

Branch Out: Create an Alphabet Tree

Early literacy skills are probably the most important development for your preschooler, so what better way to teach her than with this fun arts and crafts activity? Make an alphabet tree collage! Cut out the pieces of a tree and glue them together, writing each letter of the alphabet on the leaves! Your child will have fun improving her fine motor skills, learning essential reading and letter recognition skills, as well as basic math skills like shape.

What You Need:

- Construction paper in brown and green (or other colors)
- Ruler
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue stick



What You Do:

1. Help your child come up with shapes to form a tree. For example, a large rectangle could be the tree trunk, smaller rectangles could be the branches, and circles, diamonds, or triangles could be the leaves.
2. Measure a rectangle about 6" tall and 2" wide on brown construction paper, and help your child cut it out to use as the trunk. (Note: measurements don't need to be exact. Feel free to eyeball it!)
3. For the branches, cut a rectangle 8 1/2" tall and 2 1/2" wide. Fold it in half horizontally, then cut along the crease. Stack the two pieces together and cut the pieces vertically into four strips (about 3/4" wide). Because they are stacked, you should end up with eight strips total.
4. Cut out 26 shapes for the leaves. You can use green construction paper or orange, yellow, and red depending on the season. Leaf shapes should be a little bigger than a dime.
5. Invite your child to glue the pieces together onto a piece of construction paper. Glue seven of the eight strips onto the large rectangle (the leftover one can be recycled since it's not being used). The branches should fan out of the top of the trunk, with enough space between each branch for some leaves to fit on either side.
6. Glue three or four leaves to each branch, making sure to use all 26. Then set it aside to dry.
7. Hand your child a marker and invite her to write each letter from the alphabet on the leaves. If she is unable to do this yet, you can write the letters for her as long as you end up with all 26 letters on your tree.
8. When you're finished, invite your child to identify each letter and the sound it makes! If you like, couple this art and letter recognition activity with a read-aloud experience. Good books to read before or after this project could be *The Alphabet Tree* by Leo Lionni or *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault.