

Let's Play 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 to act as acorns
(Note: Other items work too! Use what you have: different pasta shapes, cotton balls, etc.)
- Bowls or cups to “cache” food in



Before You Play:

- Scatter your “acorns” around the room or throughout your yard.
- Ask your player(s), “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. This will be their home base.
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. Squirrels can't carry very many acorns at a time, so they will have to collect theirs one at a time!
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, have the squirrels go back to their cache and see how many acorns they have saved. If they can eat 5 acorns, they have survived the fall. It took a lot of energy to collect those acorns. If, after their fall feast, they still have 5 acorns in their cache, they have enough to survive the winter.

Guiding Questions:

- Was it easy or difficult to find acorns? Did you have enough to survive the seasons? Would you do anything differently next time?
- How difficult do you think it is for squirrels to find food? What do you think they do to increase their chances of survival? Do you think they eat foods other than acorns?