Objective:
Children create picnic party hats that illustrate what they know about climate change and gardening. In addition to being a helpful evaluation post-test, these hats will be fun to wear at the community picnic on August 12th!

Overview:
The objective of this activity is to make wearable works of art that illustrate children’s understanding of the topic of climate change and what they can do about it in the garden. This activity is both a creative arts project, as well as an effective evaluation tool. Through making the hats twice, once at the beginning of the summer program and again at the end of the program, you will be able to identify a change in the group’s knowledge and understanding of climate change and gardening.

Time:
• 1 hour during last week of program

Materials:
• 2-inch clear tape
• Newspaper
• Yarn
• Scissors
• Miscellaneous art supplies (markers, glitter, pipe cleaner, tissue paper, etc – really whatever you can think of! Try to use recycled materials wherever possible.)

Instructions:

Make the Hat
• Take two large, square sheets of newspaper and roll them into a cone-shaped party hat.
• Place the open part of the cone onto the head of the child, while continuing to hold the tip of the cone.
• Measure the open end of the cone to the child’s head. Tape it in place to keep the size. Tape all along the seam.
• Cut a piece of yarn for each hat. Tape the yarn to the edge of the hat, to act as a chin strap to keep the hat in place.
Decorate the Hat

- Simply ask, without prompting, a question related to this pilot project, such as: what is climate change and how does it impact the garden? Or, what can we do in the garden to help stop climate change? Think about a question along these lines that the children will understand.
- Encourage children to decorate their hats, with different art supplies, to show what they know. Encourage them to be creative, but do not offer suggestions or prompting, as the goal here is to find out what they have learned about the topic.

Describe the Hat

- When everyone’s finished their hats, encourage them to show their creation to the group and talk about what each decoration or item means.
- As they do this, jot down the numbers and range of responses.
- For example, when asked what plants need, children may show water drops, and a sun. Note those as examples of two different needs. Note, too, any misinformation you see presented.

Wear the Hat

- Once everyone has presented their hats to the group, and you have finished writing down their range of responses, invite the children to wear their hats for the community picnic party on August 12th.

Reflect:

- Is there an evident difference between their hat decorations at the beginning and end of the program? At the end of the program, are children able to identify more, or present a broader/deeper understanding of climate change, how it relates to gardening, and how they can make a difference through gardening practices?
- For example, they may now note that plants need sun, water, nutrition, time to grow, a good location, and care.