

Simple Ways to Explore Trees

Drawing Prompt: “Trees are our Family”

For Parents and Children 4-6 years



Dear Families, Let's investigate trees through sensory observation and drawing. Trees represent life on Earth and are a part of our family of living beings that we must get to know and respect. There is so much to learn from trees; even though trees stand still, they can feed, reproduce, communicate with each other, and defend themselves.

Objective: Drawing is a language that supports children's observations, curiosity, and empathy. The objective of this activity is to invite children to draw by observing trees attentively and empathizing with living things outside themselves.

Parent's Role: Parents provide guidance, prompting, and supplies, but there's no need to intervene in your child's drawing; you might consider making your own drawing alongside your child. A simple way to avoid copying conventional or pre-conceived tree models is to go outdoors and experience trees directly using all the senses.



Outdoor Observation Prompt:

1. In your neighborhood, or even outside your window—and following all the safety procedures of social distancing and hand washing—choose a tree to observe. What season are we in? What is happening to your tree in this season?
2. **See, smell, touch, hear:** Touch the tree, feel the texture of the bark on the tree trunk, observe the shape of the branches. Do the branches have leaves? Buds? Observe how the branches move in the air: are the moving branches making sounds? See the differences between the branches. Look up, and observe how the branches appear against the sky. Are the trees around your chosen tree the same or different?
3. **Point of view:** If you were a bird flying in the sky, how would a tree look from way up high?
4. **Seen and unseen*:** Once you've looked at all the parts of the tree, what about those parts that are not visible? What tree parts are under the ground? What do roots look like? What is their function? What creatures live underground? Which of these creatures help keep the tree alive?

Drawing: You can draw one tree or many trees!

Materials: Big sheet of paper, colored pencils, crayons, or markers, tape.

1. Begin by listing the seen and unseen tree parts you observed with your child. What do they look like? What textures and colors did they have?
2. Use coloring supplies to draw the tree parts.
3. Other elements: What natural elements are connected to trees? (Sun, rain, wind, animals). Is the tree a shelter? A source of food? For which animals?
4. Display your drawing: Display your tree drawing in your window facing outward so everyone can see it when they walk by. Invite your friends to draw trees as well. The more children participate, the more trees will appear, and soon your neighborhood will look like a forest!



Share with us: I would love to see your drawings and share them with our Lynden community. Take a picture of your drawing and e-mail it to me: corjuela@lyndensculpturegarden.org

*Online books about trees:

- “It Starts with a Seed” by Laura Knowles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nMH6m81vlc>
- “Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt” by Kate Messner : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5qhb1Jpow4>
- “A Tree Can Be...” By Judy Nayer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxhFYsrZLrc>