



Children's Garden FAQs



What does a typical session at the HSBC Children's Garden look like?

- All sessions have a combination of gardening activities, environmental education, and child-led nature exploration. Our mission here is to learn by doing: we focus on experiential learning—using our 5 senses to learn through experience.
- Participants will create and do various themed-activities, projects, crafts, and experiments that utilize the Garden and its abundance.

What are some of the activities my child might do in their summer session?

- Here are some possible activities participants might be doing in their session:
 - **Session I *Flowers and Pollinators***: doing flower dissections and learning about their various parts; collecting and identifying various seeds and learning about their dispersal; tasting different types of honey from various pollinated plants, making models of honeybees and learning the parts of insects; going on a butterfly hunt; and more!!
 - **Session II *The Kitchen and Beyond: All about Plants and Their Uses***: collecting juicy ripe tomatoes from the garden and making a salsa, sniffing and identifying herbs in the Herb Garden; making a botanical lotion, lip balm, soap, or bug spray; making a soothing herbal tea; learning about plant folklore; collecting and identifying edibles weeds in the forest; and more!!
 - **Session III *Urban Critters***: learning to identify animal tracks and go on a tracking hunt; observing and sketching local birds; creating models of various habitats where critters live; setting traps to catch beetles, slugs, and pill bugs; brainstorm ways to preserve biodiversity; seeing live hawks, possums, owls, or snakes with Volunteers for Wildlife; and more!!
 - **Session IV *Art in the Garden***: collecting rainwater to do watercolor paintings; making a temporary art installation to display at the Garden; using the power of the sun to make prints; collecting nature artifacts to make sculptures; making recycled seed paper; and more!!

Do you offer extended hours in the summer for working families?

- Yes! We offer after-care for summer programs from Monday through Thursday from 3:00-5:30pm.
- On summer Fridays, the Children's Garden is now offering Queens Culture Fridays! Young explorers will take trips to Queens Zoo, New York Hall of Science, and Queens Museum for guided workshops and discovery.

What should my child wear to Children's Garden?

- Clothes that can get dirty or wet since we spend lots of time outside
- Closed-toe shoes
- Sun hat for sunny days
- Jacket, sweater and other appropriate cool weather items
- Rain coat and hat on days when rain is forecasted



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- A change of clothes in case your child gets wet in the garden

What should we bring? *(You will receive a complete checklist once you register)*

- A reusable water bottle to be refilled throughout the day
- Children in summer sessions must bring their own lunch (refrigeration is available)
- Send your child dressed appropriately for the weather
- Sunscreen and a hat for sunny days

How many children enroll in the program? What is the child/teacher ratio?

- We limit enrollment to 25-28 children daily and then divide them into 3 groups, based on age and abilities. Each group has one supervising counselor and at least one intern or volunteer.
- For Queens Culture Days, when children are offsite, we maintain a ratio of at least one adult to five children.

What are the age restrictions for participants?

- Children must be between the ages of 4-10 years old to participate in the program
- **For spring and summer programs, children must be 4 years old by January 1st, 2017.** For Fall Programs, children must be 4 years old by June 1, 2017.
- Older or younger participants may look into our other programs, Garden Buds (2-3 yr. old) and Junior Naturalists (11-14 yr. olds), Forest Preschool Alternative (2-6 yr. old)

Can I sign up my child for multiple summer sessions? Will they do the same activities?

- Yes! We encourage it. While there will be some overlap in the structure of the day, explorations-type activities, and garden time, each session focuses on a separate theme. Signing your child up for multiple sessions ensures that they will see the garden change and grow throughout the weeks, and receive a unique experience each time.

Are cell phones allowed?

- No. We do not allow any of the students to have cell phones on them during the day. If you feel more comfortable with your student having one, we will keep it in the office during the program time.

Are toys/electronics allowed?

- Typically, no. We encourage new friendships and a communal joy of experiencing the natural surroundings. Please don't send your child with any electronics or toys.
- If it is your child's first time at an all-day setting, or they are particularly uneasy, they can bring a toy or animal for comfort. If this is the case, we typically try to keep items in their backpacks so they don't get lost or dirty.

What if the weather is bad?



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- The Children's Garden is a program that runs rain or shine. If the weather is unsafe or severe, we will modify our curriculum for the day and plan to be indoors. We will still go outside if there is a light rain or if the weather is hot. Please make sure to have your child dress accordingly.
- Children's Garden takes place primarily outdoors.

My child was sick. Can we make up a missed class?

- No. There are no make-up classes as it's important to us to maintain a low ratio of students to instructors.

My child has to miss one or several of the spring 10-class series. Can I only sign up for some of the classes or get a pro-rated price for the classes we are able to attend?

- No. The spring program runs as a series class, and has no opportunities for make-up classes. If your child has to miss a class, please just let us know.

Can I stay with my child during the classes?

- No, these are drop-off classes. On the first day of the session, you are permitted to stay briefly with your child to adapt, but we do ask that you only stay for about 15 minutes. The students in our program do very well with socializing and our counselors are trained in how to include all students and make them feel welcomed.

My child has a special learning need. Can I still send him/her to your program? Can I stay with my child during the program to help him/her?

- We encourage children of all learning abilities to participate in Children's Garden, and do our best to accommodate a full spectrum of learning styles.
- Children must be able to function independently in a non-formal group setting, as we are not adapted to work one-on-one with children. We encourage children who need one-on-one care to participate with a certified aide or caretaker. Please make arrangements prior to the beginning of the program.
- Please let our Program Coordinator know ahead of time if your child has a special need. We will work on a case-by-case basis to best accommodate your child.

Where does the program take place?

- Drop-off information is shared with families upon enrollment.
- The program primarily takes place in the Children's Garden, which is closed to the public and only used by children enrolled in the program. We have specific indoor education spaces we use throughout the day as well.
- Additionally, we use the entire 39-acres of diversified gardens within QBG including woodland, pond, farm, and more!

More questions?

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