

Alphabet Snow Hunt

Materials

white packaging peanuts
sensory table
Avalanche by Michael J. Rosen
plastic alphabet letters
plastic shovel
plastic buckets

What to do

1. Prepare the sensory table in advance by disinfecting it. After it dries, fill it with packaging peanuts.
2. Read the story *Avalanche* to prepare the children to hunt for missing letters in the "snow."
3. Empty uppercase and lowercase letters in the sensory table. Cover the letters with packaging peanuts.
4. Encourage the children to shovel out specific letters, such as all the letters of the alphabet, letters of their name, or letters that come before and after certain letters.

 Quazonia Quarles, Newark, DE

Autumn Fun

Materials

large garbage bag
autumn leaves
sheet or tarp for the floor

What to do

1. Collect a large bag of autumn leaves.
2. Spread a sheet or tarp on the floor and dump the leaves in the center of the sheet.
3. Encourage the children to sit in the middle of the leaves and toss them in the air.
4. Encourage the children to notice and enjoy the variety of shapes and colors.

Related books *Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf* by Lois Ehlert
Why Do Leaves Change Color? by Betsy Maestro

 Sandy Scott, Vancouver, WA

Birdseed Discovery

Materials

- sensory table or large tub
- birdseed
- funnels, scoops, and shovels
- small plastic animals
- plastic scale
- bowls

What to do

1. Fill the sensory table about one third full with birdseed. Place small plastic animals on top of the birdseed.
2. Encourage the children to explore the birdseed using funnels, scoops, and shovels.

Related book *Quick as a Cricket* by Audrey Wood

 Sandy Scott, Vancouver, WA

Color and Shape Boxes

Materials

- shoeboxes (plastic or cardboard)
- hands-on materials (see activity)

What to do

1. Place colorful hands-on materials or materials in a variety of shapes in different boxes. Label each box as appropriate. For example:
 - **Color Boxes**—add paint sample cards or Formica samples (from the hardware store), color paddles, colorful rocks and shells, or other small objects. Make one box per color or one box with color activities.
 - **Shape Boxes**—add blocks, cookie cutters, puzzle pieces, books on shapes, and so on.
2. Keep these boxes on a shelf for the entire year, and change the contents often.
3. Use this idea to make nature boxes, such as shells and rocks. Children can sort, count, and examine the contents using a magnifying glass. Some of the children return to these boxes again and again, enjoying the cool smooth stones, or the beauty of the shells.

 Tracie O'Hara, Charlotte, NC