

Activity: Plant Care Goal: Cognitive Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Watering Small Pots

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Photo by D. Relf



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will practice watering small potted plants in 2-3” containers.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Practice self-regulation waiting for turn to water, using correct polite verbal exchanges with others

Physical: Develop fine motor skills pouring water onto plants

Psychological/Emotional: Gain understanding of plant needs & importance of caring for plants

Sensory: Enjoyment of tactile sense with water, soil & outside weather; cope with water spills, cooler temperatures etc.

Social: Practice relationship skills; take turns watering plants

Materials

small pots with drainage holes with plants that need watering
plastic saucers
water
towels
aprons, gloves, wipes
cups, water can, squeeze bottles

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparations:** Gather materials & fill squeeze bottles, cups or cans with water.
2. Facilitator organizes the participants at workstations with assembled materials & potted plants in small containers. Place saucers under pots to catch excess water. Demonstrate watering from the top, gently pouring water over plant.
3. Have the group observe the water draining from the bottom onto the saucer, discussing how to evenly water & moisten soil for best plant growth. This usually requires 2 waterings in these small pots.
4. Place watered pots on towel, allowing for proper drainage, finally moving pots to desired locations.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Appropriate for most populations. Adaptations can be made using lighter watering containers, seated workstations, partners/task sharing for people with visual impairments – use sense of touch and soil moisture to determine adequate water saturation. For those with compromised hand strength the use of squeeze bottles may not be appropriate. This activity may be used as an opening, closing activity or main task during the session.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Some participants may be sensitive to potting soil or vermiculite. Use of aprons or extra clothing may be warranted if young children may spill water on themselves. Sun protection should be considered when activity occurs outdoors. Potable water should be used.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Related programming and activities could include games for children: take turns filling up water vessel practicing taking turns (patience) and using courteous verbal exchanges (“please may I have the watering can”), these related to self-regulation. Discussion or activity focused on alternative watering methods like drip irrigation, wicking water from bottom of containers and use of watering wand for larger pots can extend this activity as can repotting or transplanting plants as they outgrow small pots.

Self-regulation involves how individuals process and respond to external, internal, biological and neurological inputs. Practicing socially appropriate behavior using all types of activities, games and social interactions helps people of all ages and abilities, intellectual and physical, develop healthy behaviors.

A watering game for young children—3 - 4 “small watering cans were made available with the staff person stationed near the hose. The children formed a line along the fence and as the watering can was filled, it was passed to the first child in line. After the child watered the plants and cooled off, their task was to approach the next child in line, make eye contact, hand them the empty can, and say, ‘It’s your turn!’ The receiving child would respond, ‘Thank you!’ and accept the can. Only after this exchange would the watering can be refilled.... practice in self-regulation.”

Excerpt from Katie Grimes’ article [Case Example: Using Sensory Experiences to Improve Self-Regulation](#) published in *Cultivate* 4(2).

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

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HT Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner 2012, revised in 2023.