

Exploring the Forest

July 2021



Growing. Playing. Learning.

**Gee Whiz**[™]
Education

Keep in mind that any materials you might need a little bit more time to gather are featured in red.

Get Ready!

Please see the Materials List for items you may need extra time locating.

A bear hunt! A bear hunt! Who wants to do on a bear hunt? Ok...not a real bear hunt but a pretend one just might be a part of our next unit, "Exploring the Forest." During this unit, the children will learn more about many of the living things that make a forest a very special place. This includes trees, plants and, of course, animals. Chipmunks, deer, woodpeckers and of course bears will be just a few of the interesting animals the children will meet during this unit. If you live near a forest, awesome. Maybe plan a hike one day and take along some additional adult supervision. If you do not live near a forest, that's OK, too. We will provide links to short videos available on the internet to help the children see for themselves what a forest is and why it is such a special place.

The activities included in this guide are merely a starting point and not an "end all." Please incorporate your own activities and experiences you believe the children would enjoy and adapt those in this guide to better meet the unique needs of the children in your care. Be sure to use the Individualization Web, Customized/Individualized Lesson Planning Sheet & Connecting the Dots component to help you adapt this unit to meet the unique needs of the children in your group.

Don't forget to email or send home a copy of the Family Letter with each child as you begin this unit. In addition, email or text the Digital Family Notes when you believe they would be the most beneficial. Most importantly, have fun!



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Program Symbols for Developmental Areas

= Language Development

= Social Studies Knowledge

= Literacy Knowledge

= Social & Emotional Development

= Math Knowledge

= Creative Arts

= Science Knowledge

= Physical Development & Health

= Logic & Reasoning

= Approaches to Learning

Get Moving!

Activities with icon help you address the goals of the Let's Move! Child Care campaign (www.letsmove.gov).



Activities with icon can, or should, be done outdoors.



Activities with icon address character education (honesty, kindness, respect, responsibility)

2 Week/10 Day Planning Grid

All the daily experiences are included on this grid so you know EXACTLY what is planned for each day.



DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
<p>Exploring Together: Fantastic Forests (p.4)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Expanding Our Knowledge (p.5)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Fun with Colors of the Forest (p. 5)</p> <p>Infants: A Forest Story (p. 5)</p>	<p>Exploring Together: Leaves & Needles (p. 6)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: “Tree Supplied” Art Tools (p. 7)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Tree Caretakers (p. 7)</p> <p>Infants: A Beautiful Tree (p. 7)</p>	<p>Exploring Together: Climbing Up! (p. 8)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Mountain Makers (p. 9)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Mountain Climbers Are We (p. 9)</p> <p>Infants: Playdough Mountains (p. 9)</p>	<p>Exploring Together: Wonderful Wildlife (p. 10)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Find the Nuts (p. 11)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Run, Chipmunk, Run! (p. 11)</p> <p>Infants: A Nutty Shaker (p.11)</p>	<p>Exploring Together: Quiet Forest Friends (p. 12)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Look at My Antlers! (p. 13)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Leap 'N Listen (p. 13)</p> <p>Infants: Leaping Deer (p. 13)</p>
DAY 6	DAY 7	DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10
<p>Exploring Together: What’s That Sound? (p. 14)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Tap, Tap...Tap, Tap, Tap (p. 15)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Tap to Create (p. 15)</p> <p>Infants: Rap 'N Tap Art (p.15)</p>	<p>Exploring Together: Busy Beavers (p. 16)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Can You Build a Dam? (p. 17)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Beaver Tail Painting (p. 17)</p> <p>Infants: “Mud” Sensory Bag (p. 17)</p>	<p>Exploring Together: Prickly Porcupines (p. 18)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Playdough Porcupines (p. 19)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Sharp Like a Porcupine’s Quills (p. 19)</p> <p>Infants: That Feels Jaggy (p.19)</p>	<p>Exploring Together: Look There! It’s a Bear! (p. 20)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Hiding in a Cave (p. 21)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: Beary Yummy Snack (p. 21)</p> <p>Infants: Do You See the Bear? (p.21)</p>	<p>Exploring Together: Forest Fun Day (p. 22)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: If I Were a Forest Animal... (p. 23)</p> <p>Center/Small Group: It’s Story Time! (p. 23)</p> <p>Infants: Tuning Up (p. 23)</p>

