

The Toddler Autumn Activity Planner

A printable companion to Autumn Activities for Toddlers

Print this planner and keep it on the fridge. It gives you all thirty activities at a glance with the age range, mess level and time each one takes, plus the set-up checklist, the sensory bin formula, a scavenger hunt to take outside, a four-week plan and a safety checklist. Everything you need to run an autumn with a toddler without scrolling back through the article.

The 30 Activities at a Glance

#	Activity	Age	Mess	Time
1	Nature scavenger hunt	18 mo+	Low	30-60 min
2	Leaf pile jumping and burying	12 mo+	Low	20 min
3	Autumn sensory bin	12 mo+	High	30 min
4	Leaf collage on cardboard	2 yr+	Medium	30 min
5	Finger-painted autumn landscape	12 mo+	High	20 min
6	Cinnamon playdough	18 mo+	Medium	30 min
7	Pumpkin seed name board	2.5 yr+	Medium	30 min
8	Macaroni leaf necklaces	2 yr+	Medium	30 min
9	Paper plate apple lacing	2 yr+	Low	20 min
10	Autumn crown from cardstock	2 yr+	Low	20 min
11	Candy corn and toothpick towers	3 yr+	Low	20 min
12	Corn cob rolling painting	18 mo+	High	20 min
13	Painted pumpkin faces	2 yr+	Medium	40 min
14	Leaf and acorn dreamcatcher	3 yr+	Low	30 min
15	Apple dot-to-dot counting	2.5 yr+	Low	15 min
16	Autumn leaf cookies	2 yr+	High	90 min
17	Pumpkin patch or farm visit	All	Low	Half day

#	Activity	Age	Mess	Time
18	Backyard movie night	2 yr+	Low	Evening
19	Raking and leaf angels	18 mo+	Low	30 min
20	Miniature autumn forest in a bin	2 yr+	High	40 min
21	Pinecone bird feeders	2 yr+	Medium	30 min
22	Leaf rubbings with crayon	2 yr+	Low	20 min
23	Acorn counting jars	2 yr+	Low	20 min
24	Autumn colour sorting tray	18 mo+	Low	15 min
25	Pumpkin gutting and seed saving	2.5 yr+	High	40 min
26	Cardboard leaf wreath	2 yr+	Medium	30 min
27	Autumn story basket	12 mo+	Low	20 min
28	Puddle and rain-boot walk	18 mo+	Medium	30 min
29	Sunflower seed scooping	18 mo+	High	20 min
30	Autumn photo walk and album	2 yr+	Low	30 min

Mess level is about how much clean-up follows, not how much fun it is. High-mess activities are the ones worth doing on a washable floor with an old shirt on.

Set-Up Checklist

Run through this before you invite a toddler to the table. Almost every activity that goes wrong went wrong in the two minutes before it started.

- Everything is already out of its packaging and within arm's reach.
- The floor under the work area is covered with a washable mat or an old sheet.
- An old shirt or apron is on the child, not waiting on a hook.
- Wipes or a damp cloth are on the table before the paint comes out.
- Anything sharp, hot or small enough to swallow is out of the room.
- The activity is matched to today's mood, not to the plan you made last week.
- You have decided in advance where the finished thing will dry.
- You have set a timer for the length you actually have, not the length you wish you had.

The Sensory Bin Formula

A sensory bin is three layers. Get the layers right and the bin works for any season; get them wrong and it becomes a pile of mush in ten minutes.

Layer	What it does	Autumn options
Base	The bulk material the child scoops, pours and buries in	Rolled oats, dried rice, dried lentils, cornmeal, shredded paper
Filler	The interesting objects that give texture and surprise	Dried leaves, acorns, pinecones, dried corn kernels, small pumpkins, sunflower seeds
Tools	What the child uses to move things around	Scoops, spoons, small cups, tongs, a funnel, a muffin tin

Keep the base dry and the bin shallow. A bin more than three inches deep is hard for a toddler to reach into and much harder to tidy.

Autumn Scavenger Hunt

Take this outside. Tick each one off as you find it, and let the child carry the list.

- A red leaf
- A yellow leaf
- A brown leaf
- An acorn
- A pinecone
- A twig shaped like a letter
- A spider web
- A mushroom
- A bird
- Something orange
- Something that crunches underfoot
- A seed or a berry
- A leaf bigger than your hand
- A leaf smaller than your thumb
- Something that smells like autumn

Mess Level and Clean-Up Guide

Mess level	What to expect	How to contain it
Low	Crumbs, a few leaves, nothing sticky	A quick sweep and a wipe of the table
Medium	Paint on hands, glue on the table, glitter in the cracks	Cover the table, dress the child in an old shirt, wipe hands before they leave the chair
High	Oats on the floor, paint in hair, water everywhere	Washable mat underneath, a bath or a full change planned for afterwards, and a bin with a lid

The single best clean-up investment is a cheap plastic shower curtain under the table. It catches everything and it folds away in seconds.

Your Four-Week Autumn Plan

One outdoor activity, one messy activity and one quiet activity each week. That mix keeps a toddler interested without exhausting you.

Week 1 - Outdoor: _____ **Messy:** _____ **Quiet:** _____

Week 2 - Outdoor: _____ **Messy:** _____ **Quiet:** _____

Week 3 - Outdoor: _____ **Messy:** _____ **Quiet:** _____

Week 4 - Outdoor: _____ **Messy:** _____ **Quiet:** _____

Safety Checklist

- Every loose part is bigger than a toilet roll tube, or the child is past mouthing.
- Acorns, seeds and dried corn are kept away from children under three.
- Raw pumpkin and squash are washed before a child handles them.

- Paint, glue and playdough are labelled non-toxic and age-appropriate.
- Scissors are child-safe and used with an adult sitting alongside.
- An adult stays within arm's reach near water, roads and open fires.
- Anything foraged is checked for mould, animal droppings and insects.
- The child is dressed for the actual temperature, not the forecast.

Activity Log

Note what worked and what did not. Next autumn you will thank yourself.

Date	Activity	Loved it?	Do again?

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