

Land Based Studies – What supports students with ASD

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A garden space offers a unique environment that helps individuals develop the skills they need to grow and thrive. The joy and peace a garden brings can be a beautiful experience. The flowers, bushes and trees around the school all have different colours, smells and senses, yet calming.

- There are lots of different noises outside that can be relaxing and therapeutic.
- Some students visit the sensory garden which allows them to take in the outside world and explore the nature.
- The jobs they are given allow them to see the task from beginning to the end which fosters a sense of accomplishment and enhancing overall well-being. There are lots of different tools that they can use which they enjoy swapping around to do tasks and keep them busy but if they lose interest there are lots of other jobs and tools they can use.
- Learning and discussing the weather benefits them as it is a good way to start talking to new people about or having things in common with everyone they talk too. It allows them to communicate easily what they have done in a garden with friends and family and show the end results.
- The children love exploring new areas and coming up with ideas on how to improve areas. They can approach gardening on their own terms and slowly go outside of their comfort zone without feeling overwhelmed.
- Gardening involves many steps, following directions, routines, repetitiveness and skills, which is why everyone with autism can take something positive away.
- The “Myself in the Community” Unit allows activities within the local community, promoting greater social interaction.
- Lots of photo evidence is used which allows them to order photos of the order in which they have done the work.
- It can provide an outlet for any physical aggression while building confidence and greater self-esteem.
- Gardening activities can address motor skills by using many tools that can help individuals develop muscle strength and motor skills that will benefit them for years to come.
- Watching plants grow can be an incredibly rewarding experience for individuals with autism, especially when they are part of the process. Individuals can learn the value of various food groups and may be more open to trying new foods. There are often concerns associated with autism and diet.