

Nature is a great teacher, and getting kids outside to learn and play is good for their brains and their bodies. Try this outdoor activity from Project Learning Tree®—it's safe, fun, and educational!

SIGNS OF FALL

Look for signs of autumn and discover why some leaves change color in the fall.

Observe the annual change of seasons, and investigate why leaves of deciduous trees change color.

As autumn approaches, take children on a walk through a wooded area, schoolyard, local park, or neighborhood to look for signs of fall. Challenge them to find as many signs as possible that indicate winter is approaching. Colorful falling leaves are easy to see, but encourage children to look for other signs too (e.g., birds migrating, squirrels storing nuts, garden plants dying).

Explain to children the difference between deciduous trees (which loses their leaves in the fall) and evergreen trees (which don't lose their leaves in the fall). Have children collect sample leaves from each type.

Create leaf rubbings by covering a leaf with a piece of paper and rubbing a crayon over it. The leaf's margin and veins will appear. Use crayons to match the fall colors found in the leaves.

Encourage critical thinking by asking:

- What signs of fall can you see in the trees and on the ground?
- How many different leaf colors can you find?
- What will happen to the leaves?

MAKE LEARNING FUN!

Encourage your child's school to incorporate outdoor learning by connecting with your local PLT program.

Visit plt.org/yourstate

FOREST FACT

Fallen leaves are an essential part of a forest's ecosystem. The "leaf litter" shields the soil from hard rains, holding in moisture and preventing erosion. It also protects tree seeds that will germinate next spring, and nutrients that leach from the dead leaves nourish the seedlings.



Visit plt.org for more!