


ADOPT-A-TREE

Activity 16

DURATION = Ongoing
LEARNING STATION = Forest, School/Park
RELATED ACTIVITY = ←Your Own Tree

WHEN = 



UNDERSTANDING: Trees are living organisms with individual characteristics that can change over time.

MATERIALS:

- Paper and pencil for each child
- Optional: Crayons, measuring tape, camera, thermometer, increment borer

PREPARATION: None

LESSON:

Warm-up: Have each child select a tree to which they have easy access and can visit on a regular basis (weekly, monthly or seasonally) for at least a year. A deciduous (leaf falling) tree is recommended.

Activity: Have each child keep a journal about their tree. The journal should consist of observations, thoughts, drawings, bark and leaf rubbings, and anything else that the child wants to include. Suggest they make note of things like: When did the leaves begin to change color? When did the last leaves fall? When did the tree begin to leaf out? Are the leaves soft or crisp? Is the tree's bark smooth or rough? What is the tree's height? Its diameter?

Include journal entries on the area surrounding the tree: How does the tree differ from others around it? How far away is the nearest tree? Do any of the trees nearby appear to be offspring? In what kind of soil does the tree grow? What animals live on, in or near it? Do animals depend on it for food and/or shelter? Is there evidence of damage to the tree from animals, humans or weather? How much shade does the tree provide during the summer? What does it look like when you lie at its base, face upwards? Do other plants grow near the base? The child might also make a collection of the tree's leaves, seeds, bark and twigs or take seasonal photographs.

OPTIONS AND FURTHER EXPLORATIONS:

1. This activity complements teaching units on plant growth, especially if specific activities include measuring branch growth during a growing season and measuring trunk growth using an increment borer or measuring tape in late winter and again the following fall.
2. Have the children conduct library investigations on their trees. Is there more than one common name for their tree? What is the Latin (scientific) name? Is there a story behind how the tree got its name? How is the tree's wood used?