

# Make Your Own Garden Markers

With spring in the air, it's time to get outside and dig! Trowels, dirt and watering cans are usually pretty irresistible to kindergarteners, but let's not overlook their learning benefits as well: digging strengthens children's hands and wrists for the small motor tasks that they need to do in school.

And while we're talking about those small motor activities, here's a great chance to do a little extra reading and writing practice. Once seeds go into the ground, gardeners like to mark the spot. Why not involve your kindergartener in this project? Here's how.

## What You Need:

- Tongue depressors
- Card stock cut into 3x4" cards
- Markers or colored pencils
- Seed packets or a book with plant pictures
- Laminator

## What You Do:

1. Start with pictures. For each type of seed you're planting, ask your child to find a picture of how the plant should look if everything comes up right. This is easy if you're using seed packets; if not, you can also look in a garden book or seed catalog.
2. Now explain to your child that for each row of seeds you plant, you need to make a little sign with a picture and a word. Then give your child one card at a time, placed vertically. Start by having your child draw the flower or vegetable with bright markers or colored pencils. Make sure you leave about 3/4" at the bottom of the card, though, for the name of the plant!
3. Across the bottom of the card, ask your child to copy the plant's name in clear capital block letters. (While you're at it, encourage your child to sound out those letters and put them together into the full word!)
4. Repeat this process for as many cards as necessary.
5. Laminate! Run your card through a laminator so that there is a plastic border at least 1/4" wide all around. Staple or glue it with superglue onto a tongue depressor. Stick it in the ground and celebrate—unless, of course, the signs are so cute you can't bear to use them!

