid (be a kid)
- Think outside the garden bed lines
- Use Theme Gardens
- Create magical programs and activities
- Connect to the 4-H Children’s Garden

What do you need to know about kids?
- Kids are curious and full of wonder
- Kids are concrete thinkers
- Kids like things that are familiar
- Kids don’t care about adult “gardening rules”
- Kids want and need hands-on
- Kids love to be surrounded by plants
- Kids experience things intensely
- Kids are amazed by little things
- Kids will meet or exceed expectations
- Kids like to learn
- Kids learn based on what they already know
- Rules are made to be tested (broken)
- Kids notice the details NOT the vistas

What do you need to know about gardens?
- Garden “rules” are made to be broken
- Gardens come in all shapes and sizes
- Gardens appeal to all the senses
- Gardens should be hands-on (touched, smelled, hidden in, picked, …)
- Gardens are amazing!
- Gardens are FUN!!
- It is OK to have garden failures
Curiosity – the key!

Curiosity - Exploration - Discovery - Pleasure - Repetition - Mastery

Think like a kid

• As a kid, you need to feel, smell, walk in, be a part of ... the garden
  - Straight paths are to run down
  - Grass is to walk on and roll in
  - Flowers are to smell
  - Everyone needs a place to hide
  - A maze is to get lost in
• Ask "What would happen if I broke that rule?" ... stepped on the grass??
• Focus on the details NOT the vistas

Involve kids

• Garden planning
• Planting
• Maintenance
• Activities

Think outside the garden bed lines

• What is a garden?
• Gardens come in all shapes and sizes
• All plants "go together"
• Show the entire life cycle
• Add 'stuff' to your garden

Use Theme Gardens

• ABC Garden
• Teddy Bear and Animals Garden
• Crayon Color Garden
• Pizza Garden
• Peter Rabbit Herb Garden
• Michigan Garden
• My Favorite Foods Garden
• Harry's Herbolgy
• Grandma and Grandpa Garden
• Grand Kids Garden
• Mike Garden

Encourage questions, curiosity and wonder
Connect to the 4-H Children’s Gardens

• Pete & Sally Smith Schoolyard Demonstration Garden
• Collaborating Classrooms
• Wonder Wall
• Programs
• On-line experiences
  http://4hgarden.msu.edu
  http://4hgarden.msu.edu/kidstour
  http://4hgarden.msu.edu/wondercast
• Virtual gardening: http://kidscom.com

Integrate technology:

• Digital photos
• Web pages, blogs
• Web cams
• Collaborating Classrooms
• Wonder Wall

What can happen?

• Questions
  • Why do we even have aphids?
  • Where do plant smells come from?
  • Do Poinsettias have red chlorophyll?
  • Do the leaves of Sensitive plant close when it rains?

• Comments
  • Just look at all of this . . . all for us!
  • It (Pizza Garden) has everything you need to make pizza. Mom showed me all the stuff.
  • I like the view from the bridge. The bridge makes me feel peaceful.
  • We pretended that the Queen of Hearts was chasing us.
  • I just did it, by myself, not with my sisters or my mom. I was the first one to notice and do it (weaving).
  • I don’t want to leave!

Look at a garden
Through a child’s eyes
It’s magic, it’s wonder
It’s full of surprise!

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