School-Age Activities:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Finding Forests on Maps (p. 24) | Noisy Woodpeckers (p. 25) | My Little Porcupine (p. 26) |
| Leaves vs. Needles vs. Fronds (p. 24) | Beaver Tail Paddle Fun (p. 25) | What Time is It, Sleeping Bear? (p. 26) |

DAY 1

Unit: Exploring the Forest

Today's Focus: What is a Forest?

Developmental Areas Addressed Today:



Be Healthy & Safe!

Even a paper cut can become infected if it is not taken care of properly. Make sure all cuts and scrapes are washed well and covered with a sterile bandage to keep out dirt & germs.

Teaching Tip of the Day

Chasing bubbles is a great way for children to get exercise AND it is a fun way for them to learn about wind currents and cause/effect.

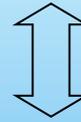
Transition Time

Have the children name things they might see if they visited a forest before moving from activity to activity today.

Today's Vocabulary

Use some of these words in conversations with children today!

forest **habitat** **trees**
animals **plants** **shade**



As younger children participate in activities today, model language by...

- Using words such as **forest, habitat, trees, animals, plants** and **shade** as children complete activities.
- Asking questions as children look at books about the forest (p. 5).
- Talking with children as they create forest art (p. 5).



Get Moving!

Exploring Together: Fantastic Forests

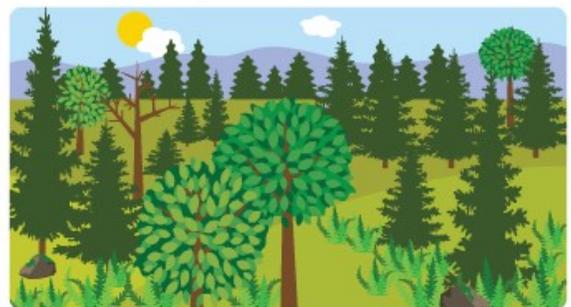
(all ages,)

Materials:

- Child-safe binoculars (if you have them)**
- Access to a computer or tablet OR a book about the forest (see Book List, p. 33 for suggestions)
- There is simply no better way for children to build background knowledge than through first-hand experience. If you live near a forest, today would be a wonderful day to get out and explore. If this is not possible, the internet opens the door for children to learn about new places through technology. You can also use a book as well. As children participate, they will build both receptive and expressive language skills, utilize their senses and share discoveries with others.
- If you are planning a walk, or ride, through a local forest, pack up the children and head out! While getting there (either on foot or in the car), talk with the children about what they believe they will see when they arrive at the forest. Encourage those children who may have spent time visiting a forest to share what they saw, heard, smelled and even felt while there. Then, once at the forest, encourage the children to use their senses to learn more about this amazing place! If you have child-safe binoculars, the children can use them to make discoveries. IF you are unable to visit a forest, share a video or book about forests. Here is one option for a video to share. It is 20 minutes so just watch a few minutes. You can stop frequently so the children can talk about what they see and hear as they watch. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-Vr2bSMU7o>
- Next, after visiting the forest or watching the video, sing the song, "Let's Go Hiking in the Forest" (p. 33) and invite the children to pretend to be walking through the forest as you sing. Then, at the end of the verse, more verbal children can answer the question. Does everyone see and hear the same thing when walking in the forest? Why not?

Questions to Spur Thinking

- Who has been to a forest?
- What did you see there? What did you hear? What did you smell?
- What is special about the forest?
- What types of animals do you think might live in a forest?
- Why do you think forests have so many trees?
- Why do you think trees and plants are an important part of the forest?
- What did you learn about the forest on our walk/ride (or by watching the video/reading a book)?



