

# SORTING LEAVES

DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested play activity. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.



**STEM Concepts:** Living Things, Classify

Get outside on a nature walk and collect fallen leaves. Help your child **observe and identify similarities and differences of leaves by comparing and contrasting their shape/color/size/texture.**

## STEM IDEAS/WORDS

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- Sort
- Colors
- Match
- Compare & Contrast
- Size

## MATERIALS

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- Variety of leaves (size, color, shape)

## OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

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- *What is the same about these leaves? Different?*
- *What colors do you see? What textures do you feel?*
- *Which leaf is smaller? Bigger? Wider?*



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# ADAPTATIONS

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### ENVIRONMENT

- Wear sunglasses/hat if sensitive to bright light and going outside for the scavenger hunt
- Place leaves within reach
- Start walking in the backyard or short distance, then gradually increase walking distance
- Have your child wear headphones if they are sensitive to sound/noise
- Provide gloves for children who might be sensitive to the texture of different leaves

### MATERIALS

- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device and/or power wheelchair
- Bring visual supports with you to help child find leaves (see following pages)
- Have containers with different labels ready to support children to sort out the leaves
- Place an anti-slip mat or a tray below the leaves so they do not move
- For children with physical disabilities with fine motor/grasping needs, consider using tools/assistive devices (e.g., grabber, reacher)

### INSTRUCTION

- Use a variety of methods of communication (e.g., sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage children
- Provide hand-over-hand support to help your child sort leaves
- Narrate/sign your child's actions
- Break the activity down into smaller steps - First go outside, then walk, then look for leaves, then sort. Allow for child breaks in between the steps if needed.
- Allow longer waiting time for child to respond and/or process this activity



*Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.*



*Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.*



*Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.*

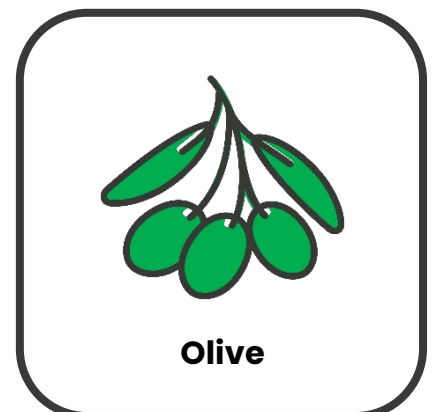
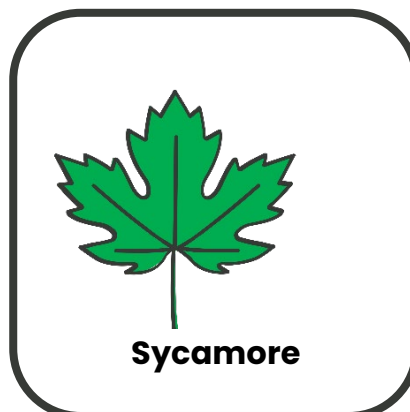
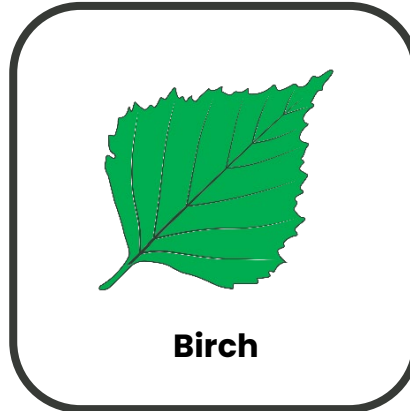
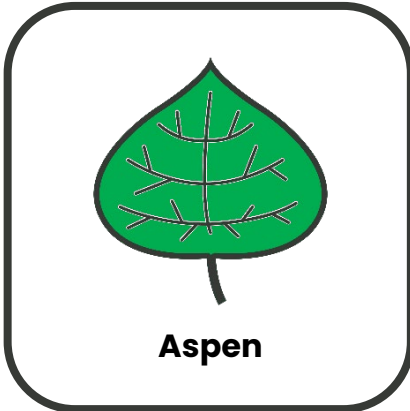


# COLOR SCAVENGER HUNT ADAPTATIONS

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## VISUAL CUES USE TO SIGNAL NEXT STEPS



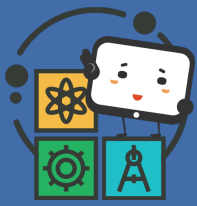
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# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

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- Collect additional items (rocks, flowers, etc.) and sort those items by their characteristics
- Make a plan with your child before you go on the walk and look for specific types of leaves (or items) before you sort them out. Record whether you find them or not.
- Check out our Exploration Ideas & Adaptations for Nature Walk
- Check out our Exploration Ideas & Adaptations for Patterns in Nature
- Check out our Discovery Play Activities for Nature Scavenger Hunt
- Check out our Storybook Conversations for *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins
- Check out these great books about trees:
  - *I See Trees* by Tim Mayerling
  - *Trees* by Tony Johnston
  - *Tall Tree* by Anthony Fredericks

