



WORKING TOGETHER TO
IMPROVE CHILDREN'S
MENTAL HEALTH
THROUGH NATURE



Growth Project

Wellbeing Activity from
The Art Room

Growth project

During the pandemic we all continue to adjust to new circumstances and to grow in new ways. We want to encourage children to build on what they have learnt during these times to help them thrive. Having space to creatively express ourselves and connect with nature can enhance wellbeing and improve our mental health.

This project provides a supportive space to think about and explore children's feelings. The activities invite them to explore their roots, environment and how they can grow together with others as a metaphor for personal growth. This Growth Project will take children on a journey through nature; they can reflect on the past, feel nurtured in the present, and flourish in the future.



Place
2Be

Materials

- paper or card
- pens/pencils/paint
- recycled items
- string, glue or tape

Activities

There are three art activities, and nine nature based activities in this project. Choose which ones you like as an exploration of growth!

Project inspiration

We recommend using the stories, images and activities in this pack to help inspire your art. The songs in our ['Growth' Spotify Playlist](#) may also provide inspiration and be calming to listen to while you create.

Share your creations

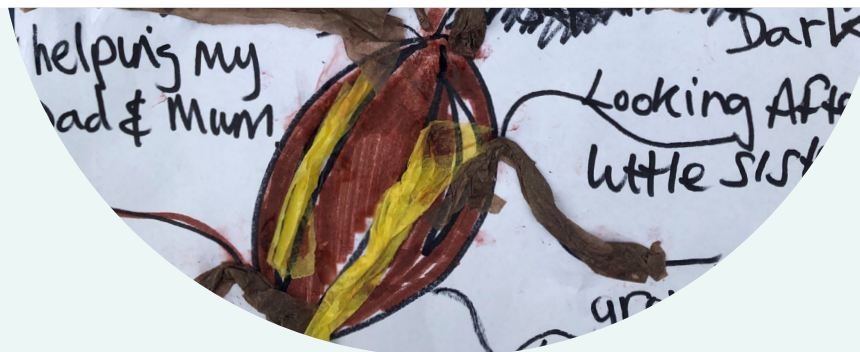
We'd love to see your artwork!
Share photos of your creations
with us on social media:



ACTIVITY 1:

Plant your seeds and grow your roots

Place
2Be



Imagine

Read the story 'Up In The Garden and Down In The Dirt' by Kate Messner.

It is also on YouTube to [read or watch](#)

Listen to our Growth Project Playlist on [Spotify](#)

Activity aims

- To explore what you have learnt during the pandemic
- To imagine you are a seed growing underground
- To create an x-ray image of your seed and roots



Create

You will need:

- card or paper
- pencils/pens/crayons/paint
- magazines/coloured paper/tissue
- sticks/ twigs/string/seeds
- scissors
- glue

Creative activity steps:

1. Imagine looking at a seed that is underground, ready to grow and spread its roots. Think about what its roots look like and where it is growing. Could it be in a flower pot, in a forest, or perhaps near a pond?
cutting/ tearing and pasting recycled paper and materials.
2. Find something flat like card or paper on which to make your art.
3. Draw and/ or paint what the growing seed looks like beneath the ground. Your picture can also be made by
4. Decorate the background of your seed. Are there any animals or insects underground where your seed is growing?
*You may want to add words or phrases related to your experiences during the pandemic like in the example above.



Explore

- Describe what it is like for your seed underground. What can it feel around it?
- In the story 'Up In The Garden And Down In The Dirt' the boy finds many things in the dirt. What will your seed discover in the soil that can help it grow? Have you learnt anything during the pandemic which might help you grow?
- In the story, insects and worms have been digging and building underground. Your seed's roots can also dig deep into the soil. How far will they reach?



Nature based activity ideas

Need further inspiration? Take a look at page 6 to see some additional activity ideas from WWF.

Share your creations

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ACTIVITY 2:

What do you need to grow?



Imagine

Read this story 'The Tiny Seed' by Eric Carle.

It is on YouTube to [read or watch](#)

Listen to our Growth Project Playlist on [Spotify](#)

Activity aims

- To explore the themes of growth and environment
- To think about what your seed needs to grow
- To create a background for your tree/plant/flower



Create

You will need:

- paper/ card/ cardboard
- coloured pencils/ pens/ crayons/ paint
- magazines/ newspaper
- scissors
- glue

Creative activity steps:

1. Choose something clean and flat like paper or card to create the background environment for your plant/ tree/ flower to grow. Perhaps it grows stronger when watered with fruity rain?
2. Have fun imagining what your plant/ flower/ tree would need and where it would grow best. Maybe the special colour of the sky will help your plant to grow?
3. Create your imaginary environment by drawing or painting with your choice of materials listed above. You can also tear/cut and paste bits of paper, newspaper or magazines.



Explore

- In 'The Tiny Seed', the sun shines and the rain falls to help the tiny plant grow taller and taller. What types of weather does your plant enjoy growing in?
- Think about which environment your plant, tree or flower would like best. What would you see around it? Mountains? Sea? Desert?
- Is there anything that might make it tricky for your seed to grow? How could you keep your plant safe?