Expanding Our Knowledge

(Toddlers–4 years, 🙌 😊 ? 📖 ❤️ 🗣️ 🗨️)

Materials:

- Books about the forest, forest plants and forest animals** (see Book List on p. 33 for suggestions)
- Books are wonderful tools for helping children build both expressive and receptive language skills as well as vocabulary. In addition, books also help children gain important concepts about print (e.g., that text moves from left to right, what a word is, what a sentence is, etc.).
- Set out an assortment of books about the forest for interested children to explore. As children look at the books, invite those who are more verbal to point out and talk about what they see. For nonverbal children, you can point to and talk about the pictures in the books. This will help these children build receptive language skills. If the children ask you to read any of the books, do it! Just remember that talking about the illustrations or photographs is just as important as reading the words.
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children can “read” books to younger children. Not only does that help them build expressive language skills, it is also a fun way for them to assume a leadership role. Additionally, for those children who are developmentally ready, you might want to talk about letter names, letter sounds, words, sentences and punctuation.

A Forest Story

(Infants, 🗣️ 🙌 📖 😊 🗣️ ❤️)



Materials:

- 2 or 3 books about the forest and/or forest animals (use Book List, p. 33 to help you)**
- Blanket to sit on
- It is so important to read to infants! Just remember that when reading to an infant, you may end up simply talking about the pictures...which is fine. The key is to expose the infant to print in a way that is fun and meaningful. Today, you will explore books about the forest as a way of opening the door for you to help the infant build receptive language skills.
- Spread out the blanket (indoors or out) and sit on it with the infant in your lap. Put 2 or 3 books on the blanket and watch to see which one seems to interest the infant. Then, pick up that book to “read.” If the infant has more developed fine motor control, he/she can help you turn the pages. Point to the pictures and talk about what you see. This helps the infant make connections between objects (pictures) and spoken words. This may seem simplistic to you, but the idea that there is a word for everything is new to infants! If appropriate, you can certainly read the text as well as you look at the books together.

DAY 1 - Center/Small Group Activities

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *Why did you choose that book to read?*
- *What did you learn about forests by reading the books? What else would you still like to learn?*

- *Tell me about your forest art.*
- *Why do you think brown and green are colors often found in the forest?*

Fun with the Colors of the Forest

(Toddlers–4 years, 🗣️ 😊 ? 🗣️ 🖌️ 🙌 ❤️)

Materials:

- Brown and green paint, paintbrushes (small & large)
- Large sheets of white paper
- Art is a wonderful way for children to share ideas while building fine motor control and exploring making/testing predictions. It truly is a combination of so many different developmental areas! During this experience, the children will achieve all of these goals while also sharing what they know about two of the most prominent colors of the forest as well.
- Set out the paints, paintbrushes (thick and thin) and white paper. As children choose this experience, invite them to create. Talk with them about the things they saw on their walk, ride or by watching the video/reading books in the forest that are the same colors as the paints (brown and green). How many different things can more verbal children name?
- Toddlers/Twos/Young Threes: These children, while not likely verbal enough to answer questions, will have fun painting and exploring the colors brown and green. You will want to talk about the forest as these children create. This will help them make that link between the colors they saw on their walk/ride or in the video and their own art.
- Older Threes/Fours/Advanced Preschoolers: These children should be able to talk about the things they saw in the forest that were either brown, green or both. Additionally, they should be able to talk about their art.

Your Own Activities

DAY 2

Unit: Exploring the Forest

Today's Focus: Many Trees Grow in the Forest

Developmental Areas Addressed Today:



Be Healthy & Safe!

Teach the children the saying, "Three leaves...let it be!"

Teaching Tip of the Day

Yard sales are great places to pick up books and puzzles at reasonable prices. They are usually very inexpensive and often in good condition.

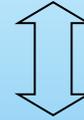
Transition Time

Have the children pretend to climb trees as they move from activity to activity today.

Today's Vocabulary

Use some of these words in conversations with children today!

trees evergreen leaves
deciduous needles pine cones



As younger children participate in activities today, model language by...

- Using words, such as those listed above, while engaging children in conversations during the day's activities.
- Talking with children as they use pine branches, leaves, pine cones, etc. to create art (p. 7).
- Engaging children in conversations as they care for trees (p. 7).



Get Moving!

