

## Seasonal Trees

Celebrate the changing seasons with your child as he creates a seasonal sculpture that explores the possibilities of three dimensional artwork. Combine nature, the environment, and artistic process into one fantastic lesson. Encourage your child to make observations, and then translate them into his own unique masterpiece.

This activity will aid in the development of aesthetic awareness, help to build an art vocabulary, and foster nature based scientific inquiry.

### What You Need:

- Thin gauge bendable wire (available at most arts and craft stores as well as some hardware stores)
- Modeling clay in browns or tan colors
- Tissue paper in fall colors such as red, brown, orange, and yellow
- Glue
- Optional: Wooden block base
- Paper
- Pencil (and/or colored pencils)



### What You Do:

1. Accompany your child outdoors (bring paper and pencils along). Ask your child to observe the fall trees. Have him draw what he sees. Try using colored pencils for a more realistic effect.
2. Bring the sketch inside as a point of reference for your child's tree sculpture! Give your child a small length of wire (the actual size will depend upon how large your child wants his tree to be). For a smaller tree, start with a seven-inch piece for the trunk and several smaller pieces for the branches. Make sure to instruct your child on wire handling safety, as the wire edges are sharp.
3. Ask your child to bend the smaller pieces of wire (branches) around the larger wire (trunk). This will create an armature for the sculpture. For reference, compare this to a body's skeleton - this will be the structure that supports the clay that your child will mold around the outside.
4. Add clay to the trunk and branches. Have your child tear off small pieces of modeling clay and mold them carefully around the wire to create a tree sculpture. Try using several different shades of brown and tan combined together for a unique appearance.
5. Optional: Use a small wooden block as a base for the sculpture. Have your child mold an extra base of clay down onto the block, forming tree roots. A good amount of clay will be needed to hold the structure. Encourage your child to experiment with the amount needed to make the sculpture structurally sound.
6. Add fall leaves by having your child tear pieces of tissue paper to make leaves. Glue the leaves onto the branches. For an extra special touch, if you are using a base, have your child glue excess tissue paper leaves onto the block surrounding the tree to create piles of fallen leaves.

When he's done, he'll have an festive sculptural work of art that celebrates the fall season and can be displayed in your home with pride! Extend this art activity into all four seasons. Make a tree for the winter, spring, and summer to compare with his colorful fall creation.