




GARDENING BUDS

EARLY EDUCATION GUIDE



Your Gardening Buds journey starts here!

Click on this  to listen online or access via the ABC Kids listen [app](#).

Episode 1

What is a garden?



8-year-old Caylee calls the Gardening Buds hotline for some help to get her very own garden growing. She speaks to Gardening Bud Costa, but before they can plan Caylee's garden, they go on a walk to find out about all the different kinds of gardens. From verge to vertical, pollinator to pizza, there are so many kinds of gardens!

Episode 2

What have you got?



Caylee and Costa put their microclimate goggles on to do something very important - a site assessment to understand the space that Caylee will grow her garden in. We find out how light, size, temperature and lots of other things can affect what will work for you and your garden.

Episode 3

How do plants work?



Caylee makes a special trip to Gardening Buds HQ to learn what plants need to keep healthy and happy - sunlight, water and food. Then, Costa introduces us to some wiggly little friends and teaches us how we can help make healthy soil.

Episode 4

How does your garden fit into the bigger garden?



Caylee is getting closer to figuring out what kinds of plants she wants to grow in her garden, but it's important to remember that gardens aren't just for us people! Costa talks about how important garden spaces are for the birds and bugs that share our neighbourhoods.

Episode 5

What plans should you choose



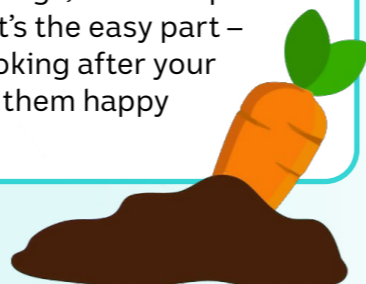
Caylee and Costa use everything they've learnt so far to choose the plants for Caylee's garden. But Caylee has a big question for Costa - after she's planted her garden, what happens if something goes wrong?

Episode 6

What happens after you plant your garden?



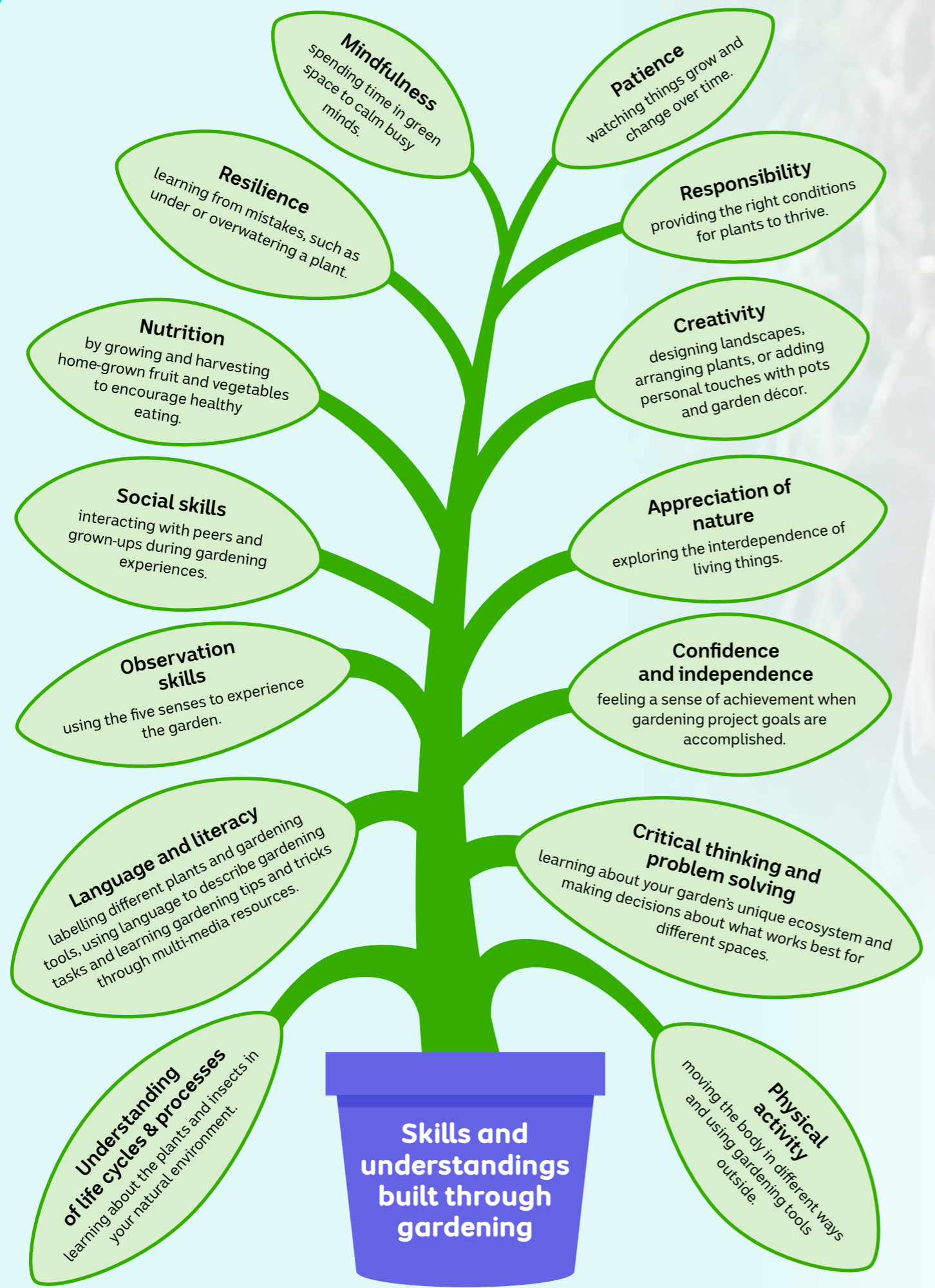
Today's the big day! Caylee and Costa plant Caylee's seedlings, and set-up her garden. But that's the easy part - the tricky part is looking after your plants and keeping them happy and healthy.