Exploring Together: Leaves & Needles

(all ages,)

Materials:

Notebook, pencil or marker, unbreakable magnifiers

- This experience will be very different depending on where you live. There are so many different types of trees! Today you will expose the children to two different types of trees ... evergreen (like pine trees and palm trees) and deciduous (like maple or oak). You are definitely going to want to do this experience in your outdoor play space! As the children participate, they will build both expressive and receptive language skills, utilize their senses, learn about nature and make connections between written and spoken language.
- It's time to head outside! Start by telling the children you are going to count backwards from 10 to 1 and they should each find and touch a tree before you are done. Then...start counting. After everyone finds trees to touch (and more than one child can be touching the same tree), invite the children to use unbreakable magnifiers (or just their eyes and hands) to explore them. As the children explore, encourage those who are more verbal to describe the trees. Write their words down in a notebook along with the name of the type of tree (if you know it). If you have ELL/DLL children in your group, be sure to do this in both English and the children's home languages. As you write, talk about letters and words. As you engage the children in conversations, talk about how forests have many, many trees. You might also want to note how the types of trees often vary from forest to forest.
- Challenge the children to also compare and contrast the trees. Which trees have leaves? Which trees have needles? Which have fronds? Now would be a great time to utilize the terms evergreen and deciduous. Continue the discussion by asking more open-ended questions such as those to the right.
- **EXTENSION:** Have the unbreakable magnifiers available during outdoor play over the next few days.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- How would you describe the tree you are touching?
- How is the tree you are touching like the one (child's name) is touching? How is it different?
- Why do you think forests have so many trees?
- How are evergreen trees like deciduous trees? How are they different?



“Tree Supplied” Art Tools

(Toddlers–4 years,       )



DAY 2 - Center/Small Group Activities

Materials:

- Large sheets of white paper
- Pine branches (small), fresh leaves, pieces of bark (that have fallen off trees), pine cones, palm fronds, etc.**
- Shallow dishes of paint (green, brown, white, gray)

- This experience is very open-ended and the children can take it in many different directions. As part of the process, the children will make and test predictions, explore items related to trees and make discoveries. At the same time, they will all create beautiful works of art!
- Set out the materials you gathered ahead of time. If the weather is nice, you may want to do this activity outdoors. As children show interest, invite them to use the items related to trees and paint to create. Adapt and modify based on the developmental levels of the children in your group.
- Toddlers/Twos: As these children create, describe both their actions and the items they choose to use. Talk about how each item came from a tree. Note the colors of paint these children choose to use and talk about what happens when colors mix. For ELL/DLL children, do this in both English and the children’s home languages.
- Threes/Fours/Advanced Preschoolers: These children should be able to describe the items they choose to use as well as make predictions about what they think will happen when they use each to paint. They can also compare and contrast how different nature items work as painting tools.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- Which “tree parts” did you choose to use?
- What do you think will happen when...?

- Why do you think it is important to take care of trees?



Tree Caretakers

(Toddlers–4 years,        )



Materials:

- Access to water and of course, a tree!
- Watering cans**
- Trowels or small hand shovels, garden gloves**
- Learning about the importance of trees and taking care of the environment are important concepts for children...and adults! This experience will invite interested children to take care of a tree that lives in your outdoor play space. For this age range, pulling weeds and watering are simple tasks they can do to show respect for the environment as well as responsibility.
- Position yourself near a tree in your outdoor play space. Put the watering cans, trowels and/or small hand shovels near you. As children show interest, invite them to help care for the tree. What do they think they could do to help the tree continue to grow big and strong? Invite more verbal children to share their ideas.
- Someone will probably suggest pulling weeds growing around the base of the tree. (Just make sure there is no poison ivy or jaggy thistles!) This is a great way of taking care of trees! Explain that some weeds/plants (like English ivy) can be dangerous to trees. These types of vines climb up the tree trunk and eventually kill the tree. As the children help pull weeds, talk about the parts of the tree. Engage more verbal children in conversations about the many, many trees that live in the forest as they work. Then, provide watering cans the children can fill and use to water the tree. As the children do this, talk about why water is so important for trees and plants.
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children can use math as they record data about the tree (e.g., circumference of the trunk, estimated height, etc.)

