



Playdatebox

MAY 2022

GARDENS

PLAYDATEBOX.COM NEWSLETTER



CHEAP THERAPY

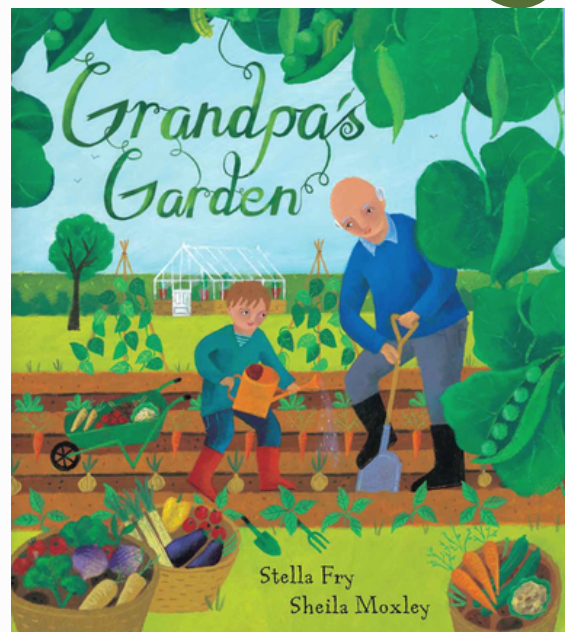
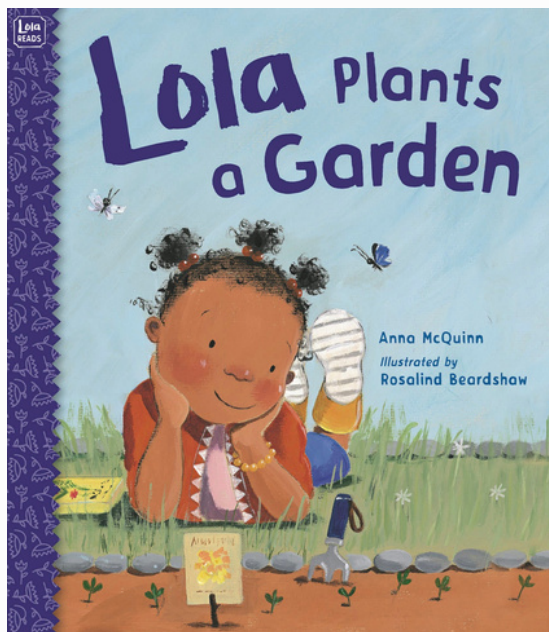
GARDENING IS A GREAT FORM OF THERAPY, BOTH FOR ADULTS AND FOR CHILDREN, AND WE'VE GATHERED ALL OF THE SUPPLIES AND IDEAS YOU WILL NEED FOR SEVERAL FUN PLAYDATES WITH GRANDCHILDREN AGES 3-8.

LET'S PLANT A GARDEN!

SELF-CARE FOR GRANDPARENTS AND KIDS WHO LOVE THEM

We've collected fun ideas and resources you can use to create your own Playdates with children or grandchildren you love. Please share them with friends and family and visit [Playdatebox.com](https://www.playdatebox.com) for more ideas!

- **Lola Plants a Garden** – A fun read-aloud by Anna McQuinn
- **Flowerpot Painting Activity** – Paint your own decorative flowerpot
- **Plant some seeds** – Plant something fun in that pot you decorated!
- **Seed packet decorating activity** – Design and color your own seed packet to send to a friend.
- **Sun-sensitive paper** – Go on a hunt for some unique plant foliage
- **Seed starting** - Start seeds you find in your refrigerator.



FAVORITE READ-ALOUDS

GARDEN-THEMED BOOKS TO SHARE WITH YOUR GRANDCHILDREN

Playdate #1

Read a book about gardens!

Lola Plants a Garden:

Lola is curious about what makes plants grow, so she and her mom visit the library to find out. She decides to plant a garden of her own and invites all of her friends to share her harvest. [Preview the book here on YouTube.](#)

Grandpa's Garden:

A wise grandfather teaches an impatient child all about the magic of gardens as they observe Grandpa's garden through the seasons. **Access this book free with your coupon code for Readeo.com**

Readeo.com:

Try a "BookChat" remote reading experience with Readeo.com

Readeo.com allows you to select a book online from over 800 titles. You and your book buddy will be connected via videochat, so you can both see and hear one another AND see the full book on your screen. This allows you to read together as if you were in the same room!

Coupon Code!

Use the code **PlayDateBox** to get an extended 30-day trial of Readeo.com.

Try the app for free to see if it's a good fit for you.



Playdate #2

Give them Something To Grow



Plant Something Together

There's something special about working with a child to put something into the soil and watch it grow! And research tells us that next to therapy and journaling, gardening is one of the best forms of self-therapy.

Whether you plant seeds in your own garden, work together to create a small flower planter, or just sprout beans together long-distance, you and your grandchild are going to benefit from getting your hands a little bit dirty.

How to Do This Remotely:

With 2-3 living plants, some potting soil, and a suitable container, you can create matching "gardens" via video conference.

Choose a few flowers from a local nursery, or even plant some garden herbs like basil, oregano, or cilantro.

Playdate #3

Decorate a Flowerpot



Painted Flowerpot:

Whether your grandchildren live close or you have to connect with them via a phone call, painting a flowerpot together is an inexpensive and fun activity for a preschooler. Level up the challenge for older kids by teaching them an even more interesting way to decorate a pot.

You'll need some supplies:

- A terra-cotta flowerpot
- Paints
- Paintbrush

How to Do This Remotely:

It will be more fun if you have paints and a flowerpot on both sides of the phone call. Get your hands free by using the plug end of your smartphone to hold the phone steady so you can paint as you talk.



#PlayLibrary

Kids' Garden Set

Garden tools for children are the kind of childhood plaything you don't think of as toys until the day you are wise enough to invest in some. If you happen to be a gardener, you'll completely understand how necessary a set of kid's gloves, a watering can, and some tools for mucking around in the dirt can be.

But if you aren't a gardener, you may still want to invest, particularly if you happen to have a play space that features bare dirt or you want to get your grandchildren away from their screens for a while.

- Child-sized trowel, spade, rake
- Kids' gardening gloves
- A watering can
- A bucket or bag for carrying tools
- Access to a hose – a spray nozzle with a trigger a child can manage is an extra bonus for a preschooler
- An assortment of old pots for painting and planting

Help a child you love to develop an appreciation for plants, bugs, and the world around them. This is a wonderful open-ended toy!

Playdate #4

Send Seeds to a Buddy

Try designing your own seed packets using just a piece of paper, or order plain seed packets online and decorate them yourself. Once your seed packet is ready to go, ship some seeds to a buddy and then have a growing contest.

This activity is particularly fun if you are gardening "remotely" with your Playdatebox Buddy.

A SET OF KID'S GARDENING TOOLS IS A GREAT THING TO HAVE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD TOYBOX.

THEY ALSO MAKE A GREAT BIRTHDAY GIFT!





FREE PRINTABLE

DOWNLOAD A ZINNIA
TRACKING SHEET SO YOU
AND YOUR GARDENING
BUDDY CAN PLANT
ZINNIAS
SIMULTANEOUSLY.

WATCH HOW THE
GROWTH OF YOUR
PLANTS IS THE SAME OR
DIFFERENT.

Playdate #5

PLANT SOME SEEDS IN YOUR POT

Once your painted pot is dry, you'll be able to plant a few seeds and learn about soil, water, and light and how they impact growing seeds. We recommend that you share photos regularly as your plants grow. Gardening with grandchildren can happen even if you live miles apart! We show you how on our blog!