Nature based activity ideas

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ACTIVITY 3:

Let's grow!



Imagine

Read this story 'The Curious Garden' by Peter Brown while you create.

It is on YouTube to [read or watch](#)

Listen to our Growth Project Playlist on [Spotify](#)

Activity aims

- To explore the theme of growth in your community
- To think about what your seed will grow into
- To create your flower/plant/tree



Create

You will need:

- card/ paper
- coloured pencils/ pens/
- crayons/ paint
- magazines/newspaper
- recycled materials
- scissors
- glue
- straws/ pipe cleaner

Creative Activity Steps:

1. Create the flower/ plant/ tree that has grown from your seed with your choice of materials listed above.

*It can either be drawn, painted or cut and pasted onto the environment made in activity 2 or a new background.

*Are there any fruits or vegetables growing on your flower/tree/ plant?

2. Here are links explaining different ways that your flower/plant/ tree can be made:

[Paper Flower](#)

This will involve using paper, pencil and pipe cleaners, straws or sticks.

[Paper Tree or Plant](#)

This will need glue.



Explore

- What type of flower, plant or tree would your seed grow into? What makes it different from other plants?
- In the story 'The Curious Garden', Liam helped the dying wildflowers on the old railway grow into a beautiful garden. How would you go about transforming an empty space into a garden?
- Lots of new gardeners appeared in the story to help grow gardens across the city. Who would you work together with to grow your garden?



Nature based activity ideas

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Nature based activity ideas



Connects with Activity 1: Plant your seeds and grow your roots

Explore

Spending time in nature can help us relax when we are stressed or worried.

1. Bring nature indoors by creating an autumn nature table with colourful leaves, conkers and acorns you find outside.
2. Plant your own seeds indoors using recycled materials – egg cartons, yoghurt pots and paper cups work well. Just fill your pots with soil, pop in your seeds, water and place near a window for sunlight.
3. Find a natural object such as an acorn, leaf or conker and use a pencil and paper to draw the

object without looking at the page and without taking your pencil off the page. Try to spend time exploring its different textures and shapes. Your final drawing probably won't look much like the object but that doesn't matter. You will have noticed more details by focussing your attention on the object rather than on the page.

Connects with Activity 2: What do you need to grow?

Explore

Connecting our senses and exploring the different shapes, textures, colours and smells of nature can improve our mood, sleep and our concentration.

1. Take some time in nature with your senses. Take a trip to your local park or green space and use your different senses to explore natural environment. What different colours can you see? Can you hear cooing

pigeons or the crunch of frosty ground beneath your feet? Can you smell damp fallen leaves or feel the smooth surface of a conker?

2. Use the Seek app to record different types of plants and animals you see outside on your journey to school or to the park, it's a great way to learn more about the nature in your local area.

[Seek app](#)

3. Take a look at the colours of the trees around your school or home. How many still have their leaves? Which trees are more orange, red, yellow or brown? Do any still have green leaves? Can you catch a falling leaf before it hits the ground?

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Connects with ACTIVITY 3: Let's grow

Explore

By taking small actions to improve the natural environment around us we can feel part of something bigger and help nature thrive in our local communities.

1. Make a nature check list to capture all the autumnal nature you experience in the next few weeks – have you seen leaves falling to the floor? Noticed the nights getting earlier or the temperatures getting colder?
2. It can be difficult for birds to find enough food in the colder months of the year. Build a bird feeder to help nature thrive around your home or school.

[Apple Feeder Activity Sheet](#)

3. Help minibeasts over the winter by building a bug hotel in your garden or school playground.

[Bug hotel Activity Sheet](#)



Growing together

End of project reflection

- Take a look at the art you have created. Which part did you enjoy making the most?
- Imagine taking a walk through your dream garden. What would it look like? Are any of the plants magic?
- Think about the quote 'You will always grow through what you go through.' What have you gone through in life which has helped you to grow? Have you ever helped someone else to grow?

More from The Art Room

Have you seen our other Activities from The Art Room?

Visit the 'Activities from The Art Room' website to see our other projects for families and teachers, including Black History Month, Superheroes, Calm, Colour, River to Sea, Animal Homes, Space and Seasons. They are free to download and can be done at home or in the classroom!

[Visit Activities from The Art Room](#)

More from WWF

Future Visions of Our Planet

The World Wildlife Fund is calling on young people to share their visions of a sustainable future.

You could write a script for the Future Visions film, write a poem or short story about life in the future, compose a song or piece of music, make your own short film, design an infographic poster, or even write a speech for world leaders that sends a message about the future you want to see.

The only limit is your imagination!

Learn how to take part at:

<https://bit.ly/2SCI6pL>

To help children and young people to think about their visions for the future, WWF has created this worksheet: <https://bit.ly/36FY35N>

Royal Patron HRH The Duchess of Cambridge

Place2Be is a national charity working in England, Scotland and Wales.

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