

# A Week of Falling Leaves

**Topic:** Autumn Leaves

**Core Subject Areas:** Early Science (Observation), Art, Sensory Exploration, Language Development, Fine & Gross Motor Skills

**Target Age:** 2 Years Old

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## Overall Learning Objectives

By the end of this week-long lesson, the learner will be able to:

- Point to and name at least two colors of leaves (e.g., red, yellow, brown).
- Demonstrate understanding of "big" and "small" by picking up corresponding leaves.
- Engage in sensory exploration by touching, crunching, and observing leaves.
- Practice fine motor skills by picking up, tearing, and gluing leaves.
- Participate in a gross motor activity like throwing leaves or going on a leaf hunt.

## Materials Needed

- A variety of real autumn leaves (collected from outside)
- Collection bag or bucket
- Child-safe, non-toxic paint (red, yellow, brown, orange)
- Construction paper or cardstock (white, black, or assorted colors)
- Child-safe glue or glue stick
- Contact paper (clear, self-adhesive)
- Crayons or washable markers
- A large bin or tub for sensory play
- Optional: Magnifying glass, smock/apron for art

## Success Criteria

Success is measured by the child's active participation and exploration. A successful week means the child has touched, observed, and creatively engaged with leaves, showing curiosity and enjoyment in the process. The focus is on the experience, not a perfect final product.

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## Day 1: Leaf Colors and Collection

### Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Start by singing a simple song to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star":  
*"Leaves are falling, all around,  
On the trees and on the ground.  
Red and yellow, brown and bright,*
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*What a lovely, autumn sight.  
Leaves are falling, all around,  
On the trees and on the ground."*

- **Educator Talking Points:** "Look! The leaves are falling down! Today, we are going to find colorful leaves outside. We will look for red leaves, yellow leaves, and brown leaves. Are you ready to go on a leaf hunt?"

## Body (Content & Practice)

1. **I Do (Model):** Show the child a red leaf, a yellow leaf, and a brown leaf you collected earlier. Point to each one and say its color clearly. "This is a **red** leaf. Look, **red**!" Repeat for yellow and brown.
2. **We Do (Guided Practice):** Go outside on a nature walk with a collection bucket. Walk together and find a leaf. "Look! We found a leaf! What color is it? It's **yellow**! Let's put the **yellow** leaf in our bucket." Help the child pick it up and put it in.
3. **You Do (Independent Practice):** Encourage the child to find leaves on their own. "Can you find a **red** leaf? Wow, you found one! Good job! Put it in the bucket." Let them explore freely, picking up any leaves that catch their eye. Talk about the colors they find.

## Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

- Bring the bucket of leaves inside. Dump them out and admire the collection.
- **Educator Talking Points:** "Look at all our pretty leaves! Can you show me a **yellow** leaf? Yes! Where is a **brown** leaf? Great looking!"
- Sing the "Leaves are falling" song again.

## Formative Assessment:

Observe if the child can point to a specific color leaf when asked. Note their engagement and interest in collecting leaves.

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# Day 2: Leaf Shapes and Sizes

## Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Lay out a few very large leaves and a few very small leaves from yesterday's collection.
- **Educator Talking Points:** "Good morning! Look at our leaves. This is a **big** leaf. Wow, so big! And look at this one... it's a **small** leaf. So tiny! Today we will play with big leaves and small leaves."

## Body (Content & Practice)

1. **I Do (Model):** Pick up a big leaf and say "**BIG** leaf!" with wide arms. Then pick up a small leaf and say "**small** leaf" in a quiet voice, pinching your fingers together.
2. **We Do (Guided Practice):** Make two piles: a big leaf pile and a small leaf pile. Hold up a leaf and ask, "Is this leaf **big** or **small**?" Guide the child's hand to place it in the correct pile. "Yes, that's a **big** leaf! It goes in the big pile."
3. **You Do (Independent Practice):** Let the child sort the remaining leaves. Give simple prompts: "Find a **small** leaf." or "Can you put this **big** leaf on the pile?" Don't worry about perfection; praise their effort. Also, trace a few different leaf shapes with your finger, noting how some are pointy

and some are round.

## Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

- **Activity:** Leaf Rubbings. Place a few interesting leaves under a piece of paper. Show the child how to peel a crayon and rub the side of it over the paper to reveal the leaf's shape.
- **Educator Talking Points:** "Look! We made our leaf appear! We can see its shape. You made a beautiful leaf picture!"

### Formative Assessment:

Observe if the child can hand you a "big" or "small" leaf upon request. See if they attempt to sort the leaves into piles.

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## Day 3: Leaf Textures and Sounds

### Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Hold a dry, crunchy leaf up to the child's ear and crunch it. Smile and say "CRUNCH! What a fun sound!"
- **Educator Talking Points:** "Leaves make noise! Let's listen. CRUNCH! CRUNCH! Today, we are going to play with crunchy leaves and feel how they are bumpy and smooth."