How to Do This Remotely:

Consider seeds that grow quickly. Beans, Zinnias, and Radishes are all great options. If you try Zinnias, be sure to download the Zinnia Tracking Sheet so you can compare progress.



PLAYDATE #6

DISCOVER BLOOMS AND FOLIAGE - SUN-SENSITIVE PAPER

Sun-sensitive paper is a really fun tool to use for creating interesting shapes and textures on paper. Go on a treasure hunt to find leaves and blossoms that have some interesting shapes. Place your samples on the paper, weigh them down with a clear acrylic sheet, and wait a few minutes.

Sun-sensitive paper is a little bit like old-fashioned photo paper in that it leaves a "negative" of the shape of the plant. You wait for the paper to go completely white around the outside edges of the leaves and plants, and then soak the paper in water to change the colors yet again. The whole process is kind of magical for a child. You'll find [detailed instructions on our blog](#).

Once your paper is finished, you can turn it into unique artwork. Or, make a greeting card out of your paper, write a note, and send it to someone you love.

How to Do This Remotely:

Go on a Nature Walk together using FaceTime or Google Duo. Or, ship sun-sensitive paper to both locations and try this science project simultaneously.

Tips For Virtual Storytime

On the blog this month, [we share some easy ideas](#) for reading aloud via FaceTime or VideoConference.

- Learn easy ways to maneuver the book and the computer so kids can see the pages easier.
- Try a couple of fun screen-sharing options that will give you access to professional videography to go along with the story you are reading,
- Try Readeo.com for free. It eliminates much of the frustration you've probably felt when you've tried to do a bedtime story remotely!



PLAYDATE #7 - SEED STARTING

START SEEDS USING LEFT-OVER PRODUCE FROM YOUR REFRIGERATOR

I recently tried a trick I learned on an Instagram reel that showed how to start new pepper plants using seeds from red, yellow, and green peppers from the grocery store.

They simply filled a used plastic strawberry box with seed-starting soil (or potting soil if that's easier to find). Next, they planted the seeds and covered them lightly with soil, keeping the seeds moist until they germinated.

The germinated seedlings were then planted into larger pots and moved outdoors when the weather was warm enough.

Curious, I tried the same thing with some cherry tomatoes that were in the crisper drawer and looking a little wrinkly. I just squirted out the innards of a cherry tomato into a pot of soil and within a week, I had dozens of new seedlings.

I wasn't successful keeping my tomatoes alive once I transplanted them outdoors (that would have required paying attention and keeping things watered adequately), but I learned you can start seeds in unusual ways, and for teaching children, this was a fun experiment!

Seed Sprouting for Novices

Try starting some seeds indoors just for the sheer joy of seeing them sprout!

You can sprout alfalfa seeds, sunflower seeds, and more in a Mason jar on your kitchen counter and turn these highly-nutritious microgreens into a colorful garnish for your meals. Learn how on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uav3Wd58nmU>

SOME FUN GRANDPARENT RESOURCES TO TRY...



*Easy & Fun
postcards*



*New Online
Course*



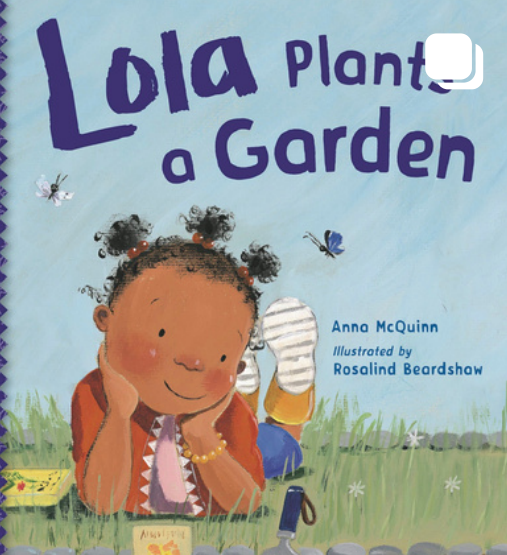
Meaningful ways to
stay connected with
far-away grandkids

