

- The garden is THEIR garden.
 - This mindset helps children feel comfortable, feel a sense of ownership, pride, belonging, and helps them take an interest in its success.
- We ensure kids are safe and can learn in a failure-free environment.
 - Large tools are used with adult supervision only
 - If a child wants to try a new way of planting, we will. If it doesn't work, that child will have learned something new. There is no blowback if something doesn't grow; instead it is an opportunity to explore why it didn't grow and how we can address it.
 - Children go over tool safety at EVERY garden visit.
- We reinforce positive behaviors by setting examples and encouraging children to try new things
 - Children do not have to eat anything they don't want to. Only facts will be provided.
 - ASD staff will demonstrate that harvests are safe and tasty. Children will not be shamed for saying no or disliking any food.
- We do NOT harp on "healthy" vs "unhealthy" foods; no food is a bad food. We provide knowledge about what fruits and vegetables do for your body while emphasizing that all food is good.
- Allowing children to explore a topic that interests them helps them gain valuable skills in learning, critical thinking, and problem solving.
 - One of the best ways for children to learn is to feel like they have control over what they are learning about. Taking ownership over a project, an insect, a plant, etc. helps children feel connected and a sense of pride when things go right.
 - Children all have different interests. We help find a topic or job that each child will enjoy and excel at. The garden provides opportunities for math, science, art, building, caregiving, digging, and so much more!
- Gardens provide a space for children to connect to each other and to nature.
 - Gardening is inherently a team-building activity when there is limited time to accomplish all tasks. Children learn to work together, share, and wait their turn.
 - Studies have shown that simply touching soil can trigger your brain to release serotonin, the "feel good" chemical. "Grounding" is a new fad that simply involves being barefoot outside. Within the confines of safety, children are encouraged to touch, smell, taste, feel, listen, and explore with tenacity. Being present among plants and insects helps us to understand the world around us and find a sense of connectedness to the natural world.
- Every child is given the opportunity to take fruits and vegetables home when they are ready to harvest.
 - When we harvest from the garden, we stick to our philosophy: the garden is THEIR garden, and they get to reap the fruits of their labor.