A Beautiful Tree

(Infants,      )

Materials:

- Fingerpaint paper cut into a simple evergreen tree shape** (e.g., like a Christmas tree)
- Green fingerpaint, **new plastic hair brush**
- Even infants can create art! This would also be a great experience for Toddlers/Twos. Today, they will fingerpaint and then use a hairbrush in a new and different way. In the process, the infants will build fine motor control and utilize their senses.
- Use tape to attach the evergreen tree-shaped paper to the infants high chair tray or a low table if the infant is able to sit unassisted. Next, dampen the paper and add a small amount of green fingerpaint. Watch to see what the infant does. Describe his/her actions, the shape of the paper and the color of the paint. Then, wipe off the infant’s hands and provide him/her with a plastic hair brush. Describe what happens if the infant brushes the tines of the brush across the wet fingerpaint. Does it make the paint look like needles on an evergreen tree? The infant may, or may not, choose to do this. But if he/she does, talk about it!

Your Own Activities

DAY 3

Unit: Exploring the Forest

Today's Focus: What are Mountains?

Developmental Areas Addressed Today:



Be Healthy & Safe!

Fresh fruits and vegetables are nutritious AND often taste best when they are in season. Be sure to add these to your menus.

Teaching Tip of the Day

Children learn to become proficient with scissors through practice. Make sure to provide children with supervised opportunities to practice cutting. They can even cut up your junk mail!

Transition Time

Have the children pretend to climb mountains as you sing the song, "Let's Climb Up the Mountain (p. 33) when moving from activity to activity today.

Get Moving!

Exploring Together: Climbing Up!

(all ages,)

Materials:

Access to a computer or tablet OR pictures of mountains in books or printed from the internet

- Mountains and forests often go together. Today, the children will learn more about different types of mountains and the activities that people enjoy doing on them such as climbing and hiking. An action song will get the children moving and encourage dramatic play. Looking up information on the internet will help the children gain first-hand knowledge of how technology can be an important source of information.
- Sit on the floor with pictures of mountains (printed or from the internet) OR position yourself near the computer or tablet. As children show interest, invite them to join you to explore the pictures of mountains. If you are using your computer or tablet, just use your favorite search engine (e.g., Google) and type in "images of mountains." As you type, name each letter and then say the word as you complete it. This is a meaningful way of exposing children to letters and words. Encourage the children to describe the mountains featured in the pictures, books or on the internet. What do they see? Have they ever visited a mountain with their family? If so, what did they see? Ask plenty of conversations to get the discussion going. Note the trees on the mountains as well. Talk about how in many cases, forests and mountains go hand-in-hand.
- Next, talk about activities that people like to do on mountains such as hiking and climbing. Introduce the action song, "Let's Climb Up the Mountain" (p. 33). As you sing the song, the children can pretend to climb/hike on mountains. At the end of the song, invite more verbal children to share what they think they would see once they got to the top of the mountain. This is a fun way for them to practice expressive language skills.

Today's Vocabulary

Use some of these words in conversations with children today!

mountain **climb** **trees**
rocks **steep** **safety**



As younger children participate in activities today, model language by...

- *Using words, such as those above, as children participate in the daily experiences.*
- *Engaging children in conversations as they build mountains with sand (p. 9).*
- *Talking with children as they role-playing climbing, or hiking on, mountains (p. 9).*

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What do you know about mountains?*
- *Have you ever visited a mountain with your family? What did you see? What did you do on the mountain?*
- *What do you think people like to do on mountains?*
- *What types of animals might you see if you were climbing/hiking up a mountain?*
- *Why do you think there are so many different types of mountains?*



Mountain Makers

(Toddlers–4 years, 😊 ❤️ 🗣️ 🙌 ? 🗣️ 🗣️)



Materials:

- Access to the sand box, sand table or container of sand, access to water
- Sand shovels, scoops, old ladles, etc.
- People figures (washable/safe for sand)
- Ruler or yardstick.

