

Things to do with your children during autumn...

Whether you are a parent / carer or work in a setting. They can be used to follow a particular interest of the child or as an invitation to play/learn:-



1. Blackberry playdough
2. Maths with blackberries
3. Apple and blackberry crumble
4. Pumpkin seeds
5. Pumpkin decoration
6. Experimenting with paint
7. A basket of imagination
8. Exploring with light and colour
9. Apple printing
10. Nature walk
11. Finger print autumn trees
12. Autumn centred play dough



1. Blackberry playdough

- Mix together in a mixing bowl: -
 - 150g of crushed blackberries
 - 2tbsp of oil
 - 1/3 cup of water
 - Add a cup of plain flour and ½ cup of salt
- Knead together until smooth.
- Introduce vocabulary to describe the dough
 - smooth, sticky, wet, cold.
- Discuss how the mixture changes when you add different things to it.



2. Maths with blackberries



- You could take your children on a walk to collect blackberries.
- Encourage your children to count the blackberries and talk about who has the most or least. Emphasise that it is not a competition and it doesn't matter if some children only have a couple.
- Introduce language such as largest or smallest.
- Place the blackberries in order of size starting with the biggest/smallest
- Sort according to colour (if you have some unripened ones).
- Weigh the blackberries using a digital scale.

3. Apple and blackberry crumble

- With the blackberries you have collected (and counted) make an apple and blackberry crumble with your children. Use words such as measure, weigh, count, mix, stir, pour, spray, cut.
- You could talk about how the ingredients look, feel, taste, smell.
- Talk about the dangers of using a hot oven.
- When the crumble is ready talk about sequencing actions – what you did first, last, next etc.

[Apple & blackberry crumble recipe | BBC Good Food](#)



4. Pumpkin seeds



- If you can, visit a pumpkin farm to collect pumpkins.
- In your home or setting talk about the pumpkins and introduce relevant language such as big, bigger, biggest, small, smaller, smallest, colours of the pumpkins etc.
- Scoop out the seeds, talk about how it feels, smells, looks, sounds.
- Clean the pulp off the seeds.
- Rinse the seeds with cold water.
- Talk about the size of the seeds – look for the biggest seeds, these may be your strongest.
- Explain to your child/children that you will be planting the seeds to grow into pumpkins.
- Encourage your child/children to spread them out on paper to dry.
- When they are completely dry – store them in an envelope ready for planting.
- Talk about what the seeds will need to grow and what will happen.
- Plant directly into the ground in May/early June.
- Encourage the children to monitor the seeds and their growth.
- Place the shell of the pumpkin in an empty fish tank/aquarium – ensure it is sealed.
- Watch the pumpkin shell decay over time.
- Discuss with the children what is happening.
- Use the opportunity to help children understand nature.

A great opportunity to teach children about eco literacy and how to care for the environment!

[How to create an eco-friendly early learning environment | Enabling Environments | Teach Early Years](#)



5. Pumpkin decoration

You may have a children with a transformational schema. [View - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#) for further information on schemas. Schemas are behaviours that children repeat when they are exploring and finding out how things work. Children have a strong drive to repeat actions: these may involve moving things from one place to another, move in circles, squeeze things, throw things, cover things or put things in containers. A child with a transformational schema may have the desire

to squeeze or pour glue. If this is the case, this is the perfect experience for them.

For this activity, you will need:-

- Pumpkins
- Petals
- Glue sticks
- PVA glue
- Leaves and foliage

Allow the children to explore and decorate using items they may have collected during a nature walk.



6. Experimenting with paint

Powder paint is best to use for this experience. This allows for so much opportunity to mix, create different shades, learn about consistency and can be used wet or dry. Powder paint provides children with wonderful opportunities to experiment.

- Water
- Ladder / steps
- Powder paints of different colours
- Large and small brushes
- Spoons
- Bowls
- Sieves



Let your children explore with the texture, consistency, wet/dry and give plenty of opportunities to paint on a large and small scale in different positions.

7. A basket of imagination

This experience allows children to go wild with their imagination. All you need is a basket/bowl full of interesting items. You can use objects rich in autumnal colours and use the objects as prompts to let their imaginations run free. Provide mark making materials so that children can write down their ideas or create illustrations. Or as the enabling adult, be their scribe if you are invited into their play. This shows that as adults we are valuing their ideas. This will also help children understand that words have meaning. Children's ideas can then be collaborated into a

book to be shared during amser cylch/storytime. You could begin introducing the language of storytelling such as:-

- Once upon a time...
- This is a story about...
- The end....

Let your children take the lead and be mindful as the enabling adult, when to assist.

Items you could include are:-

- Wooden basket/bowl from charity shop
- Woodland animals
- Loose parts
- Mark making materials
- Peg dolls
- A scarf rich in autumnal colours



8. Exploring with light and colour

Light is an exciting phenomenon for young children to explore. Children need the opportunities to explore, discover, invent and have fun! This experience allows children to explore with different

loose parts. Loose parts play allows children to enter a world of discovery and 'what if...'. This type of thinking leads to problem-solving and theoretical reasoning.

- Clip on lights
- A variety of different lights/torches/fairy lights
- Variety of scarves
- Loose parts
- White and black paper – for children to observe the contrast



9. Apple printing

Autumn is the best time of year for this experience. The apples on the trees are ripe to harvest and ready in abundance. You may have apples in your garden or local park that you can use. If this is the case you can encourage the children to observe their growth through the seasons from the beautiful blossoms to the tiny apples growing and then through to the Autumn when they are ready to harvest. The apples can be used to make the apple and blackberry crumble. Even the cores can be used by putting them on the compost heap. This is such a simple experience and a beautiful way to reuse items that would usually go to waste.



- A selection of paints
- Paper/cardboard
- Apples cut in half – stalks intact for little hands to hold
- Apple cores

10. Nature walk

You could take your children on a nature hunt. You can either provide them with a nature hunt bag to collect any natural items or objects or give them a poster to collect specific items such as:-

- Acorns
- Nuts
- Conkers
- Twigs
- Sticks
- Flowers
- Apples
- Leaves of different colours

These items can be used to sort, discuss, explore, observe or whatever your children want to do with them. Use the opportunity to use mathematical language such as big, bigger, biggest, small, smaller, smallest. Or describe the textures introducing vocabulary such as crunchy, crispy, smooth, rough etc. These items can be used to decorate your pumpkins (experience 5.)



11. Fingerprint autumn trees



Use the twigs collected from your nature hunt and encourage the children to glue them to card or paper. Children can use different autumnal colour paints to print leaves on the trees using their fingers.

- Autumnal colour paints
- Glue
- Paper/card
- A selection of twigs/sticks

12. Autumn centred play dough

Use the same recipe in experience 1 and add different spices such as cinnamon, lemon etc to create different scented doughs. Discuss the textures, scents etc.



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Cylch Meithrin Felinfoel and
Cylch Meithrin Nant Dyrys.

For more information please contact:
Judith Grigg BEd(Hons) MAEd
Prif Swyddog Dysgu Sylfaen
Judith.grigg@meithrin.cymru

