



# **Mecklenburg County Health Department**

## **Gardening Best Practices Child Care Centers**

### **• General Guidance**

- Wash your hands after turning compost, working in the worm bin, and before handling produce.
- Use garden tools and equipment carefully.
- Keep the garden free of dangers and trash.
- Keep animals and pets out of the garden.
- Maintain tools and store them in a locked container.
- Store tools on the ground in a safe manner when not in direct use.
- Do not use CCA treated lumber for raised garden bed borders.
- Rid the garden of sharp objects, such as rebar or fence posts, or make sure stakes are capped.

### **• Fertilizers**

- Do not apply when children are present.
- Use as needed to meet plants' nutritional needs.
- Follow all label precautions, as some fertilizers can be dangerous for children.
- Always keep stored in a locked, labeled, well-ventilated storage area.

### **• Pesticides**

- Avoid using if possible.
- Read and follow the label.
- Grow plants that naturally repel pests.
- Do not use "home-made" or experimental pesticides; rather, use only ones approved by EPA for farms and/or home gardens.
- Always keep stored in a locked, labeled, well-ventilated storage area.
- Do not apply when children are present.

### **• Animals and pests**

- Take active steps to keep pets, wild animals, and insect pests out of an active growing area.
- Do not leave food discards uncovered in compost piles.
- Do not use raw manure with a growing crop.

### **• Garden care and maintenance**

- Water garden with potable water.
- If non-potable water from rain barrels is used, apply water at the soil surface and never on the edible portion of the crop.
- Use science-based composting techniques that create pathogen-free finished compost.

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