



Acorn Hunt

Teach the children about how some animals get ready for winter. Read some books about it. Talk about squirrels. Observe some around your neighborhood. Talk about where squirrels live.

In this game, children can pretend they are squirrels getting ready for winter.

- Hide acorns around your room or yard. They can be real ones the children collect outdoors or they can make paper ones to use for the game.
- Have the children pretend they are squirrels getting ready for winter.
- Give each child a brown paper lunch bag.
- The children can search for the hidden acorns and put them in their bags.
- Have the children count their acorns.
- Make a chart or graph to show how many were gathered.
- Make a large paper nest for them to put the acorns in at the end of the game. This can be a review for the children of where squirrels live.



Gray Squirrel – finger play

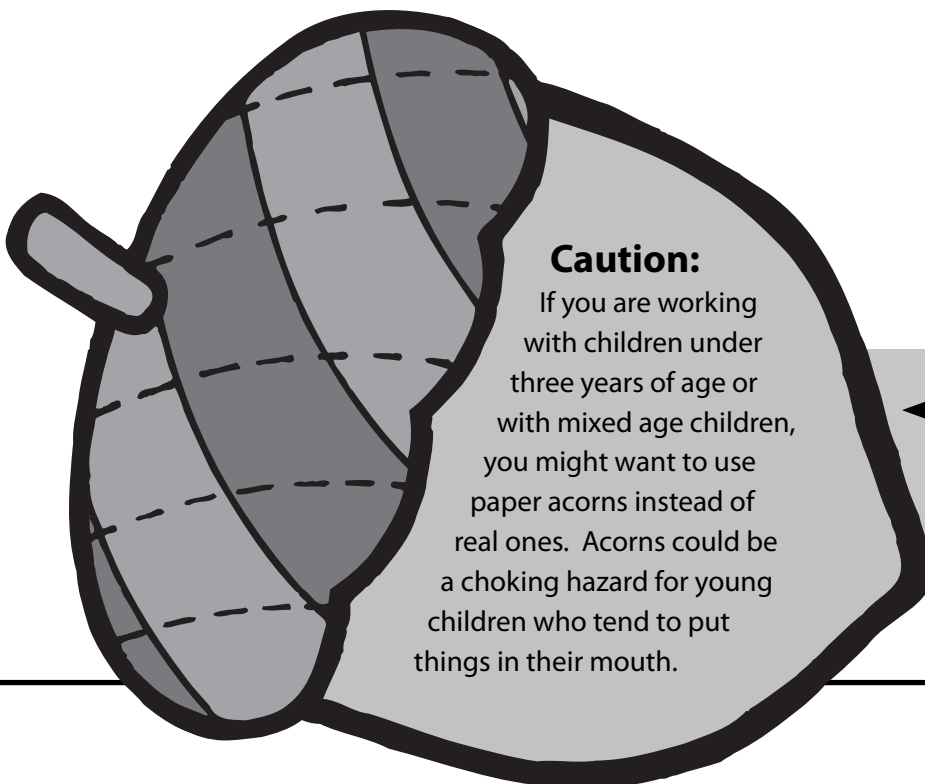
(Do motions to fit words)

Gray squirrel, gray squirrel,
Swish your bushy tail.

Gray squirrel, gray squirrel,
Swish your bushy tail.

Wrinkle up your little nose.
Hold a nut between your toes.

Gray squirrel, gray squirrel,
Swish your bushy tail.



Caution:

If you are working with children under three years of age or with mixed age children, you might want to use paper acorns instead of real ones. Acorns could be a choking hazard for young children who tend to put things in their mouth.

← Use this as a pattern to make some paper acorns!

Collecting, Counting, and More

Give each child a small bag or plastic pail with a handle. Have them collect things they find in the yard such as pine cones, acorns, leaves, and small twigs. Each child can use the special things he or she collected for a variety of math activities.

- The children can count the items in their collection.
- They can sort their things, putting items that are alike in a pile together.
- The children can count the number of different kinds of things they have.
- Talk about different concepts such as same and different, big and little, brown and green, smooth and rough, above and below.

- They can make patterns. For example: have the children make a row of their items using two acorns, then one pine cone, then three leaves. Repeat this in the same order to make a pattern.
- Make a graph showing the things collected and the number of each. Have the children glue one of each item on the part of the graph depicting that item so they can see what each part represents.
- Arrange the items by size – big, bigger, biggest.