- This experience invites children to make and test their ideas as they problem-solve. At the same time, the children will need to practice self-regulation and share materials (more than likely). Additionally, as the children participate in this activity, they will also build fine motor control.
- Add the items listed above to your sand play area (sand box, sand table or container of sand). As children show interest, they can use the sand, and water, to build mountains. They may choose to add rocks and “trees” (small leafy sticks or just leaves) to their mountains as well. They might choose to make people figures “hike” on their mountains when they are done. If they do, then you can reinforce positional concepts as well.
- As you observe and engage with the children, note the additional materials they choose to utilize and then talk with them about their choices. As more verbal children talk with you, nonverbal or less verbal children will build key expressive language skills.
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children will probably utilize a wide variety of materials when building their mountains and should be able to describe their thought process while doing so. They can also use rulers or yardsticks to measure the height of the mountains they create. This adds an element of math to the experience.

Playdough Mountains

(Infants - ❤️ 🙌 😊 🗣️ 🗣️)

Materials:

- Playdough
- Plastic or rubber people figure (safe for an infant)

- Playdough is a wonderful material to use with infants because working with the dough helps infants build strength and dexterity in their hands. Manipulating playdough also is an excellent sensory experience because it involves sight, touch and even smell.
- Put the infant in his/her high chair and put a big lump of playdough on the tray. Watch to see what the infant does and then describe both his/her actions as well as the playdough. As the infant plays, make a plastic or rubber people figure hike up the playdough “mountain.” Describe what the figure is doing and use words like *climb*, *hike* and *mountain*. Remember...the infant will not use these words in a spoken format for quite some time but will begin to understand what they mean as you use them in conversations.

DAY 3 - Center/Small Group Activities

Questions to Spur Thinking

- How do you think real mountains are formed?
- Tell me about your mountain.

- What do you think it would be like to climb a mountain?



Mountain Climbers Are We

(Toddlers–4 years, 🙌 🗣️ 🗣️ ❤️ 🗣️ ? 🗣️ 😊)

Materials:

- Props to role-play mountain climbing/hiking -** Suggested props include backpacks, a toy compass, empty water bottles, sleeping bags, hiking boots, even a small tent!
- White paper, crayons/markers

- Dramatic play is a wonderful way for children to show what they know. It is also a great way for children to build skills in many different developmental areas such as language, physical development and social skills.
- Set out the props and sit back and watch what happens. Interested children can use these materials as they pretend to climb/hike mountains. Some children may choose to add additional props (like play food). If the children are outdoors, great! If the weather is not nice, this is certainly something they can do indoors instead. Keep in mind that different developmental levels will approach this experience differently. Adapt and modify as needed.
- Toddlers/Twos/Young Threes: These children are probably going to just enjoy putting things in the backpacks, putting them on and then dumping them out. They are not quite ready to engage in pretend play yet...which is developmentally appropriate. Just describe their actions and the materials they use as they play.
- Older Threes/Fours/Advanced Preschoolers: These children are more likely to engage in dramatic play with roles. Your most advanced children may even assign roles to each other. Additionally, those children who are ready to explore writing can use paper and crayons/markers to create trail maps as they play. If they choose to do this, they can dictate text for you to write down. Talk about letters and words in the process.

Your Own Activities

School–Age Activities

If you have school-age children in your care, use these experiences with them as desired. Most require little preparation and can be implemented with just a few children. In addition, all of them can be extended to last more than one day.

Finding Forests on Maps



Where Are Forests?

Materials:

- US National Forest map** – Here is the link: <https://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/guide-to-your-national-forests-large-2018.pdf>. You can either print out or view on the computer or tablet.
- Learning to read maps is an important skill. Today, the children will have the opportunity to learn how to read a map that helps them see where National Forests are located in the United States. If you live in a different country, you can use a map from there instead. As the children participate, they will practice reading skills, learn more about maps and share discoveries with others.
- To begin, have the children watch as you put the web address for the US National Forest map into your computer or tablet. Once the map pops up, invite the children to describe what they see. Look for the key on the map and challenge the children to read the words. Explain what a map key is and why it is important. Then, challenge the children to use the key to help them find all of the areas in the United States with National Forests. The children can also share their experiences with forests as part of the activity.

