Activities to Support Conceptual Understanding

Fall Trees

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Leaf Color Hunt

Description:
Provide real or artificial leaves in fall colors (red, yellow, orange, brown). Hide them around the room or outside. As students find each one, match it to color tactile Image Cards in print/Braille.

Multi-Sensory Connections:

- **Tactile:** Feel smooth vs. crinkly leaves, veins, edges.
- **Audio:** Crinkle leaves together, stomp on dry leaves for crunch sounds.
- **Smell:** Rub leaves together to release earthy fall scents.
- **Movement/Spatial:** Move around to find leaves; place them in a left-to-right sequence.

Rich Verbal Descriptions & Salient Features:

- *"This leaf is flat, thin, with veins running through it."*
- *"The edges are jagged; the stem is long and narrow."*

Crunch & Chirp Listening Walk

Description:
Recreate the soundscape of fall trees. Step on leaves for the *crunch, crunch, crunch* sound. Play recordings of squirrels *chirp, chirp* or birds in the trees.

Multi-Sensory Connections:

- **Tactile:** Touch real acorns, hold a piece of bark, or run fingers along a leaf.
- **Audio:** Amplify sounds—crunching, chirping, wind blowing.
- **Movement/Spatial:** Walk across textured mats (paper bags, leaf piles) to simulate outdoor paths.
- **Smell:** Add pine needles or cinnamon for a "fall woods" scent.

Rich Verbal Descriptions & Salient Features:

- *"The squirrel has pointy ears, sharp claws, a slender body, and a bushy tail."*
- *"The acorn is small, round, with a tough shell and a little cap."*

Acorn Find & Count

Description:

Scatter acorns (real, wooden, or plastic) for children to find and collect. After collecting, count them together and compare sizes.

Multi-Sensory Connections:

- **Tactile:** Feel smooth, hard shells and rough caps.
- **Audio:** Drop acorns in a tin for a clinking sound.
- **Movement/Spatial:** Search high/low, near/far, and place in a line to count left-to-right.
- **Visual (if possible):** Match acorns to Braille/print number cards.

Rich Verbal Descriptions & Salient Features:

- *"This acorn is small, round, and has a little stem on top."*
- *"This one has a bumpy cap with a rough texture."*

Tree Adventure Movement Game

Description:

- Act out the fall tree adventure together.
- Stand tall and stretch arms = tall tree.
- Sway arms = branches moving in wind.
- Wiggle fingers = falling leaves.
- Curl up small = acorn on the ground.

Multi-Sensory Connections:

- **Tactile:** Hold a leaf or branch while moving.
- **Audio:** Add wind whooshing or leaf rustling sounds.
- **Movement/Spatial:** Switch positions—high/tall like a tree, low/small like an acorn.
- **Smell:** Optional—use pine or earthy scents to ground the experience.

Rich Verbal Descriptions & Salient Features:

- *"Your arms are long like branches; your body is tall like the trunk."*
- *"Your fingers wiggle like leaves drifting down."*

Parent Tip

Fall trees are full of sensory opportunities. Encourage children to touch, smell, listen, and move while you describe each feature. Count leaves and acorns, act out trees and squirrels, and make the story a full-body adventure.

About these Materials

These activities build on strategies shared by teachers of students with visual impairments, families, and organizations such as Perkins School for the Blind and Paths to Literacy.