



From Pumpkins to Emotions: Exploring Fall and Feelings with Children

By Erin Smith

Fall is here, and with it comes great opportunities for community and family engagement! It is a time for new beginnings, when we can look around and wonder, what does our community have to offer? Are there wooded areas to explore where children can discover all the changes taking place in nature? Are there orchards or pumpkin patches nearby where you can harvest your own apples and pumpkins? Or even back to the basics! A fun activity for outdoor exploration anytime of year, for centres and homes, is a scavenger hunt. You can customize your list with pictures or drawings of items that can easily be found in your area. We have created a basic scavenger hunt template, that provides simple, easy to identify pictures of items that can be found outdoors in the fall.

**Scavenger hunts are a great way to explore
a new place and create lasting memories
anytime of the year!**

Create your own scavenger hunt with a theme based on where you are heading! Or, use one of ours premade ones!



Make the most of every fall activity!

Going to the pumpkin patch? See who can find the biggest pumpkin! The smallest pumpkin! How many colours do you see? What shapes are the pumpkins? How many can you carry? Who can run the farthest with a pumpkin? The possibilities for exploration and discovery are endless in the pumpkin patch!

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As we explore and enjoy the crisp air, it is evident that October brings so much excitement with the build up to Halloween, children are excited about dressing up in costumes and going door to door to get candy... I mean, who wouldn't be? This time is ripe for engagement as the children begin to talk about Halloween! Why not bring that into your Centre and capture that engagement? You could host a Halloween party or your own 'Trunk or Treat', where children and families have the opportunity to mingle and celebrate, while building closer connections with educators and other families.



An opportunity for growth

While Halloween is ripe with fun, games, and open exploration, it can also bring with it the opportunity to explore uncomfortable emotions with the children in our care because some elements may scare our littles! Having open discussions about spooky ghosts and other things that make us feel scared, and how it is okay to feel these ways, is key for children to learn how to regulate their emotions. It is important to honour their feelings no matter what, and acknowledge that these feelings are often different for everyone. Identifying how emotions look and feel in our bodies using books, puppets, and songs helps normalize both comfortable and uncomfortable emotions and lets children know we all experience a wide range of emotions. As caregivers and educators, it is essential that we recognize that all emotions, both positive and negative, are okay to have and feel, as this provides the experience that children need now, to develop into strong

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independent adults! Identifying and labelling emotions is the first step in supporting children to regulate themselves when they are faced with strong emotions. By using opportunities like these to talk about those uncomfortable emotions, it makes it less scary when children face them head on. Just like emotions are different for all of us, so are the strategies we use to regulate our emotions.



Have a spooktacular fall!

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