



SUMMER-FALL-WINTER-SPRING FAMILY PLAY PLANS

Busy families often find it hard to set aside time for play, especially with the distraction of screens and technology.

TRUCE offers some seasonal, screen-free ideas to inspire your whole family — whatever their ages— to play together.



FALL FAMILY PLAY PLAN

Turn off the Screen & Turn on the LEAVES

Fall leaves offer endless opportunities for family playtime—both indoors and out.

Brightly colored fall leaves are simple, everyday, natural items that can provide hours of fun family play.

As families play together, children learn skills such as cooperation, turn-taking, problem-solving, sorting, and much more. And, of course, playing together is just plain fun for everyone.



Watch children as they play. This can help you figure out what they are working on and can also help you know what to say and do.

You can add to the play by talking about what is happening: “I see that you have found some red leaves.” “The leaves on this tree look much bigger than the leaves on that tree.” Ask simple questions, such as: “How can we make a pattern with our leaves?”

PLAY VALUE—PRICE VALUE



Playing with fall leaves—a free, open-ended material—can offer a deeper, more creative play experience than many of the expensive, one-purpose toys sold today.

IDEAS FOR FAMILY PLAY WITH FALL LEAVES



ACTIVITIES WITH LEAVES

- **Jumping into a Pile of Leaves.** What is more fun in fall than raking up a big pile of leaves together and then jumping into it?
- **Leaf Race.** Each family member selects a leaf and then he/she blows it across a table with a straw.
- **Leaf Match.** Put out two of each kind of leaf. Have the children match the pairs. Look in a tree book to learn the names of the leaves.



- **Leaf Angels.** On an unraked lawn, make “angels” in the fallen leaves.
- **Leaf Sorting.** Collect a variety of leaves. Then, group the leaves by color, name, and size. (You could arrange the leaves in order, from smallest to largest.)
- **Leaf Maze.** Rake a maze in the fallen leaves.
- **Leaf Toss.** Gather leaves on a sheet. As family members hold on to the edges of the sheet, lift it slowly and then quickly and watch how the leaves “float.”

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WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

Nature helps children develop powers of observation and creativity and instills a sense of peace and being at one with the world.—*William Crain, “How Nature Helps Children Develop,” 2001.*



LEAF ART

- **Leaf Pressing.** Collect brightly colored leaves. Carry them home in a protective carrier, such as between two pieces of cardboard. Then put the leaves between several sheets of newspaper, place the newspaper between two cardboard covers and then weigh down with a large book. Make sure the leaves don't touch one another. In a week or so, the leaves should be dried out and can be used in art projects.
- **Leaf Rubbing.** Place a leaf under a piece of paper. Use the side of a crayon with the wrapper removed to color over the leaf. Green leaves generally work better.
- **Leaf Prints.** Paint one side of a leaf. Press it onto a piece of paper to make a print.
- **Leaf People or Animals.** Tape a leaf to a piece of paper and draw head, arms, legs, etc. to make a “leaf person” or a “leaf animal.”



LEAF PROJECTS

- Collect different color leaves and then sort them by color on colored sheets of paper. For more ideas, explore the book, *We're Going on a*



Leaf Hunt by Steve Metzger.

- **Leaf Wreath.** Collect brightly colored leaves. Cut a hole in a paper plate. Glue leaves, acorns, and other fall items to the paper plate to make a colorful, fall wreath.



TRUCE FAMILY PLAY TIP

Develop a family screen turn off ritual. Here are some ideas:



- Count all the screens that are on as you turn them off.
- See if you can turn off all the screens in a minute or less.
- Have a bin or basket where you put all portable screens during family play time.