

Simple Ways to Explore Trees

Activity #2: Exploring Silhouettes

For Parents and Children 2-6 years

On a beautiful spring day, we ventured outdoors to explore trees. We were surrounded by pine trees, so we had an unlimited supply of pine cones: children love to explore and collect them. We collected as many pine cones as we could, and then I used them to outline their bodies. Once an outline was finished, and the child had stood up, the children would play with the new boundary, jumping inside and outside the silhouette and scattering the pinecones. Then we would gather up the pinecones in a bucket and start over, tracing the next child.

Find an abundance of something outdoors that you can use to trace a silhouette. It's best to collect seeds (or pine cones, which hold seeds) that have fallen naturally on the ground, and to take just what you need. You can trace your child's body or shadow using this collection. Remind your child to be very still and patient like a pine tree while their body is being traced. As you trace the outline, you can review each part of the body: If you were a tree, what part of the tree would your arm be? Once the child is surrounded by objects, help them stand up gently so the outline remains in place.

Questions: Where do pine cones come from? How many pine cones can you find? What sound do they make when they drop? Compare and contrast as you gather: are they sticky? heavy? light? Can you make a silhouette of your family?

Materials: Collecting bag, seeds, pine cones, small branches, dried leaves, grass. Or try this indoors with yarn, blocks, or beads.

