Fall Sensory Fun

Leaves, pumpkins and crisp air: easy ways to play with all the senses this season.

Your child learns about the world through sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, movement and body awareness. Fall is full of chances to use them all. Pick a few ideas, head outside, and have fun together.



Make a leaf pile

Rake leaves into a big pile together, then jump in, roll around and listen to the crunch. Raking, jumping and rolling give your child's muscles, ears and balance a great workout.

Heavy work (muscles and joints)

- Hike up hills on a nature walk
- Rake leaves into piles
- Carry small pumpkins from one spot to another
- Climb on hay bales with a grown-up close by
- Stomp on crunchy leaves
- Walk like a turkey or a bear

Listening

- Crunch leaves and listen
- Take a sound walk: stop and name what you hear
- Make a rain stick from a tube or bottle filled with dry rice, then seal it tight
- Read a fall story together

Busy hands

- Scoop seeds out of a pumpkin a grown-up has opened
- Pick up pumpkin seeds one at a time with a pinch
- Roll out dough for a pie or cookies
- Shape play dough into little pumpkins
- Make leaf rubbings with paper and crayons

Touch and taste

- Lie back in a pile of leaves
- Dig for small toys in a bin of dried corn or beans
- Touch slimy pumpkin insides and smooth seeds
- Finger-paint a pumpkin
- Fish apples out of a tub of water
- Taste fall foods, like apples, pears and pumpkin bread



Pumpkin scooping

Slimy, stringy and cool! A grown-up does all the cutting. Your child scoops with a big spoon or bare hands, then sorts the seeds into a bowl.

Movement and balance

- Jump on a trampoline
- Roll down a leaf pile or a grassy hill
- Play at the park
- Walk along a fallen log while holding your hand
- Reach high to "pick" apples, then bend low to drop them in a basket

Looking

- Hunt for red, orange, yellow and brown leaves
- Play "I Spy" on a walk
- Watch the sunset together
- Toss rings onto small pumpkins
- Find your way through a corn maze

SAFETY

- Seeds, dried corn, beans and small apples can be choking hazards. Stay close, and skip them if your child still puts things in the mouth.
- Grown-ups do all the pumpkin carving and use of sharp tools.
- Check leaf piles for sticks, rocks and bugs before anyone jumps in.
- Always stay right next to your child during water play.