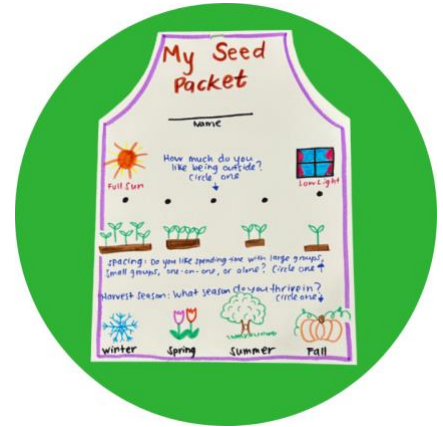


My Seed Packet

Overview: Social-emotional learning and garden education combine with this simple activity that asks kids to create an informational seed packet about their preferences and needs.

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing/Coloring Utensils
- Assortment of Seed Packets (optional)



Approximate Time to Complete: 30 Minutes

Location: Indoor or Outdoor

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

Background Information: According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL is "the processes through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions."

Gardens and outdoor spaces are ideal places for kids to participate in group activities, interact with different age groups, celebrate diversity, learn to monitor and manage their emotions, practice empathy toward themselves and others, and develop foundational strategies that will help them navigate the world as adults. Gardening, playing, and exploring outdoors help the body's nervous system find equilibrium, leading to increased calm. It also provides endless opportunities for kids to engage with their peers, learn peaceful ways to resolve conflicts, and learn compassion and empathy.

By asking children to consider the needs of plants and their own emotional and physical needs and preferences they are given the opportunity for increased self-awareness and compassion for other living things. Creating a seed packet describing these qualities combines creativity, mindfulness, and language arts. The result is a piece of art perfect for sharing with classmates, friends, and family and a way for children to learn about and relate to one another with compassion and empathy in group settings. This activity is highly adaptable to suit the age range you're working with and the available time and resources.

To learn more about the intersections between social emotional learning and garden education check out our article [How Youth Gardens Can Support Social Emotional Learning](#).

Instructions:

1. Decide if you will supply kids with a ready-made seed packet worksheet or have them design their own. Design your own and/or print out available ready-made

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worksheets if using. One of our favorites was created by the Plants for Human Health Institute at NC State University and can be found at:

<https://stem.plantsforhumanhealth.ncsu.edu/2023/04/14/seed-packet-sel/>

If the latter, decide on what developmentally appropriate categories you'd like included for the group you're working with so you're prepared to give instructions. Consider making your own as a reference! Some categories to consider:

- Full Sun/Partial Sun/Low Light (How much do you like being outside?)
 - Spacing (I like being in big groups, smaller groups of people I know, and being alone or one-on-one with someone).
 - Harvest Season (What season do you thrive in the most: Spring, Fall, Summer, Winter)
 - Companion Planting (Who or what helps you to thrive when they or it are around?)
 - Flower (Describe your flower; what is your favorite color/scent?)
 - Fruit (Describe your fruit; what is your favorite food?)
 - Planting Style (I am orderly and tidy, like row plantings. I am spontaneous and carefree, like wildflower meadows. I am both orderly and carefree, like permaculture beds.)
2. Discuss basic plant needs with kids, having them share their knowledge about what plants need to survive. Ask: *Do we share any of these needs with plants?* Assess the answers you receive. Ask: *Do some plants have different needs than others? For example, do all plants like hot, sunny weather or lots and lots of water?* Assess the answers you receive, emphasizing that plants have preferences that can differ from each other. Discuss how humans also have preferences that help us thrive and that these can be different from our friends and family members or be shared amongst others too.
 3. Pass out seed packets if they are being used, and have kids look at the information printed on them. Depending on their age and reading skills, ask kids to share what information they observe on them and any differences they spot from packet to packet.
 4. Explain that kids will be making a seed packet to describe themselves! Pass out worksheets, or share your own seed packet creation and pass out paper and writing/drawing utensils for kids to design their own.
 5. Once everyone's packets are ready, have kids share theirs with the group or with their neighbors and find what differences they have and what preferences they share.

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