

Hungry squirrel

Play a game to learn how squirrels find and save food to survive in the cold winter woodland.

Materials:

- wooden acorns or pompoms of different colors (other items work too! Use what you have--different pasta shapes, etc.)
- bowls/cups to “cache” food in

Before You Play:

- Scatter “acorns” (or whatever object you are using as your acorns) around the room or throughout your yard.
- Ask, “How do you think squirrels find food throughout the winter?” Have a conversation about their answer. What makes them say that?
- Tell them that today, we are going to play a game to model how squirrels find food so they can survive the winter.

How to Play:

1. Assign each squirrel (player) one of the bowls as their spot to cache (or save) their food for the winter. Have them choose a location to leave their bowl--their homebase.
2. Explain that it is the fall, and there are a lot of acorns falling from the trees. Acorns are one of the things that squirrels eat, so they are going to go out to collect some acorns one at a time--squirrels can only carry so much!
3. Set a timer for 2 minutes and have squirrels collect as many acorns as they can and bring them to their cache. Remember, squirrels can only collect one acorn at a time!
4. When the timer goes off, go back to your cache and see how many acorns you have in your cache. If you can eat 5 acorns, you’ve survived the fall. It took a lot of energy to collect those acorns. If, after your fall feast, you still have 5 acorns in your cache, you have enough to survive the winter.

Extension:

- Introduce predator prey relationships by having a coyote tagger who is trying to catch squirrels to eat!