



Schools Tree Day – Get to know a tree – Early Learning

Background information

Learning goals: Children connect to nature through play-based learning. Children will begin to recognise trees as living things, and will begin to consider why our environment (and we humans) need trees.

Content information: Imagine a world without trees: no wood; no paper; no oxygen; no rustling of leaves; no shade on a hot day; no birds nesting in hollows and branches; no climbing to great heights on wobbly limbs; and no springtime blossoms to drag you out of the winter doldrums. Trees really do give us a lot. But how well do we really know the trees in our yard or garden? Spending time with trees and exploring them with all our senses can be one of the best ways to reconnect with nature.

We have many different types of trees in Australia, but the most distinctive is the eucalyptus. There are more than 700 species of eucalypti and most of these are native to Australia. Since the arrival of Europeans, many other species of trees have been introduced. While these trees are often beautiful - with autumn colours - and useful - by bearing fruit - they don't have the same value to our environment. Native trees provide native wildlife with food and shelter. They are also suited to the climate and soil so don't require as much water or as many nutrients.

Planting native trees is one of the best way of helping our natural environment and helping to improve biodiversity in our local areas.

See what other centres are doing by exploring a case study [here](#).



Definitions:

- Native - of indigenous origin or growth.
- Introduced - a species living outside of its normal or natural range.

Activity: Get to know a tree

Ages - 0 to 2

What to do:

Using the image of the tree - [The whole tree](#) - talk to children about the different features of a tree: the trunk, the roots, the branches, the leaves and the seeds or nuts.

Take your children into the yard. Walk around the yard looking at trees (if you don't have trees, look at shrubs, bushes or other plants). Talk to children about the differences between bark, leaves, shape, colour, seeds and nuts, flowers (if any) and smell. Collect a sample of the leaves to take back to your room (use fallen leaves where possible).

Ask children to create an image on the floor using the leaves you have collected from your yard.

Provocations:

- I wonder where we can find trees?
- I wonder what the different parts of a tree are?
- I wonder why there are different types of leaves?
- I wonder what the seeds or nuts are for? (Reproduction)
- I wonder what the roots are for? (To get it's food and water)
- I wonder why a tree has leaves? (To get its food - photosynthesis)



- I wonder why trees are important?

Possible lines of development:

- Find the wood - take a walk around your centre looking for all the things made of wood.
- Plant a seed and watch it grow (e.g. [Early Learning - Grow a Tree](#)).
- Growing tree - role play a tree growing from a seed to a big tree.
- Leaf rubbings.
- Paint the leaves, thread them on some string and create some leaf 'bunting' to hang in your room.
- Find more games and activities at [dirtgirlworld.com](#)

Ages - 2 to 3

What to do:

Begin this activity by asking students to share some of the features of a tree. Consider the following questions:

- What features do all trees share?
- What things might be different between different trees?
- How can you tell different trees apart?

Head outside with your children to a stand of trees (at least two) and break children into pairs or small groups. Give one child in each group a blindfold and ask them to put it on.

There are two approaches for this activity. Select one:

- With one child blindfolded the other child describes the tree to the blindfolded child, talking about the features of the tree that make it special and different from all the other trees around. After several minutes of listening to the description of the tree,



ask children to take their blindfolds off and see if they can find their tree based upon features that were described to them.

- With one child blindfolded the other child leads the blindfolded child to a tree and helps the blindfolded child feel the features of the tree, in particular the features that are in reach and make it special and different from surrounding trees. After several minutes of feeling the features of the tree, ask children to lead their blindfolded classmate away and take their blindfolds off. The blindfolded child must then try to identify their tree based upon the features they felt.

Once all children have had the chance to be blindfolded, engage children in a discussion around their experiences:

- Was it easy or hard to identify their tree? Why?
- What would have made it easier?
- Were they surprised when they saw their tree? Did it look like they imagined?

Ask children to draw their tree or make their tree out of modelling clay.

Provocations:

- I wonder what features all trees have?
- I wonder how trees might be different?
- I wonder how different trees might feel?
- I wonder if different trees smell differently or sound different in the wind?
- I wonder why we need trees?
- I wonder why it is important to look after trees?

Possible lines of development:

- Explore other things with blindfolds on e.g. the difference between natural and human-made objects, or identify different objects such as fruit or vegetables, or identify different objects through smell.



- Plant a seed and watch it grow (e.g. [Early Learning - Grow a Tree](#))
- Explore different tree shapes, sizes and colours (searching online).
- Explore the differences in leaves, bark, seeds and nuts.
- Find more games and activities at [dirtgirlworld.com](#)

Ages - 3 to 5

What do do:

Begin this activity by asking children to share some of the features of a tree. Consider the following questions:

- What features do all trees share?
- What things might be different between different trees?
- How can you tell different trees apart?
- Do you think this tree originates from Australia or has it come from overseas? Why?

Head outside with your children to a stand of trees (at least two) and break children into pairs or small groups. Give one child in each group a blindfold and ask them to put it on.

There are two approaches for this activity. Select one:

- With one child blindfolded the other child describes the tree to the blindfolded child, talking about the features of the tree that make it special and different from surrounding trees. After several minutes of listening to the description of the tree, ask children to take their blindfolds off and see if they can find their tree based upon the features that were described to them.
- With one child blindfolded the other child leads the blindfolded child to tree and helps the blindfolded child feel the features of the tree, in particular the features that are in reach and make it



special and different from surrounding trees. After several minutes of feeling the features of the tree, ask children to lead their blindfolded classmate away and take their blindfolds off. The blindfolded child must then try to identify their tree based upon the features that they felt.

Once all children have had the chance to be blindfolded, engage children in a discussion around their experiences:

- Was it easy or hard to identify their tree? Why?
- What would have made it easier?
- Were they surprised when they saw their tree? Did it look like they imagined?
- Why is this tree so important?

Ask children to draw their tree and give it a name based upon its features.

Provocations:

- I wonder what features all trees have?
- I wonder how trees might be different?
- I wonder how different trees might feel?
- I wonder if different trees smell differently or sound different in the wind?
- I wonder why different trees grow in different places?
- I wonder if you can find the same trees all over the world?
- I wonder why we need trees?
- I wonder why it is important to look after trees?

Possible lines of development:

- Explore other things with blindfolds on e.g. the difference between natural and human-made objects, identifying different objects such as fruit or vegetables, identifying different objects through smell.
- Plant a seed and watch it grow (e.g. [Early Learning - Grow a](#)



Tree)

- Explore different tree shapes, sizes and colours (searching online).
- Explore the differences in leaves, bark, seeds and nuts.
- Ways that we use trees e.g. wood, cardboard, paper, woodchips.
- Find more games and activities at dirtgirlworld.com

Evaluation

Complete an analysis of learning that lists evidence about:

Belonging	Finding something of interest
Communication	Expressing an idea or feeling
Exploration	Engaging with challenge and persisting when difficulty arises
Well being	Being involved

Embedding into daily practice

- Use any relatively clean water left over after craft activities and games to water plants in your garden.
- Propagate seeds from suitable local endemic species, nurture them and then have the children plant them at your centre.
- Start a worm farm to use scraps and make wonderful fertiliser for your centre gardens.

Take part in Plant Ark's Tree Day

Following these activities is a great way for your children to take part in the largest nature-care event in Australian schools, Planet Ark's Schools

Tree Day. You'll be joining thousands of amazing people in making a difference, fostering a child's love of nature and creating positive environmental change. So, get growing! It only takes a minute to register at treeday.planetark.org.



Like this lesson? Send us your feedback thea@coolaustralia.org