BACKGROUND

Outdoor education has a long list of positive effects on early development. In fact, numerous studies have found that green-thumbs of all ages garner huge **emotional and physical benefits** from gardening. Children need "Vitamin G" (G for green), whereby nature is a necessary ingredient for a healthy life! This is the philosophy of ABC Kids listen podcast Gardening Buds, where gardening is regarded as a proven superpower for health and happiness!

(Image: Filip Urban, Unsplash.)



MEET THE PRESENTERS

[Gardening Buds](#) is hosted by Gardening Australia's [Costa Georgiadis](#) and eight-year-old Caylee Nolan. They take listeners on a journey to make their very own garden. Why make a gardening podcast for children? Well, audio is wonderful way to encourage deep listening and to actively engage childrens' imaginations, as Costa states...

"I love the idea of the podcast as a learning space that is green time and not specifically screen time. Podcasts create a different way of learning, a place to sit and visualise and use the imagination."



Planting the seedlings
Photographer: Jonathan Kemper

EARLY EDUCATION CURRICULUM LINKS

Listening to [Gardening Buds](#) can support educators to

- Ignite children’s interest in their natural environment and plan cross-curriculum learning experiences.
- Plan hands-on outdoor experiences to connect with nature, community and culture.
- Promote [nature pedagogy](#) now embedded in many early childhood education programs across Australia.
- Explore a range of [sustainable practices](#) to help develop an ecological identity in young children.

Teaching and learning emerging from Gardening Buds

- [The Early Years Learning Framework \(EYLF\)](#)
 - **Practice 5: Learning Environments**

“Outdoor learning spaces are a feature of Australian learning environments. Play spaces in natural environments include plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud, water and other elements from nature. These spaces invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature. They foster an appreciation of the natural environment, develop environmental awareness and provide a platform for ongoing environmental education.”
 - **Learning Outcome 2.1**

Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
 - **Learning Outcome 2.4**

Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.
 - **Learning Outcome 4.2**

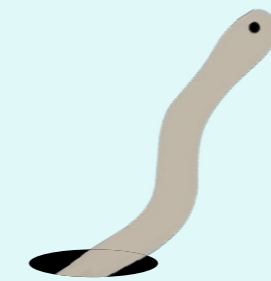
Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
- [The National Quality Standard \(NQS\) Quality Area 3: Physical Environment](#)
 - **Element 3.2.1**

Exploration of the natural environment helps to build children’s competence and play-based learning. It also encourages children to develop an appreciation of the natural world, an awareness of the impact of human activity on the environment, and ways in which they can contribute to a sustainable future.
 - **Element 3.2.3**

The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.
- [Early Childhood Australia \(ECA\) Statement on Young Children and Digital Technologies](#)
 - **Relationships:**

Use digital technologies in early childhood education and care settings to promote social interactions between children, peers and adults.
 - **Digital technologies in play and learning:**

When children experience joint media engagement, including co-listening to digital content, they can ask questions, put forward ideas & receive feedback from adults.





