

Healthy Kansas Kids Newsletter

A Program of Child Care Aware® of Kansas



Pinwheels for Prevention is part of **Child Abuse Prevention Month**, recognized nationally each April. Planting a garden of pinwheels reminds us of our ongoing responsibility to ensure that every child has the equal opportunity for healthy growth and development. When the entire community takes responsibility for creating healthy environments in which to raise our children, we lay the foundation for long-term community prosperity. Pinwheel gardens will be popping up throughout Kansas to serve as a reminder of the important role we play in children's daily lives.

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Treated Playground Equipment

Playgrounds are spaces that promote fun and play for young children. Playgrounds also encourage motor skill development and the moderate to vigorous physical activity important for growing bodies. But studies are showing that the wood in many playground sets, picnic tables, benches, and decks can contain potentially hazardous levels of arsenic due to the use of Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA) as a wood preservative and insecticide. Arsenic is a toxic chemical element that occurs naturally in rock and soil. Arsenic is colorless, tasteless, and odorless. When the chemical enters the body through ingestion or inhalation, it is readily absorbed and undetectable. Exposure to CCA treated wood may increase a person's risk of developing a chronic disease, such as cancer.

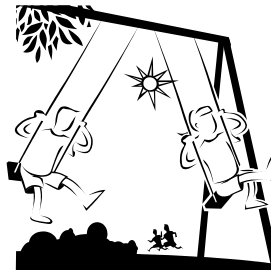
Pressure Treated Wood

Chromated Copper Arsenate is made up of 22% arsenic, a known carcinogen. In 2004, CCA was phased out for residential uses; however, exposure to structures (decks, playground sets, picnic tables, etc.) built prior to 2004 are still a health concern, particularly for children.

Children's Exposure to CCA

Children constantly put their hands in their mouths. If children play on arsenic treated wood, they have a higher risk

of exposure. Children's bodies do not break down arsenic easily, which means that arsenic stays in their bodies longer than it would in an adult's body. The health effects related to arsenic include irritation of the stomach and intestines, birth or developmental effects, skin cancer, lung cancer, bladder cancer, infertility and miscarriages in women.



What to Do to Avoid Arsenic Exposure

Test it. Test kits are available for a fee at The Environmental Working Group, Home Building Network and the Safe Playgrounds Project.

Seal it. Apply a water-based sealant twice a year.

Wash up. Make sure children wash their hands with mild soap and water after playing outdoors. Do not allow children to put their hands in their mouths after handling CCA-treated wood.

Take cover. Cover picnic tables with a plastic coated tablecloth; avoid contact of food and drink with CCA-treated wood.

Do not burn it, sand it or cut it. Burning CCA-treated wood will release arsenic into the air. Sanding or cutting CCA-treated wood will create toxic dust.

Dispose of it at a hazardous waste site. Visit the website www.earth911.org; enter your item and zip code—hazardous waste locations will be provided.

Replace it. Replace CCA-treated wood with safer alternatives.

Websites and Resources

Avoid Arsenic Exposure from CCA-treated Wood:
<http://healthychild.org/issues/chemical-pop/arsenic/>

Poisoned Playgrounds:
www.ewg.org/reports/poisonedplaygrounds

Arsenic Home Test Kit:
www.safe2play.org/faq9.html

Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA):
www.epa.gov/oppad001/reregistration/cca

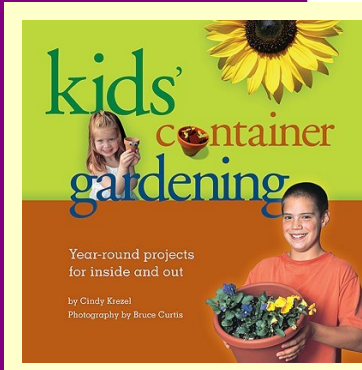
The Safe Playgrounds Project:
www.safe2play.org

Beyond Pesticides:
www.beyondpesticides.org/wood

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry:
www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts2.html

Adapted from Eco-Healthy Child Care®. Child Care Aware® of Kansas supports the efforts of Eco-Healthy Child Care® to help early childhood learning environments to be as healthy, safe, and green as possible.

