

LETTER TO PARENTS

SCIENCE NEWS

Dear Parents,

Our kindergarten class is beginning a science unit called *Trees*. We will be observing and comparing the trees in our schoolyard. We will also be caring for a live tree in the classroom and planting it in a few weeks. Your child may come home with lots of information and questions about trees and their parts.

You can join in the tree study by taking your child for walks in your neighborhood to observe trees and other plants and to compare how they are alike and how they are different. For example, see if you can find two trees of the same kind. How were you able to tell they were the same kind? Which trees lose their leaves in the fall and which keep them all year? Look closely at the leaves. What shape are they? Do the trees have buds, flowers, fruit, or seeds? By making this close examination of trees, you might notice things about trees that you never thought about before.

Your child's homework assignment is to gather some tree leaves to press at school. Please help your child gather six or eight leaves. Put them in a small plastic bag to keep them fresh on the way to school. Thank you.

Sincerely,



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HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION**INVESTIGATION 1: FALL TREES**

Read this out loud with your child, then do the activity together.

Think of a place near your home where there are trees. This should be a place where there are not too many trees to count. Your street, block, yard, or neighborhood park might be good choices. Without looking, guess how many trees there are. Ask everyone in your family to guess the number of trees.

_____ thinks there are _____ trees.

_____ thinks there are _____ trees.

_____ thinks there are _____ trees.

_____ thinks there are _____ trees.

Next, go outside together and count the trees. Look at the kinds of trees you find.

Compare the bark, the leaves, and the shapes of the trees. Answer these questions.

- How many trees did you find?
- How many different kinds of leaves did you find?
- What kind of animals did you find living in the trees?
- What did you find around the trees?

Record what you saw.

We counted _____ trees.

We found _____

HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

INVESTIGATION 2: LEAVES

Play What's My Leaf?

Number of players

2 or more—the more the merrier

Materials

8 leaves that have fallen from the same kind of tree

1 bag

Game 1: Spread out your leaves on a table and take a good, long look at them. Each player chooses one leaf. Compare the leaves. Discover what makes your leaf different from all the other leaves. Is it the smallest? Is it the biggest? Does it have a special spot or mark on it? Does it have an unusual edge or shape? When all players are sure they know how their leaf differs from all the others, everyone returns their leaf to the bag. Mix up the pile gently and spread them out again. Take turns finding your leaf.

To make the game easier, start with the same number of leaves as players.

To make the game more difficult, add a new leaf each time you play.

What makes your leaf special? Draw it here.

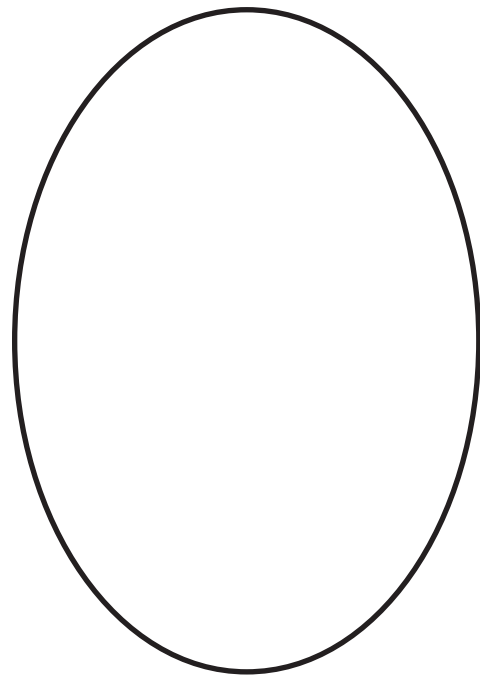
Game 2: Player 1 chooses a leaf from the group of leaves on the table, but doesn't tell anyone which leaf it is. The other players then try to guess which leaf player 1 has chosen, by asking questions that can be answered yes or no.

HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION**INVESTIGATION 3: TREES THROUGH THE SEASONS**

Adopt a tree! At school, we have adopted a tree to observe through the seasons. You can do the same with a tree in your neighborhood. A good tree to choose is one that you can easily visit. Maybe there is a tree that you walk by every day. Get to know your tree. What shape is it? Feel its bark. Can you reach around the tree? Look at its leaves. Does anything fall from your tree? Are there any clues that any animals live in or visit your tree? A piece of yarn or string can mark a twig on your tree, so you can look for any changes that happen to the twig in the winter, spring, summer, or fall. Enjoy your tree; no other tree is exactly like it.

This is my tree in the _____ .

(fall, winter, spring, or summer)



(Draw a leaf or twig of your tree here.)