



## SpeakEasy Sandbox #27: Fall Nature Walk

### Pre-verbal

**Activity:** Point to fall items on your walk excitedly, "ah, look!" See if your child starts to turn their head or follow your finger. This is practicing joint attention (sharing attention on the same object) and it's how children start to understand words. Once you have your child's attention, then give the item a label ("look!...a red leaf!"). They are more likely to process the words you say if you first establish attention on the same object.

### Vocalizer

**Activity:** Children understand (receptive language) much more than they are able to say (expressive language). Help your child understand the language of fall: narrate your walk in simple sentences by talking about what you are doing, seeing, and thinking on your walk. Pause and look at your child, waiting several seconds to give them an opportunity to participate via a look, a smile, a gesture, or a sound.

### First words

**Activity:** Don't just walk...jump! Listen to the different sounds your feet make on the sidewalk, on grass, on top of leaves. Try this with a variety of different actions and emphasize the verbs as you go - "run", "crawl", "stomp", "hop" like a frog, or any other way you can think of together.

### Word combiner

**Activity:** Play fall "I spy" as you walk. This is a great way to work on understanding of more complex language through using descriptors. "I spy something red. Do you see it? It's a red leaf!" Or, if you are working on joint attention skills, you can simplify the language to focus on that task (e.g. "I spy a squirrel", then find and point at it together).

### Full sentences

**Activity:** On your walk, see how many items you can find that fit into a category. Broad categories such as "animals" or "plants" are easier. For more complexity, name a category by its parts (e.g. "things that have legs"), by an adjective (e.g. "red things" or "crunchy things"), or by its function (e.g. "things that roll"). This is not just a great way to solidify vocabulary - categorizing is a great cognitive organizational skill.

*The SpeakEasy Sandbox is a newsletter that provides the necessary tools to boost your child's language and feeding development through play. Sign up at [www.speakeasycommunity.com](http://www.speakeasycommunity.com).*