Let's Grow Something!



Gardening is a great way to entice young children into nature and give them foundational knowledge about real food and where it comes from. Gardening with children can be a great family activity, regardless of whether you're a novice or an experienced gardener. Start by talking with your child about what they would like to grow and decide how much space you can dedicate to a garden. Here are a few easy outdoor garden ideas to consider.

Herb Garden

An herb garden is a wonderful way to bring children closer to nature. Herbs such as rosemary, oregano, sage, thyme, lavender, mint and onion stimulate little noses. If you have some little pizza lovers, consider planting a pizza herb garden in a circular bed. Grow oregano, basil, garlic, bell peppers and tomatoes, then enjoy making homemade pizza with fresh ingredients.

Alphabet Garden

Let children use acrylic paints to decorate a clean, smooth stone. Add the letter that their name begins with and let dry. Next, select seeds for annuals and perennials that correspond to chil-

dren's first names. For example, plant lavender for Luke and peppermint for Paige. Let children choose their own plant at the garden store or select from an assortment of seeds. Tending their own plants will give children a sense of ownership.

Vegetable Garden

Plant radishes, lettuce, squash, carrots, tomatoes and cucumbers for a produce garden. These plants have a short growing season and require very little maintenance.

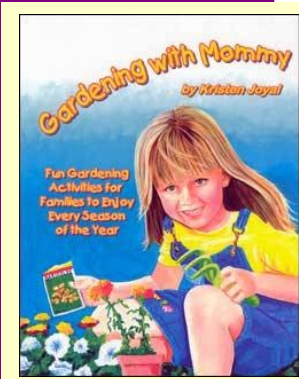
Container Gardens

If you lack sufficient soil or space for a garden project, container gardening is the next best option. Use wooden planter boxes, large pots, hanging baskets or barrels and situate where they can be monitored and watered easily. Container gardens are great for tomatoes, eggplant, strawberries and herbs.

Tips for Gardening with Young Children

- When gardening with children, look for a "teachable moment." You may have been planning to show them the various plant parts, but the kids found a
- praying mantis. Don't fight their enthusiasm for the moment. Instead, explore and learn together about the wonders you find.
- As with any new project, plan to start small so the garden isn't overwhelming.
- Leave behind adult ideas about gardening. Straight rows of tomatoes, peppers and corn may be your idea of the perfect garden, but may be far from what a child finds inviting.
- Plan a play area for younger children. A preschooler may want to plant and replant, dig and explore. Give him a space to do this, full of containers with pebbles, bark, seeds, small tools, and other garden-related items to explore.
- Use kid-sized tools for planting and digging. Even spoons will work well when held in small hands.

Adapted from: Ohio Master Gardeners Resource Guide



Eating a Rainbow

Want to see those fresh fruits and veggies disappear off your child's plate? Let them create a healthy and delicious rainbow with an array of fruits and vegetables. You will need:

- A variety of colors of fruits and/or vegetables to create the rainbow, such as red, green, yellow and orange peppers, strawberries, oranges,

blueberries, grapes, tomatoes, peas, carrots etc. Anything goes!

- Simple fruit dip: mix together 1/2 cup of plain yogurt, 2 T. maple syrup, and 1/8 tsp. vanilla extract until smooth.
- Simple vegetable dip: mix together 1 cup of low-fat cottage cheese with half a packet of

ranch dip mix until smooth.

Arrange the fruits and/or vegetables in the order of the rainbow on a plate. Make a cloud of fruit dip at one end and a cloud of vegetable dip on the other end. Add some pineapple "gold" next to the fruit dip, if desired. Enjoy!

Adapted from www.circletimekids.com

