



ACTIVITY 3: EXPLORING FALL COLORS

AGE: Preschoolers

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

An assortment of fall leaves of different shapes, sizes and colors.

PURPOSE

A key part of learning and understanding of math is the ability to see how things are alike and different, and to be able to sort, compare, and group them based on their features, such as color, shape or size. In this activity, your preschooler will learn how to sort fall leaves by a few characteristics such as color and size.



This activity relates to the Measurement, Classification, and Data element of the **Mathematics** domain of the VELs.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO!

During time outside in your yard, at the park or on a walk in the neighborhood, gather an assortment of fall leaves. Ask your child to tell you what colors the different leaves are, and to describe the leaves' shapes and sizes. Ask your child to use descriptive words like round, large, small, smooth, rough, and flat – you may need to show them by using them yourself first. Next, ask your child to group the leaves by different properties such as their color or size.



Talk to your child about the differences in the leaves as they group them and ask them questions about why they grouped certain leaves together, for example, "How is this red leaf like the others in your pile? What is different about it?" When you have finished, count how many piles you have, and if they can think of other ways to group the leaves together. For example, think about grouping them by the shape of the leaf (maple or oak for example) and then try to find trees that have leaves still on the branch to match.

SWITCH IT UP!

- If fall leaves are not available you can do a similar activity with other items found in your local park or in your home. Ask your child to sort other items such as flowers, rocks, socks, buttons, colored candies, or shells.



- Expand on this activity by creating a scavenger hunt for items of different colors. Ask your child to help you find items of different colors either in the park, in your yard, or in your house. For younger children, you might give them a clue for which colors to match, such as a red crayon or a yellow cup. Help your child explore what’s around them to find items of that color. You can also ask your child to “count” how many objects of each color they find by making hash marks on a piece of paper with the color name written on it.



BRIDGING ACROSS DOMAINS

These are ways to work on other areas of development (or bridge across domains) during the same activity.

- **Visual Art:** Take the leaves your child found and sorted and use them to make a collage on a piece of paper using glue or contact paper. Encourage them to arrange the leaves in a pattern they choose and to describe what they are doing, such as, “What made you decide to put those leaves together?.”
- **Foundational Reading Skills:** Write the name of the colors and/or shapes your child is sorting on a piece of paper. Read the word aloud to your child, pointing out individual letters in the word. Encourage them to sort items on the piece of paper that corresponds with the correct color or shape word.



CHECK IT OUT!

Visit your local library and check out these books to read with your child.

- *Leaves* by David Ezra Stein
- *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert
- *Fletcher and the Falling Leaves* by Julia Rawlinson and Tiphonie Beeke

NOTES