*Website You
Will Love*

Silverpost Postcards: You text a photo and a greeting, Silverpost prints and mails a postcard each month. Cost: \$5.00 per month.
<https://www.hello.thesilverpost.com/>

Grandparenting 101 is a fun new Zoom course launching September 2022. Richard and Linda Eyre will teach the art of developing effective, difference-making relationships with our grandkids. Cost: \$175 for the 6-month course. Or, if your budget won't stretch that far, get a scholarship and take the course for FREE!

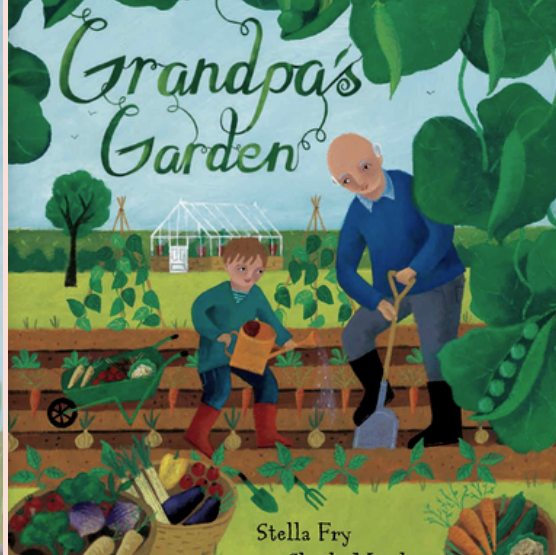
TheLongDistanceGrandparent.com: Kerry Byrne, Ph.D. shares tips and tricks for grandparents who love grandchildren from a distance.



Picture Book: Lola Plants a Garden

Ages: 2-4 years
Paperback: \$7.19 on Amazon

How does your garden grow? Book-loving Lola is inspired by a collection of garden poems that she reads with her mommy.



Picture Book: Grandpa's Garden

Ages: 4-7 years
Paperback: \$7.99
This beautifully told story follows Billy from early spring to late summer as he helps his grandpa on his vegetable patch.



Children's Garden Set

Ages: 4-8 years
Brand: Storybook Kids
\$12.99

A sturdy set with a canvas carrying case and a board book on gardening.

Includes garden tools and gloves. Available in several colors.

RESOURCES GALLERY (affiliate links)



Kids' flower pot painting set

Brand: Dan & Darci
Paperback: \$39.99

Paint the 3 stoneware pots, the stoneware tray, and plant markers, and sow the Marigold, Cosmos, and Zinnia flowers



Indoor Herb Garden for Grandma & Grandpa

Ages: 2-102
Paperback: \$39.68

Plant culinary herbs along with the grandkids but grow them indoors!



Cyanotype SunPrint Paper

Brand: SunPrint
\$19.99

Objects that eclipse the sun's light will show up in white, with the rest of the paper turning a vibrant Prussian Blue.



Garden Dramatic Play Set for Toddlers

\$24.98

Develop Imaginative play and social skills. For toddlers ages 2+



Kids' Gardening Tools

Ages: 4-7 years

\$12.99

Fork, Rake, and a Shovel . The tools are made of durable wood and high quality metal



Let Love Grow Seed Packets, 100

\$11.99 for 100

Fill with your favorite seeds and mail a packet to a grandchild.

