

LEAF RAINBOW TINKERLAB

This nature-based art activity is open-ended and adjustable for different ages and learning levels. The main focus is to help kids compare and observe differences in shades of colors. This can be challenging, since usually kids are taught to focus on categorizing and sorting colors, instead of focusing on differences within those categories. Be patient, and encourage them to use descriptive words or creative comparisons.

Ages: 3 to 10

INSTRUCTIONS:

COLLECTION:

1. Get your masks, sweaters, and mittens, and head outside! This activity is all about leaves, so try and find as many different colors and shapes of leaves as you can. 10 leaves or more should be enough for the activity.
2. While you're collecting, try and make note of where the leaves are coming from- are they from big trees, or small shrubs? Are there seeds and fruits on the ground with them? Have all the leaves from one plant turned the same color, or all fallen off at once? Is anyone else poking around in the leaves with you, like squirrels, birds, or roly polys? What do you think they're looking for?



CONSTRUCTION:

1. Once you've collected a variety of leaves, head inside. You can opt to stay outside if you'd like, just make sure you've found a spot that is well shielded from the wind! Find a flat surface-you can work directly on this, or lay down a big piece of paper or cloth.
2. Time to build a rainbow! Work together to sort the leaves by color and shade. Your rainbow can go from lightest to darkest, from orange to yellow to green, or from light brown to dark brown! This activity is all about comparison- it may help to set the two extreme ends of the spectrum first (for example, light yellow on one end and deep brown on the other), and then fill in the spaces by comparing to those two ends.
3. Once you've created a rainbow, you can also go through and give silly names to the different colors! For example, your rainbow can include banana peel yellow, puppy tongue purple, or buttered toast brown.

This activity can be reshuffled and repeated- if your kid is having a hard time letting the first rainbow go, take a picture! Try sorting by another characteristic, like size, crunchiness, or shape. Collecting leaves might be more exciting the second time, as kids will have a better idea of what to look for, and might collect more interesting colors! However, when you're done, be sure to return the leaves to the outdoors. You can do this by building one last big rainbow outside, or just release them into a gust of wind!

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE!

Post about your adventures and tag us at @gpconservatory or use the hashtag #gpcathome!



This work is supported by a grant from PNC Foundation for education with young children. We are grateful for their support of our programs at the Conservatory.