



HELLO PARENTS,

Trees are one of the oldest organisms on Earth and have been human companions since the beginning of time. Trees help combat climate change, clean the air and water, provide oxygen, prevent soil erosion, mark the seasons, provide food, offer shelter for wildlife, and reduce stress in people. They also create welcoming, shaded spaces for children and adults to play and relax. It is important to instill in children a love for trees and nature as early as possible. In this newsletter, we provide activities that will help your child learn about trees and develop appreciation for them.

ACTIVITIES INFANTS (3 -18 MONTHS)

IN THE SHADE OF A TREE

MATERIALS:

- Soft blanket

DIRECTIONS:

- Lie on a soft blanket with your child under the shade of a tree.
- Point to the tree trunk, branches and leaves, and name them to your child.
- Listen to the rustling sound of the leaves.
- Move with your child close to the tree, encourage them to touch and smell it, and describe what you and your child see and feel.

[Click here](#) for more ideas.

TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

BRANCH PAINTING

MATERIALS:

- Tree branches, sticks or twigs
- Paints
- Paint brush
- Vase or jar

DIRECTIONS:

- Collect with your child some branches, sticks and twigs.
- Look at them together and compare their lengths, smell them, feel the texture of their bark, etc.
- Later, encourage your child to paint the branches.
- When they dry, display them in a vase or jar.

[Click here](#) to read "Are Trees Alive?" by Debbie S. Miller.

PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

FRUIT PICKING

DIRECTIONS:

- Take your child to a fruit orchard.
- Encourage your child to pick fruit from the tree.
- During the fruit picking, talk about fruits, trees, insects, etc. For example:
 1. How does the fruit grow on trees?
 2. What shapes and colours are fruits and leaves? Compare different varieties.
 3. What happens to the over-ripe fruit which fall to the ground?
- If possible, encourage your child to talk to the farmer and ask them questions.

[Click here](#) to listen to the story: "Maple" by Lori Nichols.

JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

A BREATHING LEAF

MATERIALS:

- Plastic bowl
- Fresh leaf
- Small rock
- Magnifying glass (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

- Fill a bowl with lukewarm water.
- Put the leaf inside the bowl and place a rock on top of the leaf so that it is fully submerged in the water.
- Place the bowl in a sunny spot for a few hours.
- Check on the leaf and use a magnifying glass to take a closer look. Did you notice any bubbles?
- Ask your child what happens when they hold their breath underwater and let their breath out. Are there bubbles rising to the top of the water? The bubbles your child can see in the bowl with the leaf indicate that the leaf is breathing, too!

[Click here](#) for more ideas.

SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

TREE ID SCAVENGER HUNT

MATERIALS:

- Notebook
- Pen
- Access to internet or a tree atlas

DIRECTIONS:

- Find trees in your neighbourhood.
- For each tree, answer the following questions and write the answers in your notebook:
 - Does the tree have needles (coniferous) or leaves (deciduous)?
 - What shape are the leaves?
 - Does it have seeds, flowers, or cones?
 - Is the bark smooth or rough? What colour is it?
 - What is the shape of the tree? For example: round, oval, conical, pyramidal, etc.
 - Make a sketch of the tree, its leaves and bark. You can also take one leaf sample.
- At home, check the tree atlas or [here](#) and [here](#) to identify the trees you have spotted.

[Click here](#) to learn more about trees.



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FUN FACTS ABOUT TREES

- Earth has more than 60,000 known tree species.
- Trees in a forest share nutrients with each other through an underground web of roots and soil fungi.
- A large oak tree can consume about 400 litres of water per day.
- The world's:
 - tallest tree is redwood "Hyperion" (115.6 metres) in California, USA. The exact location of this tree is kept secret in order to protect it.
 - oldest tree is pine "Methuselah" (4,845 years old) in California, USA.
 - tree with widest trunk is cypress "Arbol del Tule" (diameter of 11.62 m) in Oaxaca, Mexico.
 - largest tree is sequoia "General Sherman" (83 metres tall and 11 metres in diameter).
- [Click here](#) to see them all.