

Play and Learn with Helicopter Seeds

What to do:

1. Help your child collect maple leaf “helicopter” seeds during a walk outside. You’ll likely find plenty on the ground under the maple trees in your neighborhood.
2. Encourage children to investigate the seed pods. Peel the seed pod open and ask your child questions like: What do the seed pods look like? What do they feel like? What do they smell like? What do they sound like?
3. Try tossing the seedpods up and watching them spin down (This is how they got their nickname, helicopters).
4. Sort piles of the seed pods. Count them and order them by numbers. You can draw circles for your little ones to place the seeds in or arrange them by number, patterns, or shapes. Encourage your child to do simple math problems by asking them how much they have and how much is left when you add or take away different amounts.
5. To reinforce letter recognition, you can use the seeds to make single letters or use them to spell out your child’s name.

Materials:

- Helicopter seeds (the fan blade seeds that drop off of trees can be found everywhere at this time of year—look around the yard or neighborhood)
- A container large enough to collect seeds.



How to extend activity:

Use your seed pods for art! Using a crayon and paper you can add details to your seed pods to make butterflies, birds or even a flower.

Why is this activity important? Throwing helicopters into the air is great for gross motor skills development. Peeling seeds also develops those small muscles in the hand. Depending on which activity you choose you can also enhance letter and number recognition, math skills and creativity.