

Growing Green Thumbs

Laramie County Cent\$ible Nutrition Program | June 2020

Growing a garden benefits kids in many ways, including encouraging them to eat more fruits and vegetables, according to the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#). In Laramie County, the Cent\$ible Nutrition Program (CNP) is working with early care and education centers (ECEs) to do just this.



“The Cent\$ible Nutrition Program contacted us in the middle of May with the ability to help us get a garden started with the kids,” said Tina

Ustunergil, Director of Kiddie Kastle daycare in Cheyenne. “We have been really excited to do some fun activities with the kids and have them learn about the importance of healthy food.”

Teaching about healthy food and being active as well as assisting ECEs in making healthy policy changes is one of the ways CNP supports the health of our communities. These efforts are part of a statewide effort to decrease youth obesity through the Healthy Policies Toolkit.

The Healthy Policies Toolkit was developed in 2019 through a partnership among CNP, Wyoming Workforce Services, and the Wyoming Department of Health, Maternal and Child Division. The toolkit was adapted from the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures intervention developed by Nemours.



CNP can provide technical assistance to qualifying ECEs wanting to develop and implement healthy policies, but due to COVID-19 and maintaining social distancing, planned work with ECEs had to adapt. Growing gardens is one way Laramie County CNP and its ECE partners decided to add some healthy changes.

“We are really excited to see what the garden brings the kids and the learning that they will get from growing their own produce,” said Ustunergil.

Kiddie Kastle, the Montessori School of Cheyenne, Creative Compass School, Little Friends Daycare, Cheri’s Daycare and Debbie’s House Daycare all started gardens this year. The Montessori School of

Cheyenne had wanted to begin a garden project and working with CNP helped make that possible.

“The Montessori School of Cheyenne wanted two gardens, one for the one to three year olds and one for older children,” said Tammy Ware, CNP educator. “A volunteer built them wooden garden beds on each side of the building for each age group. I provided them with seedlings I started.”

CNP educators started the seeds for all the ECE gardens, which were planted in early June.

“When I called the Montessori School of Cheyenne, they told me that the one to three years olds got to help plant in their garden, and they loved it,” said Ware.



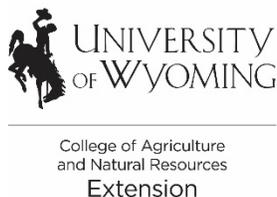
Several weeks have passed since planting and so far, gardening has been a success.

“Everything is sprouting up and the kids are so excited,” said Brittany Wilson and Tess Barnes , Directors at Creative Compass School. “The kids can’t wait to get here each day to see the changes!”

Gardening helps kids build excitement to eat what they are growing, but also provides new opportunities for learning and moving.

“We are so grateful for getting the opportunity to be able to do this with our students, it’s amazing!” said Wilson and Barnes. “Our thumbs might have a tiny bit of green in them after all.”

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View the story and more pictures online at: <https://uwyoocnp.org/stories/growing-green-thumbs/>

