

# Tips for Managing Groups of Children in a Garden Setting

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## The New York Botanical Garden

- 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 “un”supervised 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 “un”supervised 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)