

Plant Growing Exercise

Introduction

This activity is a fun, relatable way to introduce the concept of self-care to children. Should you choose to grow seedlings, it is an icebreaker to keep a consistent dialogue on realization of needs and maintaining a self-care routine.

Instructions

Step 1: Talk to the child about plants, asking what a plant needs to be happy and healthy (water, sunlight, air, nutrients, space, soil, etc.). Explain what would happen if it lost any of these things (leaves would wilt, it wouldn't grow tall and strong etc. avoid using the term "dying")

Step 2: Ask the child to think of themselves as a plant, and name 5 things they need to be happy and healthy (try to encourage creative answers, such as playing with friends or spending time with family).

Step 3: Introduce the concept of self-care; the things they feel they need are all forms of self-care. Encourage them to continue to think of themselves as a plant and make choices to keep themselves happy and healthy.

The exercise can be complete after Step 3, but for a more interactive consistent dialogue on self-care, feel free to consider additional steps.

Step 4: Grow seedlings with the child. Encourage them daily to take necessary steps to ensure their plant is healthy. Continue the dialogue about how it is important that they also take care of themselves.

Alternatively, you may choose to introduce an already-matured plant for the child to help take care of. Succulents such as *jade*, *aloe vera* or *snake plants* are relatively low maintenance.



Supplies

- Seedling planters, such as:
 - Biodegradable pots
 - Egg shells
 - Plastic cups (helps to see root formation)
 - Plastic growing trays (helpful in a group setting to avoid individual children's plants dying)
 - Soil mix
- Seeds:
 - Radish and lettuce grow quickly
 - Dianthus and Sweet William are resilient

Note: Although these plants are relatively low maintenance and resilient, each type of plant will have its own specific needs. Seed packets will have more information on how to plant, sunlight needed, and a watering schedule.

