

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Activity: New herby beginnings

Kickstart the new year with this growing activity that will fill your nursery with the delightful aroma of fresh herbs, awakening your senses each day. This hands-on exploration of new beginnings encourages curiosity, responsibility, and joy as children witness the miracle of growth in the natural world.

Learning aims

- Enhance understanding of the concept of growth and change
- Sensory exploration
- Foster a sense of responsibility towards the herbs as they care for them and monitor their needs.



Resources

- Herb seeds (parsley, basil or thyme grow well)
- Small pots or one large pot
- Compost
- Scoops for the soil (optional)
- Water (watering can/spray bottles) – optional
- Paper/card/stickers to make labels
- Pencil, felt pens, crayons – to illustrate or write herb names.

Activity outline

- Discuss the concept of new beginnings with the children, for example, this is a new year, a new term, new toys after Christmas, new pets etc. Explain that you are going to plant some seeds together to watch the new beginnings of herbs. Tell them that the new year, just like the herbs, is a time for everyone to grow and try new things
- Provide each child with a small pot, or use one large pot, and fill halfway with soil, using their hands or a scoop if preferred
- Encourage children to explore the soil – how does it feel, look, smell? You could model some descriptive words, such as, “It feels soft and crumbly”
- Show the seeds and explore them too – their size, weight, shape etc. Read the instruction on the packet, sharing writing for information
- Model sprinkling a pinch of the seeds into a pot, covering them lightly with soil. Encourage the children to do the same. Make sure children wash their hands thoroughly after handling the soil/compost and seeds
- Demonstrate how to gently water the soil and then encourage the children to water theirs
- Create simple labels to show which herb is in the pot/s

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- Discuss what the herbs will need to help them grow - water, sunlight, and care.

Extension ideas

- Observation chart for children to draw, or note with an adult's support, the changes they observe
- Use the herbs in a recipe such as a cookie, a smoothie or some soup or make them available on the malleable table and in the home area.

NDNA products to support you with this activity

- Online course – [Quality Teaching in Early Years](#)