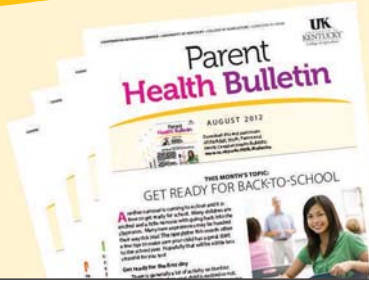


# Parent Health Bulletin



APRIL 2015

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# GARDENING: A GREAT FAMILY ACTIVITY

This is a great time of year to start thinking about gardening. Do you and your family already have a garden? If so, you are probably already beginning to think about what you want to plant this year and making sure that the soil is ready. Perhaps you have started thinking about creating a new garden design or even updating the old one. If you do not have a garden, this year may be a great year to start working on creating one. A garden can be a great way to pull the whole family together while preparing the garden, planting the seeds, growing and tending the plants, harvesting the foods and sharing the bounty.

While planning and starting a garden, first consider the best place



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# *Gardening can be a great way to get outside as a family. Working together makes the hard work seem easier too.*

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to locate the garden. Is there a flat area close to the house? How much sun does it get? Most gardens need plenty of sun. Talk to your child about good places to start a garden in your yard. If you do not have any sunny spots, that does not mean you and your family cannot have a garden. You may just have to be more careful about the plants that you choose to grow. To include your child in picking the right spot for the garden, walk around the yard at different times of the day and talk about where the sunlight is landing on the ground. Together the family can pick the best spot for the garden.

Once you have selected a location for the garden, you may start to till up the soil and make sure that it is good for growing. Soil can be tough to move. It may take rakes and shovels to turn the dirt over and prepare the spot for a garden. This is a great way to get the whole family involved — especially if your child likes to get dirty. Digging up the area you want for the garden may take a little while. While you are digging, take notice if you see worms. If you do, this is a good thing. If your soil does not seem too healthy — perhaps it is too sandy, too wet or too dry — talk to your local Extension office. They can help you out.

Before you start putting seeds in the ground, decide what you want to grow. Do you like tomatoes? Perhaps you want to grow some carrots or squash. Maybe you will see a new or unusual vegetable to grow. This too is a great family activity. When deciding what to plant, let your child pick one or two items, especially if they are vegetables. Once you have the seeds selected, it is time to plant. Each type of seed may have different needs for planting, so make sure to read the back of the package before you start.

While you wait for the plants to grow, you and your family can talk about the types of plants you are growing. If it is an edible plant, consider what you will do with the food once it is harvested.

If you have no space at all to garden in your yard,



you still can grow plants in containers. Using pots of different sizes you can grow plants on almost any balcony, patio or porch.

Gardening can be a great way to get outside as a family. Working together makes the hard work seem easier too. Happy digging!

### **SOURCES:**

- University of Illinois Extension. My First Garden. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/firstgarden/index.cfm>
- Colorado State University Cooperative Extension. Planting a Garden with your Child. <http://www.colostate.edu/Dept/CoopExt/4DMG/Children/plangard.htm>

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Parent  
**Health Bulletin**

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