Kids love to dig in the dirt. Some little sprouts from Jackson County were doing it for a good reason. They learned how to grow their own fruits and vegetables. The program, sponsored by the Jackson County Early Explorers, was held at the Cedar Lakes Conference Center high tunnel through the month of June. Jessica Isner was one of the adults leading the group.

“Our goal is to work with children under 6 to learn how to explore the world around them,” explained Isner. “We’re teaching the children where our food comes from. It’s planted. It’s watered. It’s harvested. The sun helps it grow.”

The five-week program, called “Little Sprouts Discovery Garden,” gave the children a chance to learn at their own pace. The hour-long program started out with songs and stories and a tour around a high tunnel garden to watch plants develop each week. Then they split up into play stations to learn new lessons.

One station centered around decorating flower pots to plant their seeds. Another involved measuring how much plants had grown from the week before. And perhaps the favorite station, using kid-sized shovels and rakes to prepare a garden. Isner stressed it’s all hands-on learning, and it’s not just for the kids.

“A huge part of this is not only outreach to the children but also to their parents. We want families to put away those cell phones and enjoying the world around us with their kids.”

Anywhere from 20 to 40 children attended each week.

“At the end of this, we hope the children know where their food comes from and how a plant grows,” stressed Isner. “Most importantly, they can do this from home.”

For more information on the program, check out the Facebook group Jackson County Early Explorers.