



# Investigating their world

Young children are fascinated by the world around them. Encouraging their curiosity and willingness to investigate helps them to become active and engaged learners.

Children enjoy exploring the natural world around them, including plants, animals, rocks, water in many forms, shadows, rainbows, or 'static electricity' on a windy day.

## Building skills for investigating

When investigating or experimenting, encourage your child to:

- organise the materials and equipment they need
- predict 'what will happen' (e.g. ask, *What might happen when ...? Why do you think that will happen?*)
- observe carefully using their senses to find out (e.g. look, listen and, if safe, touch, taste and smell)
- think and talk about what they see, notice relationships (e.g. *This happens when ... but not when ...*) and ask questions (e.g. *Why did the ice melt? Where has the water gone?*).

## Supporting your child to investigate

- Your child will learn to investigate when you:

- allow time for them to test ideas, observe, try other ways to find out and talk about what they are discovering
- model (show them) ways to investigate/find out about things
- suggest possible ways they can find out about something
- provide materials, equipment and space/places to investigate
- point out important features/ideas to look at/attend to
- ask questions to help your child to think about what is happening
- explain accurately what is happening and why
- make links between what they are finding out now and what they already know
- help your child to reflect on their investigation (e.g. what they did, what they noticed/found out, or new questions they have).

Encourage your child to ask questions, investigate and observe the natural world in everyday situations (e.g. *What happens when we drive through the mud? Why does the washing dry faster on a windy day? How can we help the tree frog we found?*).

## Everyday experiences

## In the garden

A garden is a great place for children to explore and experience the natural world. A garden can be created anywhere and can be in many shapes and sizes (e.g. you might use a small pot to grow your favourite herbs or make a portable garden in a planter box).

Grow plants that will appeal to your child's senses, such as herbs, colourful and fragrant flowers, or plants with soft velvety leaves to touch. You can grow plants from seeds found in fruit, seed producing plants in the garden, or cuttings.

## Ideas for making a garden project with your child

- Make a 'no dig' garden above the ground using an old tyre/untreated timber/corrugated iron (without sharp edges) and fill with soil/compost.
- Make a waterbed (hydroponic) garden using plant boxes in a larger water filled tray.
- Use small pots/containers/hanging baskets for small portable gardens.
- Use old milk cartons/egg cartons/folded newspaper boxes to plant seeds.
- Encourage your child to extend their interest in the garden by exploring other projects connected to their garden (e.g. make a scarecrow, compost heap or worm farm).
- Make a sign and labels for the garden (e.g. 'Elizabeth's garden' or 'Lettuce').

## Help your child to stay healthy and safe

- Help your child to apply sunscreen and wear a broad-brimmed hat while outdoors.
- Ensure your child wears gloves when handling compost, potting mix or soil.
- Look out for spiders and other insects that may be harmful.
- Remind your child to wash their hands after being in the garden.

## Supporting your child to care for a garden

- Talk with your child about what seeds need to help them grow into plants (e.g. nutrients, water and sunlight).
- Help your child to find a suitable place to keep their seeds so they will grow (e.g. on a shelf near a window).
- Show your child how to prepare the garden soil (e.g. rake the soil and remove any weeds).
- Provide a spade and other equipment (e.g. a garden fork, trowel, watering can) that your child can use to dig and pour in the garden.

## For further information

Visit [www.qld.gov.au/kindy](http://www.qld.gov.au/kindy)

