

Indoor Herb Garden

Take a bite out of science! Kids love food and teaching them about the ingredients of their favorite snacks is a great way to introduce simple science concepts. Whether it's pizza, pasta or iced tea, your child's top snack choices are bound to contain herbs that are easy to grow. By growing a mini herb garden even your kindergartener will understand what it takes to grow a plant...and make flavorful food!

What You Need:

- Small pots of herbs such as oregano, basil, mint, rosemary or tarragon.
- A medium-sized planter or a wooden planter box (big enough to hold three small herbs)
- Soil
- Three plastic forks
- Card stock or poster board
- Pens



What To Do:

1. Take your child with you to the nursery (or home garden center) to pick out different herbs for her herb garden. Talk to her about her favorite dishes and which herbs are used in them. If she likes Italian food you're in luck -- lots of easy-to-grow herbs like basil and oregano are used in those dishes.
2. Get your hands dirty. One of the best parts of gardening is playing in the dirt. Have your child place a good amount of soil in your planter. Now re-plant the herbs you purchased and make sure there's enough space between each plant (five inches).
3. Have your child water the plants so they are firmly in their new planter. Talk her about how often the plants will need to be watered. (You can ask the person at the nursery for this information!)
4. Now label each plant so your child can practice reading their names. Have her cut out small cardboard place cards from the card stock or poster board. They should be no more than four inches wide and two inches tall.
5. Help your child write the name of the herb on each card.
6. Stick the card in the tongs of a plastic fork and place the fork, stem side down, into the soil next to each herb.
7. Voila! Your mini-herb garden, complete with homemade plant markers, is ready to grow!
8. Place it in an area where it will get plenty of sun. (This is the perfect time to talk about what plants need to grow: sun and water.)
9. Don't forget to eat! Use the herbs your child grows in their favorite dishes. Recipes with herbs are easily found in cookbooks or on the Internet. Have your child cut or pinch off the herbs you cook with.

Continue the learning: When you're eating new foods or dining in a restaurant, ask your child if she can taste any familiar herbs. What herbs are in this dish? Is it one she can grow?