



tip sheet: **Top 20 Tips for Managing Groups of Children in a Garden Setting**

overview

Successful school garden programming benefits from good class management. Consider the garden as an outdoor classroom and develop similar strategies for managing your class.

suggestions

Suggested Group Management Tips:

- **Prepare students for garden activities** in the classroom BEFORE going into the garden
- **Create songs or cheers** to help organize/remember information, or to establish garden time routines
- **Inform aides/chaperones of their role(s)** in the planned planting activities and logistics
- **Organize students into garden teams** of three or four to aid in directing students in the garden
- **Enlist students to develop and write garden rules** and post in a prominent garden location
- **Plan unsupervised activities** such as journaling, sketching, measuring, etc.
- **Consider available tools when planning garden activities**, sharing among pairs or teams when necessary
- **Create illustrated charts** (weed ID cards, beneficial insects, etc.) to aid *unsupervised* activities
- **Set firm limits to garden activities** (plant three seeds, fill watering can twice, harvest five basil leaves)
- **Act out or practice proper planting, tending, and harvesting techniques** in the classroom prior to visiting the garden (“watering like an elephant’s trunk”)
- **Be sure to review activities after garden visit** to reinforce lessons and generate enthusiasm for next visit
- **Use planting frames or other spacing tools/techniques** when planting
- **Demonstrate proper tool handling** prior to passing out tools
- **Plan activities** that require age appropriate tools
- **Encourage (and use yourself) positive language** around trying new food (“interesting” instead of “disgusting” or “gross”) and touching soil and gardening equipment (“dirt isn’t dirty”)
- **Learn and use your student’s/visitor’s names**
- **Plan follow up classroom activities** to reinforce and connect gardening activities to classroom learning
- **Consider alternative indoor activities** for unexpected rainy days (storybooks, songs, sorting, cooking)