

Preschool Math:

Leaf Patterning and Sorting



Learning Value:

Children enjoy using aesthetically pleasing natural materials to explore math concepts, including counting, one-to-one correspondence, sorting, classifying, and patterning, and symmetry.

Materials Needed:

- ▶ Leaves of various sizes and colors
- ▶ Other natural materials, such as pine cones or twigs

Participants:

This activity is intended for adult/child interaction and independent play.

Directions:

- ▶ **Step 1:** With your child, gather about 25 leaves from your yard or a nearby park. Look for a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes.
- ▶ **Step 2:** Spread the leaves out on a table, a tray, or even the ground. Count them, pointing at each one as you do so.
- ▶ **Step 3:** Ask your child to examine the leaves and separate them into piles by color. Now separate each pile by shape. You'll probably have several little piles.
- ▶ **Step 4:** Choose two types of leaves and lay those leaves out in a pattern, for example, red leaf, yellow leaf, red leaf, yellow leaf. Slowly add more leaves and make the pattern more complicated.
- ▶ **Step 5:** Use the leaves to make a spiral, a circle, or another design. Add pine cones, twigs, or other natural elements. Learn about symmetry as you place the natural elements in an organized, symmetrical pattern. Older children might enjoy adding and subtracting the leaves.