RESOURCES GALLERY

(affiliate links)



California Giant Zinnia Seeds

\$3.49

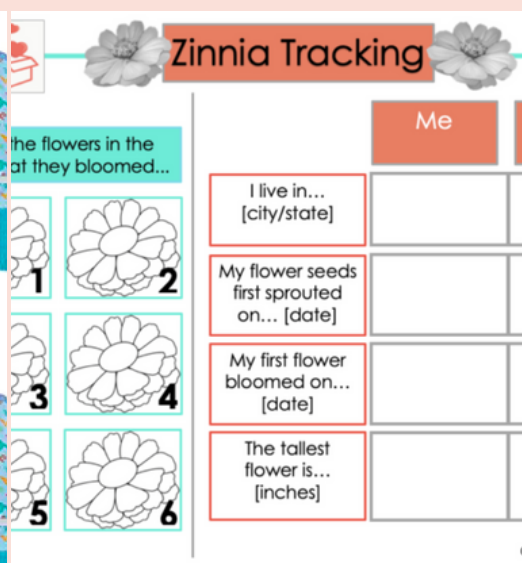
My favorite flower for planting with kids. Easy to grow with big, beautiful blooms that mature in about 50 days!



Kids' Garden Gloves

\$12.99 for 3

The grandkids will get a kick out of planting bedding plants with you, especially if they get their own set of gloves. Comes in 7 colors and patterns.



Zinnia Tracking Sheet

Free Download

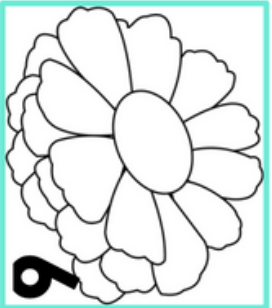
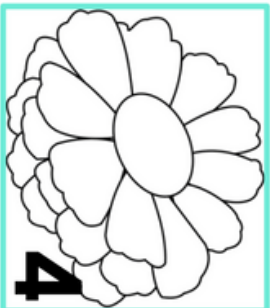
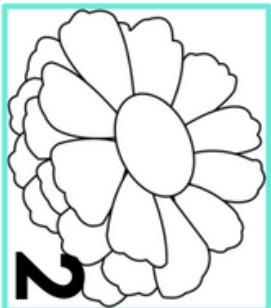
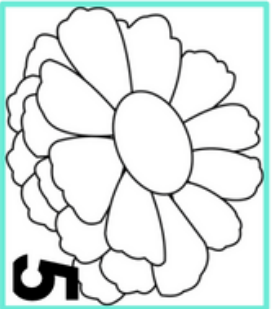
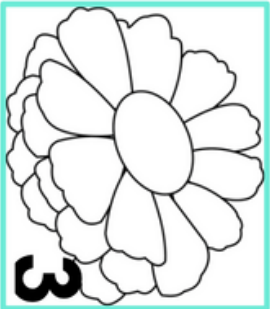
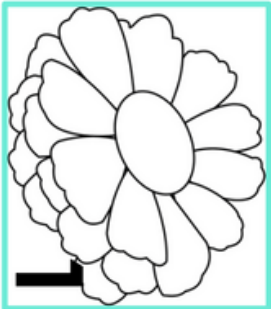
Track the growth of your Zinnias across the miles with this free printable.



Zinnia Tracking



Color the flowers in the order that they bloomed...



Me

My Playdate
Partner

I live in...
[city/state]

My flower seeds
first sprouted
on... [date]

My first flower
bloomed on...
[date]

The tallest
flower is...
[inches]

FIND MORE FUN IDEAS: [PLAYDATEBOX.COM/GARDENS](https://playdatebox.com/gardens)

SHARE
YOUR
IDEAS!



If you have fun "gardening with grandkids" ideas you would be willing to share with our readers, we want to hear from you!

NEXT MONTH:
SPACE
EXPLORERS!

WE LOVE

- Guest blog posts
- Tips for connecting with long-distance grandchildren
- Fun themes for new Playdateboxes
- Your best Playdate ideas

Visit us:

[Playdatebox.com](https://playdatebox.com)

Email us:

customercare@playdatebox.com



Follow us on Instagram
[@playdate_box](https://www.instagram.com/playdate_box) and tag us in your own
photos of play with grandchildren!

