

Title of Project: Gardening for Beauty, Food and Enjoyment



Grade Level: 1st grade

Number of Students Participating: 14

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Teacher: Eileen Laca

School: Parma Learning Center

District or County: Parma School District

Overview/Description of Project:

Provide students with across circumlunar activities in which they would sow seed and care for the plants from a seedling to a plant ready to become part of a vegetable garden.

Goals:

- To give the student a love and appreciation for growing plants,
- To teach basic principles of agriculture,
- To encourage family participation by helping their child plan and plant a small garden with the plants we began at school.

Core Content Areas:

(Teacher completes this section)

Life science: growing cycle & plants

Math: measurement

English/Language Arts: read-to-follow-directions

Social Studies: community economy

All hands on and guided activity and observation.

PARC MODEL STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

STEP 1: PREPARATION

We gave our children knowledge, appreciation and a love for gardening.

In the fall we reinforced the children's knowledge of the elements necessary for all life: air, water, nutrients (food), habitat (soil) and sunlight.

STEP 2: ACTION

In the spring we did experiments watching seeds sprout, went on site to my yard and learned how perennials reproduced by digging up bulbs, rezones, and strawberries. Those who

wished were allowed to take starts home to plant in their gardens or pots. They had classroom and hands on experience in planning a garden, both for vegetables and for flowers. I required them to read seed packets to discover where to place each plant according to the need for sunlight and space. For example, in the case of flowers, they had to plan which flowers were taller and plant them behind shorter plants; which were shade loving and which needed full sun. For the vegetable garden they needed to measure between tomato plants so they would have room to grow. They soon saw that more peppers plants could be grown in a given space than tomatoes. Their parents were encouraged to help their child clear a space for their own garden, even if it were in pots. On three separate occasions letters were sent home to parents informing them of the gardening project and encouraging their participation.

Many of these Children's parents work in the agri-industries in the Parma area. These children were asked to share their knowledge of farming and harvesting. By doing so I hoped they would come to understand the contribution their parent makes to this industry that is so important, not only to the economy of Parma, but also to the world food chain.

STEP 3: REFLECTION (Reflection is not sequential; rather it is encouraged throughout the lesson)

This project not only made learning come alive through hands-on activities, it also gave the children a sense of accomplishment and, hopefully, a life-long love for gardening. Many of our students are Hispanic and their family is evolved in the main economy of the Parma area, agriculture and agribusiness. It was my hope that they came to realize the importance of their family's contribution to the over-all economy of our community and food supply of our world.

STEP 4: CELEBRATION

Every child took home 2 tomato, 2 carrot, two cucumber, and 2 bean plants that they had started from seed. They were also given seed packets for more carrots, beans, and radishes. It was my hope that some or all the children would learn to grow plants that produce food. Throughout the "field experience" at my home they also took home many flowers from starts that I provided.

We celebrated with a play-day at my home in the back yard with treats and "pots". The children were allowed to take starts of their favorite flowers or plant, pot them and take them home.