EXTEND FOR ANOTHER DAY: Repeat this experience but look at a forest map from another country in the world. How does the amount of forest in that country compare to the US?

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What part of this map do you think designates forests? Why do you think that?*
- *What do you notice about the location of national forests?*
- *Tell us about a time you visited a forest.*

- *Which type of tree do you think you will find in our outdoor play space?*
- *How are evergreen trees like deciduous trees? How are they different?*
- *What did you learn by making the graph?*
- *Why are all trees important?*
- *What should people do to take care of the trees in our forests?*

Leaves vs. Needles vs. Fronds



There Are Different Types of Trees

Materials:

- Long sheet of white paper for making a graph, crayons/markers, notebook
- Today the children will explore the differences between trees. Depending on where you live, you may need to adjust this experience to reflect the types of trees in your area. The goal is to help children hone their observations skills, record data and then utilize that data to construct a graph.
- It's time to head outside! Take the children and materials to your outdoor play space and challenge them to look at the trees. What is the same and different about the trees they see? Invite them to explore and talk about the differences. Hopefully, the children will note that some trees have needles, others have leaves and, if you live in a warmer climate, some have fronds. Use this hands-on experience to introduce the differences between evergreen and deciduous trees. Have the children use a notebook to record the number of trees with leaves, the number of trees with needles and, potentially, the number with fronds. Then, they can use this information to make a simple graph on a long sheet of white paper by printing ascending numerals on the left-hand side and the words "leaves," "needles" and "fronds" across the bottom. Talk about the graph when it is complete.

EXTEND FOR ANOTHER DAY: Have the children record the number of evergreen and deciduous trees in their own backyards or at a park they visit frequently. They can then bring in this information and add it to the graph.

Learning Indicators Addressed By Activity

	Exploring Together	Small Group	Small Group	Infant
DAY 1	Fantastic Forest LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LR1, CA1, CA4, SS1, PD4	Expanding Our Knowledge LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK3, LK1, LK2, LK3, LK4, LR1, PD5	Fun with Colors of the Forest LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, LR1, CA3, PD5	A Forest Story LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, SK1, SK3, LK1, PD5
DAY 2	Leaves & Needles LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK2, LK3, LK4, LK5, LR1, MK6, PD3, PD4, PD5	"Tree Supported" Art Tools LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK2, SK3, LR1, LR2, CA3, PD5	Tree Caretakers LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK2, SK3, LR1, LR2, CA3, PD5, SS1, SS3	A Beautiful Tree LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, SK1, SK3, CA3, PD5
DAY 3	Climbing Up! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK1, LR1, CA1, CA4, SS1, PD5	Mountain Makers LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK2, SK3, LR1, LR2, MK1, MK2, MK5, PD5	Mountain Climbers Are We LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, LK2, LK3, LK4, LK5, LR1, LR2, CA4, PD5	Playdough Mountains LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, SK1, PD5
DAY 4	Wonderful Wildlife LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK1, LR1, CA4, PD4	Find the Nuts LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LR1, LR2, MK1, MK2, CA4, PD4, PD5	Run, Chipmunk, Run! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK3, LR1, MK1, MK2, MK5, MK6, CA4, PD4	A Nutty Shaker LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, SK1, PD5
DAY 5	Quiet Forest Friends LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK1, LR1, CA1, CA4, PD4	Look at My Antlers! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK3, LR1, LR2, MK1, MK2, PD5	Leap 'N Listen LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LR1, LR2, CA4, PD4	Leaping Deer LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, SK1, SK3, CA1
DAY 6	What's That Sound? LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK1, LR1, CA4, PD5	Tap, Tap ... Tap, Tap, Tap LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, MK4, LR1, LR2, PD5	Tap to Create LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, LR1, LR2, CA3, PD5	Rap 'N Tap Art LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, SK1, CA3, PD5
DAY 7	Busy Beavers LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK1, LR1, CA4, PD4	Can You Build a Dam? LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK3, LR1, LR2, PD5	Beaver Tail Painting LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK2, LR1, LR2, CA3, PD5	"Mud" Sensory Bag LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, SK1, SK3, PD5
DAY 8	Prickly Porcupines LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK2, SK3, LK1, LR1, PD4	Playdough Porcupines LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK2, LK3, LK4, LK5, LR1, LR2, MK1, MK2, PD5	Sharp Like a Porcupine's Quills LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK2, LK3, LK4, LK5, LR1, LR2, MK1, MK2, SS1, PD3, PD5	That Feels Jaggy LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, SK1, PD5
DAY 9	Look There! It's a Bear! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK1, LR1, CA1, CA4, PD4, PD5	Hiding in a Cave LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LR1, LR2, CA4, PD4, PD5	Beary Yummy Snack LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LR1, MK6, PD2, PD5	Do You See the Bear? LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK3, PD4
DAY 10	Forest Fun Day LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK2, SK3, LK1, LR1, LR2, MK3, CA4, PD4, PD5	If I Were a Forest Animal... LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK3, LK2, LK3, LK4, LK5, LR1, CA3, PD5	It's Story Time! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LK1, LR1, PD5	Tuning Up LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, AL1, SK1, SK3, CA1

