



School & Children's Gardens: Steps to Success

*** **Note:** Many Resources noted below (and more!) are found on the FCG website:

- ✓ "Youth and School Gardens:" <http://tinyurl.com/FCGYouthSchoolGardens>
- ✓ "Starting or Revitalizing a Community Garden:" <http://tinyurl.com/FCGGardenStartUp>

Some start-up documents will need to be adapted to a school or child development center (CDC) garden. For Word documents you can customize, contact Megan Gregory: gregormm@forsyth.cc.

1. Form a Planning Committee/ Leadership Team

Resource: School Garden Volunteer Interest Survey (under: <http://tinyurl.com/FCGGardenStartUp>)

- **Organize meetings and social gatherings** of people committed to developing, maintaining, and using the garden
- **Strive for community representation and diversity:**
 - Roles (administrators, teachers/staff, parents, agency representatives)
 - Skills (organizing, construction, landscape design, gardening, volunteer management, food preparation, curriculum development, etc.)
 - Racial/ ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds
- **Conduct community outreach** to recruit volunteers.

2. Organize and Energize Volunteers

Resource: Developing a Garden Mission Statement (under: <http://tinyurl.com/FCGGardenStartUp>)

- **Craft a mission statement for your school or child development center garden.**
 - Think about: Who will use the garden? How can the garden benefit the school/ child development center and the broader community?
- **Identify and assign leadership roles and committees to accomplish needed tasks.**
 - These could include traditional leadership roles (e.g., president, secretary, treasurer) and committees specific to a school garden. For example:
 - **Garden planning** -- Guide plant selection and crop rotation plans, Advise on timing of horticultural activities (seed starting, soil preparation, planting, harvesting, etc.)
 - **Workday coordinators** -- Organize family workdays in consultation with garden planning team.
 - **Tool and Supply coordinators** -- Secure construction materials, seeds and transplants, soil amendments, mulch, etc.
 - **Curriculum integration** -- This committee should include teachers! Research and develop garden-based curricula. There are many resources (see handout: School & Children's Garden Resources) but it will take some sifting and adapting to create curricula and activities for a given school or CDC.
 - **Communications coordinators** -- Publicize workdays and other garden events.
 - *Can you think of other committees your garden needs to thrive?*

3. Choose a Good Site

Resource: Community Garden Intake Questionnaire (under: <http://tinyurl.com/FCGGardenStartUp>)

- **Horticultural considerations:**
 - Sunlight: For annual vegetable areas, at least 6 hours/day.
 - Water: Connection to municipal water, or proximity to structure for rainwater collection
 - Soil: Uncontaminated native soil, or construct raised beds. See Intake Questionnaire (above) for information about soil testing.
- **Proximity to school or child development center** (to ensure regular, easy access for programming)
- **Secure land tenure** (on land owned by the school/ CDC, or land for which you can gain written permission to use for the long term)

4. Prepare and Develop the Site

- **Design the garden space through a participatory process.** Think about: What types of plantings and other infrastructure will help you achieve the garden mission?
 - Start with a scale maps
 - Indicate size and locations of different types of plantings (e.g., annual vegetable garden areas, herb garden, perennial borders, pollinator garden, shrubs and trees, etc.). Include ample PATH space for maintenance!
 - Indicate location of supporting infrastructure (rainwater collection tanks, compost bins, bulletin boards with plastic covering, etc.)
- **Identify and secure needed resources** (infrastructure, plant material, tools, soil amendments, etc.)
- **Organize work crews**
- **Host work parties** to clean up and plant the site

5. Maintain the Site and Promote Active Programming & Curriculum Integration

Resource: School and Children's Garden Resources – compilation of garden-based curricula (under: <http://tinyurl.com/FCGYouthSchoolGardens>)

- **Integrate regular garden maintenance and learning activities** into the school curriculum or children's programming
- **Host regular family work parties** to complete larger tasks and garden maintenance
- **Host regular community events** (field days, workshops, harvest parties, etc.)

