



GREEN FINGERS

Materials you need:

- 1 box latex gloves (or just a few clean pairs from the nappy change area) Try to allow for 1 per child if possible.
- Teaspoons or small scoops (like the formula scoops).
- 1 small bag good quality compost or use from your garden compost bin.
- Packets of bean or watercress seeds (they grow quickly).
- Water tub and watering cans or spray bottles to mist
- Bucket of soapy water for washing hands

Setup for play:

- Pass out the gloves and show the children how to turn back the wrist part of the glove so the finger parts of the glove are easy to poke with a finger. You may need to roll the glove back a little and hold for toddlers.
- Tip some compost on to a tray (away from the children to avoid the dirt dust rising) and use the spoons and scoops together to fill each finger and thumb section of the gloves – best to do this outside because yes it does get messy but it's fantastic for practising fine motor control and spatial awareness! Toddlers will probably ditch the tools and just use their fingers -that is perfectly fine so let it go!
- This isn't about perfection – let the children try to do as much as they can on their own, the process is what is important here.
- Show the children how to press the seeds into the soil fingers- I like to add 3-4 so you get a better chance of at least one growing!
- Mist the gloves with water - you don't want them overflowing with water.
- Now hang in a sunny spot outside and watch the seeds begin to grow. You might want to help the children take photos or measure to journal the progress.

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What are they learning with this activity?

As the children fill the gloves with compost, plant their seeds then watch them grow they are learning to:

- Explore, infer, predict and problem solve
- Use hand/eye coordination skills and increase their spatial awareness
- Develop new vocabulary and language skills
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, visual motor integration and control
- Respect and care for natural living things
- Persevere and experience the satisfaction of a job done well and sense of achievement
- Understand the plant lifecycle and how food ends up on our plates.

Extending the play:

- Take photos and encourage children to name and draw their plant as grows and changes. Set up a display for families to view the learning process.
- Set up a garden centre dramatic play area outside or a small table the children can display their 'green fingers'.