Leaf Painting

What you need:

- Leaves
- Tape
- Drawing or construction paper
- Tempera paint
- Paint brushes

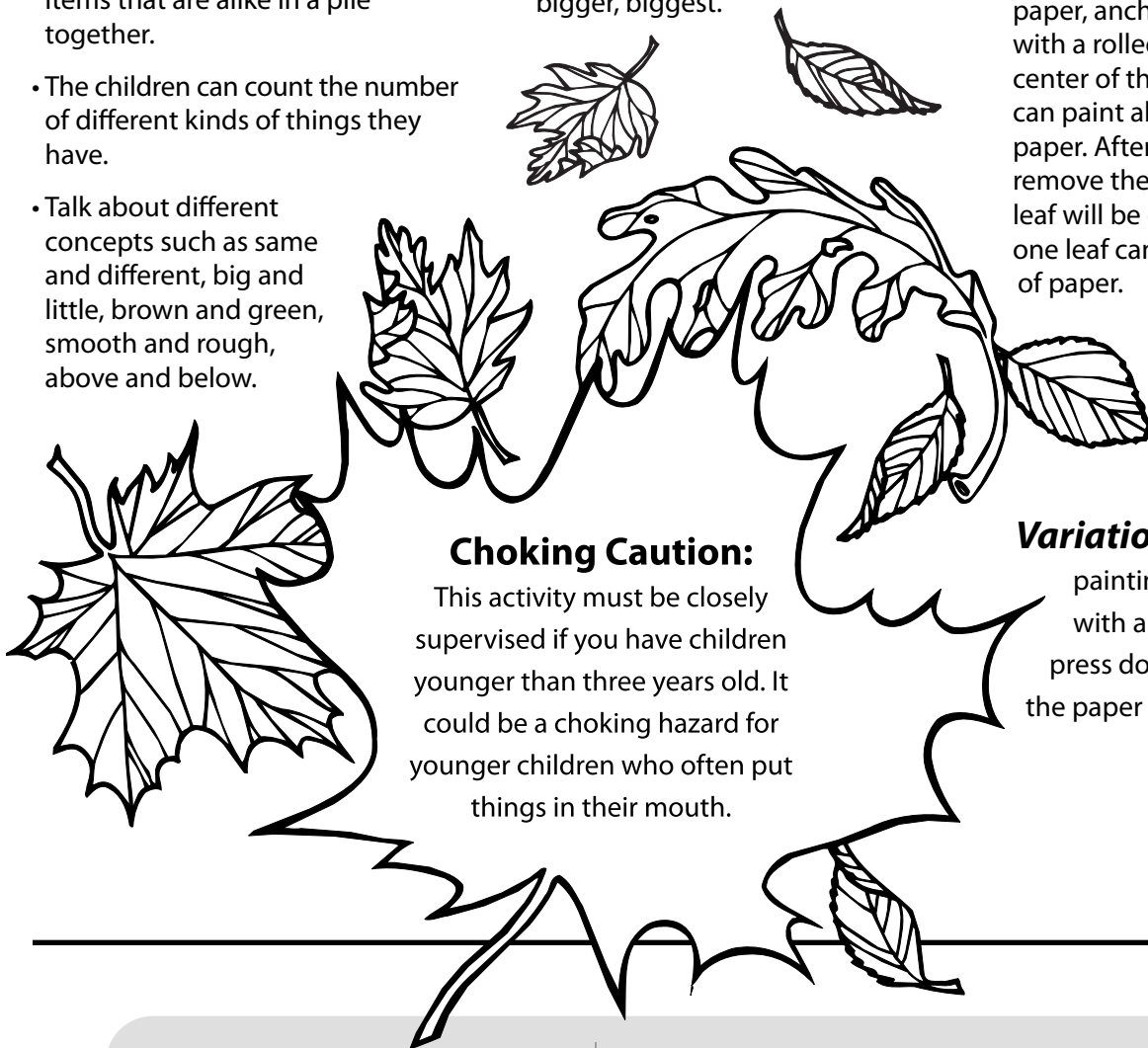
What to do:

The children can collect leaves in the yard. Place a leaf on a piece of paper, anchoring it to the paper with a rolled piece of tape under the center of the leaf. Then the children can paint all over the leaf and the paper. After the paint dries, carefully remove the leaf. The outline of the leaf will be on the paper. More than one leaf can be used on larger pieces of paper.

Variation: Make leaf prints by painting the leaves. Cover them with a sheet of paper. Gently press down on the paper. Lift up the paper for a leafy surprise!

Choking Caution:

This activity must be closely supervised if you have children younger than three years old. It could be a choking hazard for younger children who often put things in their mouth.



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