For a complete list of Learning Indicators, please see the Gee Whiz User's Guide.

School-Age Experiences

<p>Finding Forests on Maps</p> <p>LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LR1, PD5</p>	<p>Noisy Woodpeckers</p> <p>LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK2, SK3, LR1, CA4, PD3, PD5</p>	<p>My Little Porcupine</p> <p>LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK3, LK2, LK3, LK4, LK5, LR1, LR2, CA3, PD5</p>
<p>Leaves vs. Needles vs. Fronds</p> <p>LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, SK2, SK3, LK2, LK3, LK4, LK5, LR1, MK1, MK2, MK5, MK6, SS1, PD5</p>	<p>Beaver Tail Paddle Fun</p> <p>LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LR1, LR2, PD4, PD5</p>	<p>What Time Is It, Sleeping Bear?</p> <p>LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SK1, SK3, LR1, MK5, PD4</p>

Book List

Here is a list of books that compliment our unit, "Exploring the Forest."

America's National Parks - A Pop-Up Book by Don Compton and Bruce Foster

Baby Chipmunks by Bobbie Kalman

Bears by Kay de Silva

The Bears on Hemlock Mountain by Alice Dalgliesh

The Beaver's Busy Year by Mary Holland

The Boy Who Grew Up in the Forest by Sophia Gholz

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?/Oso pardo, oso pardo, ¿qué ves ahí? by Eric Carle

The Deer in the Woods by Laura Ingalls Wilder

The Forest by Riccardo Bozzi

Henry Hikes to Fitchburg by D. B. Johnson

How the Chipmunk Got His Stripes by Joseph Bruchac

How Do You Hug a Porcupine? By Laurie Isop

In the Woods by Elizabeth Spurr

In My Forest by Sara Gillingham

Little Beaver and the Echo by Amy Macdonald

The Magic of the Forest by Jacqueline Crivello

National Geographic Kids National Parks Guide U.S.A. by National Geographic Kids

Night, Night, Forest Friends by Annie Bach

Over in the Forest: Come Take a Peek by Marianne Berkes

A Porcupine Named Fluffy by Helen Lester

Who's in the Forest? by Phyllis Gershator

Woodpecker Wants a Waffle by Steve Breen

Woodpecker Wham! By April Pulley Sayre

LET'S GO HIKING IN THE FOREST

(tune: "The Wheels on the Bus")

Let's go hiking in the forest,
In the forest, in the forest.
Let's go hiking in the forest,
We might see a _____.

Have the children take turns suggesting things they might see. You can also change the last line to, "We might hear a _____" or even "We might smell a _____"

LET'S CLIMB UP THE MOUNTAIN

(tune: "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow")

Let's climb up the mountain!
Let's climb up the mountain!
Let's climb up the mountain
To see what we can see.

We might see a _____.
We might see a _____.
We might see a _____,
That's something we might see!

The children can suggest things they might see in the second verse as they pretend to look.

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