### Body (Content & Practice)

1. **I Do (Model):** Set up a large sensory bin with a mix of fresh and dry leaves. Run your hands through them. "Ooh, this leaf feels **smooth**." Pick up a dry one. "This leaf is **bumpy** and **crunchy**." Crunch it in your hand.
2. **We Do (Guided Practice):** Sit with the child at the sensory bin. Gently take their hand and rub it on a smooth leaf. "Feel how **smooth** it is?" Then help them find a dry leaf to crunch together. "Ready? One, two, three... **CRUNCH!**"
3. **You Do (Independent Practice):** Let the child explore the sensory bin freely. They can scoop, pour, and crunch the leaves. Talk about what they are doing. "Are you making a big pile? I hear lots of crunching! Does that leaf feel bumpy?"

### Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

- **Activity:** A "Leaf Sounds" dance. Put on some simple music and give the child two big, dry leaves. Show them how to swish them together or crunch them to the beat of the music.
- **Educator Talking Points:** "Let's clean up our leaves. Thank you for helping! Did you have fun making CRUNCH sounds today?"

### Formative Assessment:

Observe the child's sensory engagement. Do they explore the textures with their hands? Do they react with enjoyment to the crunching sound?

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## Day 4: Leaf Art and Creativity

### Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Show the child a piece of paper with a single, beautiful leaf glued in the middle.
- **Educator Talking Points:** "We can make pictures with our leaves! Look what I made. Today, you are going to be an artist and make your own leaf art. We can use paint and glue!"

### Body (Content & Practice)

1. **I Do (Model):** Demonstrate two art techniques:
  - **Leaf Stamping:** Paint the bottom of a leaf with red paint and press it onto paper to make a print. "Look, a leaf stamp!"
  - **Leaf Collage:** Put glue on a piece of paper and stick leaves onto it. "I'm sticking the leaf on. Pat, pat, pat."
2. **We Do (Guided Practice):** Choose one technique to start with. Help the child hold the leaf, apply the paint or glue, and press it onto their paper. "Let's paint this leaf yellow. Now, let's press it down... hard! Lift up! Wow!"
3. **You Do (Independent Practice):** Give the child a piece of paper, access to leaves, and either paint or glue. Let them create freely. They may just want to paint over the leaves or stack them up with glue—this is perfect. The process is the goal.

### Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

- Display their artwork somewhere prominent. Stand back and admire it together.
- **Educator Talking Points:** "Look at your amazing art! You used a **red** leaf and a **big** leaf. It is so beautiful. You are a great artist!"

### Formative Assessment:

Observe the child's fine motor skill practice (pinching leaves, holding a brush, pressing down). Note their level of creative engagement and independence.

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## Day 5: Leaf Fun and Recap

### Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Make a big pile of leaves in the living room (on a sheet) or outside.
- **Educator Talking Points:** "It's our last day of leaf week! Let's remember everything we learned. We found colors, sizes, and made art. Now, it's time to JUMP!"

### Body (Content & Practice)

1. **I Do (Model):** Show the child how to throw the leaves up in the air and let them fall down. "Whee! The leaves are falling down!" Gently fall or jump into the pile.
2. **We Do (Guided Practice):** Take the child's hands and jump into the pile together. "One, two, three... JUMP!" Gather a pile of leaves together and throw them in the air at the same time.
3. **You Do (Independent Practice):** Let the child play freely in the leaf pile. While they play, recap the week's concepts. "Can you find me a **big, red** leaf in the pile? Let's crunch this one! CRUNCH!"

## Conclusion (Summative Assessment & Recap)

- **Activity:** Suncatcher Craft. Give the child a piece of clear contact paper, sticky side up. Let them stick their favorite leaves from the week onto it. Cover with another piece of contact paper and seal. Hang it in a window.
- **Educator Talking Points:** "Look at all the leaves you chose! We have a **small, yellow** leaf here and a **big, brown** one here. Now we can see our beautiful leaves all the time. You learned so much about leaves this week!"
- Sing the "Leaves are falling" song one last time.

### Summative Assessment:

During the final activities, casually ask the child to identify a color or size ("Hand me a small leaf for our suncatcher"). Their ability to respond to these simple prompts demonstrates understanding. The finished art projects from the week also serve as a portfolio of their exploration and learning.

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## Differentiation Throughout the Week

- **For a younger or struggling learner (Scaffolding):**
  - Focus on just one concept per day (e.g., only the color red).
  - Use hand-over-hand guidance for all art and sorting activities.
  - Simplify choices to two options (e.g., "Red or yellow?").
  - Focus purely on sensory exploration without language goals.
- **For an older or advanced learner (Extension):**
  - Introduce more colors (green, orange) and descriptive words (pointy, smooth, bumpy).
  - Practice counting leaves ("Let's count the red leaves: one, two, three!").
  - Create simple patterns with the leaves (red, yellow, red, yellow).
  - Talk about why leaves fall in simple terms: "The tree is getting sleepy for winter."