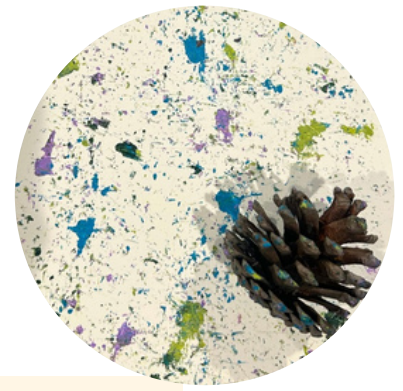


# Winter Habitat Learn and Play



## Painting with Pinecones

**Overview:** This fun, sensory-stimulating art activity utilizes seasonal materials like pinecones and kids' gross and fine motor skills to move color across the page!

### Materials:

- Art/Craft Paper
- Paint
- Pinecones or other rigid and rounded natural materials like acorns/seed pods
- Round container with a lid (coffee canister, cardboard tubs for oats or grains, etc.)

### Instructions:

1. Gather materials and, if possible, take a nature walk with kids to collect small to medium pinecones or other rigid and rounded natural materials. Closed or open pinecones, a handful of acorns, or other available seed pods work for this activity, and having a selection can offer opportunities for creative experimentation.
2. Measure your paper to ensure it fits inside the canister when rolled around the inner edge without much overlap, allowing the lid to be replaced securely. Trim paper to fit if needed.
3. Provide each child with a piece of art paper and a selection of paint colors. Have them add small dollops of color all over their page in whatever combination and arrangement they like.
4. Curl the page inside the canister and add pinecones or natural materials to the center.
5. Get moving! Have kids roll, shake, and swirl canisters to spread colors across the page using their natural "paintbrushes."
6. Open the lid periodically to check the colors' spread and stop the process when satisfied! Allow the pages to dry, and use your unique artwork for display, greeting cards, gift tags, or other crafts.



# Winter Habitat Learn and Play



## Pinecone Bird Feeders

**Overview:** Filling trees and shrubs with festive treats for birds enlivens the winter landscape and supports our feathered friends. White pine cones are the easiest to find and use for these cheerful, easy-to-make ornaments, but any pinecone will work. Kids love making these ornaments because they are so pretty and easy to create.

### Materials:

- Dried pinecones
- 1 cup peanut butter or sunflower butter
- ½ cup songbird seed (plus additional seed for sprinkling)
- A mixing bowl
- Rubber spatula
- Cookie sheet
- Wax paper
- Length of yarn

### Instructions:

1. Attach a 10” length of yarn about 1/4 of the way down from either end of the pine cone by tying it around a row of scales and then knotting the ends of the yarn to make a loop for hanging.
2. In a mixing bowl add the peanut butter or sunflower butter and songbird seed, and mix with the rubber spatula until combined.
3. Place the cones on the wax paper-lined cookie sheet, and using a spatula; liberally cover them with the seed mix.
4. Once the cones are covered, add an additional sprinkling of seed to their surfaces.
5. Freeze the ornaments until firm and ready to hang. Store them in a cool place before hanging.



# Winter Habitat Scavenger Hunt

**Overview:** A scavenger hunt can be a fun way to encourage young gardeners to practice using their observation skills while also increasing their knowledge and awareness of seasonal plants, animals, and elements. It also offers valuable time outside in the winter months!

## Materials:

- List of things to find applicable to your area, or printed Winter Habitat Scavenger Hunt Worksheet for colder North American climate regions.
- Clipboards (pieces of cardboard and thick rubber bands are a great alternative)
- Writing instruments (markers, crayons, pens, or pencils)
- Magnifying glasses (optional)

## Instructions:

1. Discuss the seasons with children and brainstorm all the signs of winter in your area before your hunt.
2. Create a list of common winter plants, animals and elements in your local garden or green space, or use the provided worksheet.
3. Dress appropriately for the weather, head outside to your chosen winter hunt location, and give each child a scavenger hunt sheet on a clipboard and a writing instrument, then encourage them to look closely and carefully for all the items on the list.



*Tips: If working with children for whom clipboards are difficult to handle, consider making a large poster of your scavenger hunt items and marking off or tallying your finds as a group. Pre-scouting your green space for trash/hazardous materials and explaining before hand that not finding everything on the list is okay are great ways to set up your scavenger hunt for success. Not finding all the items offers an opportunity to talk about how temperature determines if there is snow or ice in your area, how animals seek shelter and food during winter, and more!*

## Additional Resources:

For information on how gardening activities align with Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Early Learning Outcomes Framework, download the National Farm to School Network's excellent resource - Growing Head Start Success with Farm to Early Care and Education available at: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/resources-main/growing-head-start-success-with-farm-to-early-care-and-education>

More gardening resources for early childhood educators are available at <https://kidsgardening.org/ece-resources/>



# Winter Habitat Scavenger Hunt

Mark the box of each wintertime item that you find! Turn your hunt into winter bingo by seeing who can find every item in a column, row, or diagonal first.

 <p>Evergreens</p>	 <p>Snow</p>	 <p>Squirrel</p>	 <p>Tracks</p>
 <p>Fallen Leaves</p>	 <p>Icicles</p>	 <p>Pinecones</p>	 <p>Birds</p>
 <p>Winter Berries</p>	 <p>Chimpunk</p>	 <p>Mud/Puddles</p>	 <p>Bare Trees</p>
 <p>Rocks</p>	 <p>Snowman</p>	 <p>Clouds/ Rain</p>	 <p>Rabbit</p>