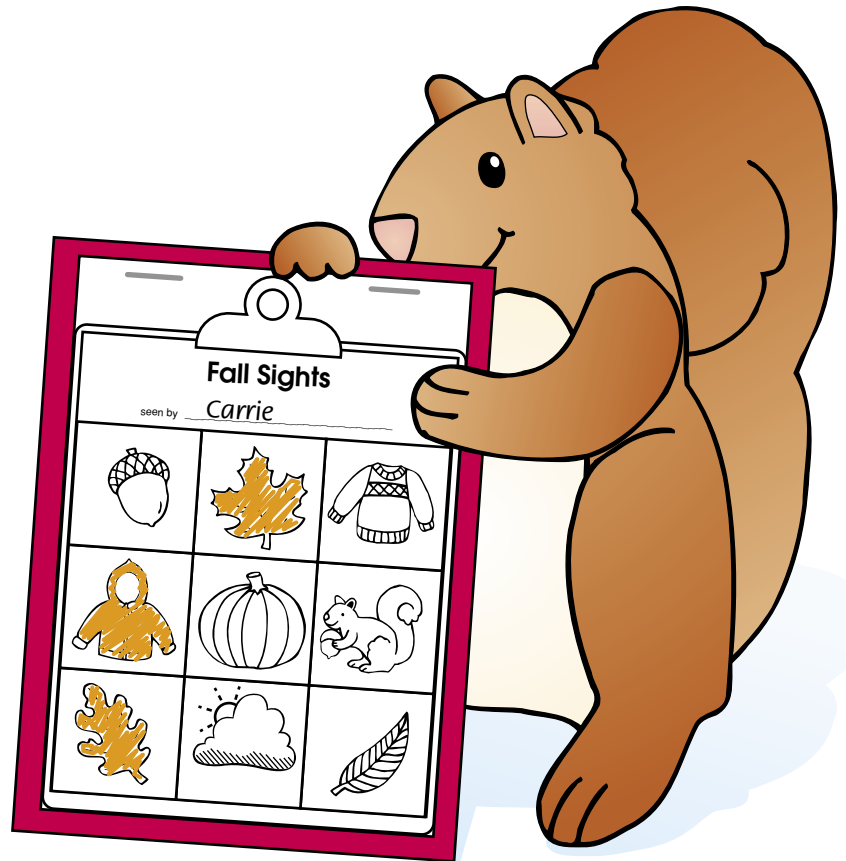


Fall Is in the Air

Cooler temperatures, warmer clothes, colorful leaves...it must be fall! Invite your little ones to study fall weather and the changes that signal this new season.

Looking for Fall

Even if the autumn changes in your area are subtle, your youngsters will find signs that say, "Fall is here!" Usher in the season by taking students for a walk outdoors to search for sights that signal the arrival of autumn. Before your excursion, make a copy of the recording card on page 8 for each child. Staple each card to an individual piece of cardboard. Then give each child a crayon and a recording card before you head outdoors. As you walk, encourage students to search their surroundings for signs of fall in the animals, clothing, trees, and weather around them. (If signs of fall are scarce in your area, enlarge the pictures from the card, color them, cut them apart, and place them along your walking trail for students to spot.) As each child sees an item pictured on her card, have her color the picture. At the end of your walk, return to your classroom for a discussion of this crisp and cool new season.



Let's Talk (and Sing) About Autumn

After your nature walk, lead a discussion about the fall sights your little ones saw. Display a large leaf shape cut from yellow bulletin board paper. Ask students to name the fall things they saw—both items that were on their recording cards and items that weren't. Write students' suggestions on the leaf shape to create a fall vocabulary list. Then teach little ones the tune below. As you repeat the verse, replace the underlined words with words and phrases from the list.

Later, invite youngsters to draw fall scenes, incorporating some of the things they listed on the leaf shape. Post the drawings and the leaf shape on a bulletin board.

(sung to the tune of "Down by the Bay")

Oh, fall is here. It's everywhere!
We see the changes here and there.
Oh, we can see the green leaves change.
Can you feel it everywhere? Fall is in the air!
Yes, fall is here!





Autumn Leaf Exploration

Little ones will jump at the chance to visit this discovery center! Set up a large kiddie pool on a painter's drop cloth inside your classroom. Half-fill the pool with fall leaves; then invite a small group of students to join you there. Encourage your young scientists to use their observation skills as they explore and talk about the leaves. Ask questions to stimulate students' thinking, such as the following: Where do you think these leaves came from? What do the leaves feel like? What colors do you see?

As the leaves become crushed, remove them. (They'll make wonderful mulch for a class garden!) Then put a new supply of leaves in the pool for further exploration.

Leaf Comparisons

Have youngsters take a look at leaves to sharpen their comparison skills. In advance, find two leaves of the same size from a maple, an oak, or another deciduous tree. Choose one that is mostly green and one that has changed to its fall color. (Or cut matching leaf shapes from green and red paper.) Ask students to tell you how the two leaves are alike (size and shape) and how they are different (color). If desired, repeat the process with other pairs of leaves. Later, place a pile of real or paper leaves in a center for little ones to sort and compare.



Did You Know?

In fall, the weather gets cooler and we have fewer hours of sunlight. The change in the amount of light tells deciduous trees that winter is approaching. Winter is a time of rest for these trees, and their leaves don't need the *chlorophyll* that helps them absorb sunlight and make food for the tree. The chlorophyll in leaves gives them their green color. So as the chlorophyll disappears, so does the green color, revealing the bright colors we associate with fall.



Here Are the Leaves

Teach your little leaf lovers this fall fingerplay to reinforce the seasonal changes in deciduous trees.

Here are the leaves up on the tree,
Just as green as they can be.
Here comes fall. The air gets cold.
The green leaves change to red and gold.
Here come the leaves, tumbling down...
No leaves on the tree.
They're all on the ground!

Hold hands up, palms out.
Nod head.
Wrap arms around body; shiver.
Hold hands up, palms out.
Wave hands and arms.
Point up.
Point down.