*Investigating vegetable patch.
(Image: ABC Kids Early Education).*

TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS

1 Be a garden detective

Enjoy a sensory walk in the garden and use your detective skills! Has a flower bloomed where there wasn't one before? What bug is on that leaf? What is that chirping sound? What is that lovely, or not so lovely, smell? How does that herb taste? What textures can you feel on that tree trunk?

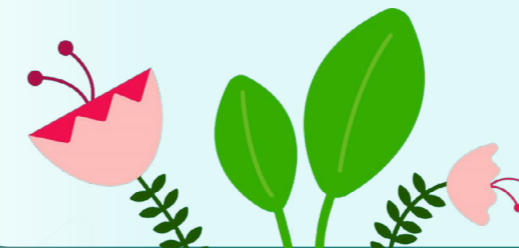
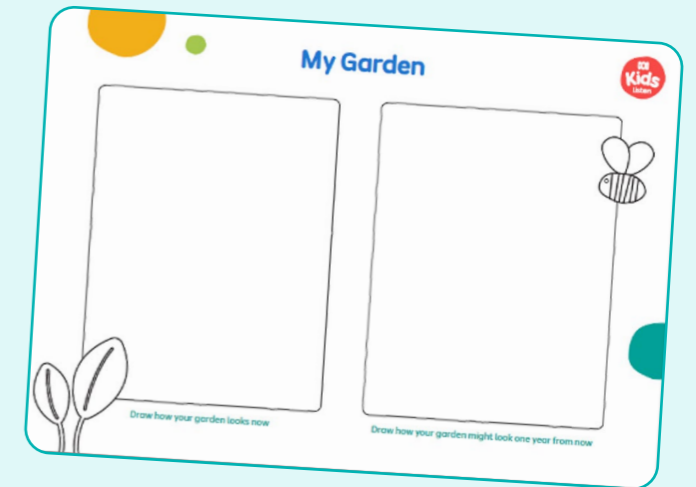
Investigate [microclimates](#) and find out how they're influenced by light, shade and weather conditions. Use children's drawings to create a visual record of your microclimate. Include garden walls, pathways, grass, sunny spots, shady areas, trees, damp or dry parts. Explain how collecting this information helps gardeners ensure they have created the right garden for the area.

2 Plan and design a new garden

Involve children in planning a new garden. Start by researching different gardens online or in books borrowed from your local library; herb, permaculture, vegetable, vertical, native, rooftop, bush tucker and pollinator gardens. Investigate which garden suits the size, shape and landscape of your area. Encourage children's developing sense of agency ([EYLF Learning Outcome 1.2](#)) by inviting them to make decisions that will impact the success of your garden; positioning plants - in relation to the sun, the quality of the soil, the amount of space and how much water is needed. Gardening is STEM learning in action!

Use the [Gardening Buds Diary](#) for children to draw and write about their garden. How do they want the garden to look? What types of plants and foods would they like to grow? What insects would they like to attract? Extend children's

mathematical understandings as they design a garden and learn new vocabulary relating to size, length, volume and capacity ([EYLF Learning Outcome 5.1](#)).



*Garden drawing by Darcy, 6 years.
(Image: ABC Kids listen)*



3 Build edible container gardens

Children involved in gardening can begin to develop an appreciation of where food comes from. There is an array of planter boxes and pots to suit spaces of all different shapes and sizes for growing vegetables, herbs, [native bush tucker](#) and edible flowers. When choosing a container for planting you can even upcycle bottles, seedling trays, old cups and saucers or teapots.

