

Sorting Our Seasons

Outdoor Learning Environments Activity Leaflet

Setting: Classroom setting or outdoor learning environment (OLE)

Activity: Learning About the Seasons

Focus of Activity: The activity focuses on categorizing elements that are related to the four seasons

Curricular Areas:

- Decision-making
- Approaches of learning: focus and engagement, imagination, and aesthetic sensibility
- Social development
- Cognitive development: creative expression
- Hand-eye coordination
- Color recognition
- Physical development: fine motor skills
- Conceptual knowledge of the natural and physical world
- Language development

Creating hands-on activities encourages learning and enhancement of children’s development. For this activity, children have the opportunity to categorize items associated with specific seasons, build their problem-solving skills, engage socially with each other, and most importantly, learn about natural cycles. In addition, children will have the chance to learn how seasons effect the lives of people, animals, and plants.

Materials:

Four circular wooden slices or “tree cookies”, acrylic paint, paintbrushes, *Mod Podge* (or *Elmer’s glue*), medium stones (flat faced is recommended), seasonally themed stickers



Suggestions:

1. Paint each wooden circle to represent a specific season (ex: for winter, use white and blue colors to create a winter scene). Engage children by having them help paint wooden circles. Use this time as a learning opportunity to expand children’s skills and knowledge related to their physical development, mathematics skills, language development and creative expression.
2. Once paint has dried, cover it with a layer of *Mod Podge* as a paint protective.
3. Invite children to add seasonal stickers to medium-sized stones. Have children find stickers to represent each



season. Place one sticker on each stone. Have them seal each sticker with a layer of *Mod Podge* and allow it to dry. As an alternative, children can paint the stones with their own images, promoting their creative freedom and fine motor development.

4. To start the activity, discuss the painted images on each wooden circle and which season they represent. Invite children to participate in the activity by sorting each sticker image to their corresponding season. Have children place the stone on top wooden circle that it matches with.
5. Create an open dialogue about their decision for placing certain rocks onto the circles. Prompts could include, "Why did you put the flower in spring? Could the flower also be placed in another season? Why or why not?"
6. Expand the activity to include learning components that are relevant to the current season.

Engaging Parents:

1. Take a picture of the children sorting. Post the picture in a readily-accessible place and/or include it in a parent newsletter.
2. Share children's progress and skill development with parents. If necessary, provide resources and tools to help continue skill development while at home.

Book Recommendations:

1. *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats
2. *Snow* by Cynthia Rylant
3. *Goodbye Autumn, Hello Winter* by Kenard Pak
4. *Our Seasons* by Grace Lin and Ranida T. McKneally
5. *Old Bear* by Kevin Henkes
6. *Calendar* by Myra Cohn Livingston and Will Hillenbrand
7. *Goodnight Songs: A Celebration of Seasons* by Margaret Wise Brown
8. *Bunny's First Spring* by Sally Lloyd-Jones and David McPhail
9. *Summer Days and Nights* by Wong Herbert Yee

