

Let's **Grow** Outside!

Update 4

With Kildare County Childcare Committee



Hi everyone,

At last it feels like summer is really here!

There is some growth at last and the benefit of the recent wet weather is that there is now lots of green around us.

We hope you are all seeing some seedlings at last, poking their leaves up out of the ground.

Hopefully children are really enjoying outdoor play, and watching their seedlings coming up.

Now we can really see that these seedlings are going to produce food! We can taste the first few salad leaves and radishes (keeping allergies in mind & maybe check with parents first if this is ok with them!).

***We can learn that all the rain we get is the reason our country is so green..
and that means we can grow food easily..***

***these are great things for children to learn about and also fits in with the
Aistear theme of 'exploring and thinking'***

How to link with the Aistear theme 'Exploring and Thinking'

Growing food from seed helps children:

–to expand their knowledge of the world

-to see how things change: for example the seed changed into a plant, the plant is now going to produce food, we can eat this food to help us grow and make us strong!

Here is this week's video: <https://animoto.com/play/QpgansJDaZqViBi0vRo4Tg>

What's growing? – your guide to growing this month

You may have some radishes and salad leaves ready to pick and eat quite soon – the radishes can be tried once they are 1-2 cm in diameter – you can see their red shape swelling in the soil.

These have a strong peppery taste so clean them and slice thinly before trying!

The salad leaves will be small yet, but you can pick a few leaves to try and they will grow again.



Are your runner beans 'running' by now?

You can move these outside at last if you have not already – here are some pictures of mine planted out in large containers, with 'pea sticks' (just old sticks from pruning which I am using for supports, you can do this or use canes – whatever is handy!).

Louise wins best runner beans in KCCC anyway – hers are flying, and flowering!!



and here you can see 'pea sticks' supporting some runner beans.

If you have sown these outdoors they will be slower, but should be on the way now.

Send us your pics too, we love seeing how growing is going for everyone.

Sunflowers and Squash

Your squash seedlings should be getting big now – these can be gently moved to a new, larger pot.

****TOP TIP ****

When moving seedlings to larger pots teach children to hold the leaf and not the stem – a damaged stem will not recover but leaves will!!



Here are our squash seedlings before and after potting on.

Both squash and sunflowers can stay indoors if you have space for another week or two, or you can start to move these outdoors – remember to ‘harden off’- get them used to outdoors slowly & put them in a sheltered spot.

How tall are your sunflowers?! We have some that are really tall and taking over the windowsill here!

How about your potatoes – the leaves should be showing at last?

Here are mine today, they were much slower than other years due to the ground getting really cold in April, but they are coming along.



Did you know potatoes are actually a ‘tuber’ so when we eat potatoes we are eating the root of the plant! This is a good fact to share with children. When we see the leaves growing above the ground the tubers are starting to swell under the soil.

We have to 'earth up' potatoes as this allows more tubers to form along the roots and stops them going green – green potatoes are poisonous to eat.



Just draw soil up around the stems so that some leaves are still sticking out! This can be repeated in the coming weeks, so that the soil is in a mound eventually. In a bag or container just top up the compost / soil in the same way.

It is only when the potato plant has flowered and the leaves start to die back that the potatoes are large enough to start harvesting.

This year growth is slow so they may not be quite ready to harvest at the end of June when ECCE finishes up – you could dig one plant in the last week though to show the children what potatoes look like when they are growing and harvest some small ones too.

The rest can be kept to dig when you are back in September with the children. Just cut off the green growth when it dies back and leave them in the soil / container until you want to dig them – mark where they were planted!



Remember, when moving your plants outside to watch out for slugs and snails!

Use natural barriers, like sand and egg shells to discourage them from eating our carefully grown plants.

Links and Resources:

Department of Education- Insights video for developing your outdoor area:

<https://youtu.be/H1jxkzL1pAA>

Blogs following up on our recent outdoor play events:

Risky Play for Beginners:

<https://www.kccc.ie/Blog/ID/1232/Risky-Play--for-beginners>

Why Stay In:

<https://www.kccc.ie/Blog/ID/1231/Why-Stay-In>

Thank you for growing with us!

Jane & all the KCCC team



**Childcare
Committee**
County Kildare

Coiste Cúram Páistí Chontae Chill Dara