Make an *Egghead Planter* herb garden using an egg carton, eggshells, seeds and soil. Milk bottles can be used to make a DIY herb garden and provide the opportunity for children to be creative by decorating containers with twisted rope and other collage materials ([EYLF Learning Outcome 5.3](#)). Certain vegetables are super [easy to grow in pots](#). Try including cherry tomatoes, beans, peas and carrots.

Invite families to get involved in creating edible container gardens, helping to foster a greater sense of community and [belonging](#). Excursions to local nurseries and community gardens are another valuable way to help children

build connections with their neighbourhood, community and culture – whilst also developing understandings about other environmentally responsible practices such as worm farms and compost bins.

Watch Play School *Through The Windows* film '[Community Garden](#)'.



▶ See Costa and Caylee make herb head planters on ABC Kids YouTube.



4 Create hanging pots and garden ornaments

Gardening is a science and an art. Involving children in arranging a garden and making ornaments to enhance its aesthetic appeal offers valuable opportunities for children to express their creativity using a range of media ([EYLF Learning Outcome 5.3](#)). To make a hanging planter, cut a large plastic bottle about 1/3 from the bottom and decorate using coloured markers. Attach twine to hang the planter, fill with soil and a small plant e.g. a succulent or perennial. Remember to add a small hole in the base for water drainage.

Sculpt and decorate garden ornaments and statues using clay and decorate with paint. Painting rocks is another way to brighten up the garden. Outdoor art experiences also provide opportunities for educators to extend children's understandings about colour, pattern and shape ([EYLF Learning Outcome 5.4](#)).



▶ See how to make plant labels and decorations with Costa and Caylee on ABC Kids YouTube.



▶ See how to make a bottle planter with Costa and Caylee on ABC Kids YouTube.



See how to make a magical mini garden with Costa and Caylee on ABC Kids YouTube.

5 Design a magical, miniature landscape garden

Terracotta pots or old cooking pots and pans provide the perfect space to create a [Miniature Landscape Garden](#). Use a range of natural materials and loose parts (e.g. pebble mulch, rocks, pop sticks, small ceramic bowls, shells, fallen bark, pine cones, wooden peg people, seedling trays) to design and make these magical gardens.

Choose a few small plants that require the same conditions e.g. succulents and cacti. Invite children to use containers stacked on

top of each other to create different levels and layers. Promote children's imagination and creativity ([EYLF Learning Outcome 4.1](#)) by encouraging them to create a garden for their favourite television or book character. Make pathways that twist and turn, and create surprises for the characters. This fantastic gardening experience will inspire children's [small world imaginative play](#) and encourage storytelling ([EYLF Learning Outcome 5.3](#)).



Additional Resources

1. [ABC Kids listen: Gardening - A Superpower for your kids!](#)
2. [Play School Green Team: Early Education Notes](#)
3. [ABC Gardening Australia](#)
4. [ABC Everyday: A Beginner's Guide to Growing Flowers in Pots](#)
5. [Modern Teaching Blog: Sustainability in the Early Years](#)
6. [Little Green Steps Western Australia \(LGSWA\)](#)
7. [Climbing the Little Green Steps: How to promote sustainability within early childhood services in your local area](#)
8. [Environmental Education in Early Childhood](#)
9. [Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network \(QECSN\)](#)
10. [NSW Early Childhood Environmental Education Network \(NSW ECEEN\)](#)
11. [Early Education for Sustainability South Australia Inc. \(EESSA\)](#)
12. [Because We Care - Education for Sustainability in Action](#)
13. [Koori Curriculum: Top Tips for Creating a Bush Tucker Garden](#)
14. [Sustainability in Action in Early Childhood Settings](#)
15. [Costa And Caylee Make Plant Labels | Gardening Buds | ABC Kids Youtube](#)
16. [Costa and Caylee make herb head | Gardening Buds | ABC Kids YouTube](#)
17. [Costa And Caylee Make Bottle Planters | Gardening Buds | ABC Kids YouTube](#)
18. [How To Make A Magical Mini Garden - With Costa And Caylee | Gardening Buds | ABC Kids YouTube](#)



References

1. The Natural Learning Initiative. (2012). Benefits of Connecting Children with Nature.
2. Ann Pelo. (2013). The Goodness of Rain: Developing an Ecological Identity in Young Children. Exchange Press.