

Squirrels

I. Concepts About Squirrels:

- Squirrels live in a nest in a tree
- Squirrels can be gray, black, brown or red
- Squirrels scamper and play
- Squirrels jump from tree to tree
- They have sharp teeth that helps them to crack open shells to eat nuts
- The mother squirrel carries her baby squirrel in her mouth like a mother cat carries her baby kitten
- Squirrels grown thick coats of fur to keep them warm
- They use their tail like a blanket
- They are "nappers" and "snackers" : This means they take naps in winter, but wake up when hungry and look for the nuts they have hidden in the fall with their sense of smell
- Squirrels leave footprints in the snow
- Squirrels eat nuts, bark, and berries.
- They hide nuts (food) in the fall and find them to eat in the winter
- They chatter when they talk or communicate

II. Stories To Read:

1. *All About Squirrels* by Teresa Williams
2. *Golden Sound Story: Say Goodnight Scooter* by Mary Dykstra
3. *Chatty Chipmunk's Nutty Day* by Suzanne Gruber
4. *Nuts to You* by Lois Ehlert

III. Activities:

A. Squirrel and chipmunk activities:

1. **Squirrel Watching:** Squirrel and chipmunk watching
2. **Sense of Smell:** Since squirrels use their sense of smell to find food: have children say what things they smell or have different scents out for children to smell (hide a food that has a pungent smell and have children use their nose to find it)
3. **Ice Experiment (How fur keeps them warm):**
 - 2 bowls of ice, 2 baggies Use one baggie blown up and one baggie open, put hand inside the open baggie. Show how one hand is cold and the other hand has something between it ice. You can also glue fake fur around the blown up baggie.

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III. Activities Continued:

A. Squirrel and chipmunk activities continued:

4. **Puppet:** Make a squirrel puppet
5. **Color sheets:** free printable color sheets
<http://www.coloring.ws/squirrel.htm>
<http://www.animalden.net/kc/ccb/color1.htm>
6. **Squirrel in nest:** See example in November Activities

I cut out a brown construction paper tree trunk. Outlined the tree trunk to have a circular area for a nest. I used items gathered on Fall walk to glue on the nest. Then we glued on a gray construction paper squirrel. If any acorns were found, they are added since our squirrel is getting ready for winter.

B. Peanut and Nut Activities:

1. **Sort nuts:** Sort nuts by color and size. I usually buy a bag of mixed nuts and a bag of unshelled peanuts
2. **Crack nuts:** Let the children use a nut cracker to crack open some nuts to eat. I always bring in some already shelled nut for the children to taste. (Make sure you check that none of your children have an allergy to peanuts or nut products).
3. **Make peanut butter:** Recipe below
<http://www.kinderart.com/kitchen/peanutbutter.shtml>
4. **Math:** Count sorted nuts, add and subtraction problems

I have also used this squirrel unit with the following:

Camping unit, and
Animals in Winter