

Inn Farm Private Day Nursery



Little Green Fingers!

Gardening with your children at home not only provides the benefits of exercise and fresh food, it also promotes communication, builds strong relationships, and offers an opportunity to work towards a common goal. Take advantage of the better weather and help your children develop a love of gardening and encourage a healthy hobby at the same time.

Children as young as preschool age are keen to plant seeds and watch their baby plants sprout and turn into big plants. When planting with children, keep things fun, not frustrating, by choosing seeds that are relatively large and easy to handle. Here are some suggestions for child-friendly vegetable seeds that are easy to sow and easy to grow. All of them are appropriate for sowing directly in the garden once weather conditions are suitable. If possible give your child a small plot all their own, or some garden planters will do the job just as well.

Pea seeds are the perfect size for little fingers. Bean seeds sprout quickly in warm soil, so now is the perfect time to plant them. Growing a bean tee pee is a great garden project. Erect a framework of 6-8 tall poles in a circle, binding the poles together at the top, then plant 4-6 bean seeds at the base of each pole. Pumpkins are always popular with children. It's exciting to watch the fruits develop and grow, getting bigger and bigger and changing colour in time for Halloween decorating. Make sure you plant pumpkin seeds where the vines will have plenty of room to roam.

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If you are short on garden space, cucumbers are a great choice for growing in a container. Erect a trellis of some sort in or near the container for the vine to scramble up. While cucumber seeds are smaller than pea and bean seeds, they are still quite easy for small hands to manage. Tomato plants and strawberry plants are readily available and are also favourites to grow. These can be planted in pots and will give plenty of fruit. Involve your children in the daily routine of watering the seeds and plants, encouraging responsibility. Remember to give plenty of praise and encouragement when the fruit and vegetables are ready to harvest. Even picky eaters are usually willing to try a vegetable they've grown themselves!

When fully grown, find recipes incorporating the fruit and vegetables and ask your children to help with the preparation and baking of some tasty dishes! Then all there is left to do is enjoy the results!

Joanne Cox, Manager, Inn Farm Private Day Nursery, OFSTED graded **OUTSTANDING JANUARY 2014**

If you have any areas that you would like us to discuss, please email enquiries@innfarmdaynursery.co.uk or call 07961 291058