September to November

Autumn Finger Rhyme: The Hedgehog Makes His Winter Bed

A hedgehog is gathering leaves for his winter bed and comes across conkers, rain and wind along the way.

Age
from about 3 years

Time
about 20 minutes with the finger rhyme and word cards; the puppet play alone takes about 5 minutes

Puppets
1 hand puppet; you play the second role yourself

Materials
a basket with a cloth, a handful of leaves, 2 or 3 conkers, an apple

Puppet play

Read the script through once beforehand. It's fine to read from the page while you play.

Roles

Prickles
the hedgehog (hand puppet)

You
in your own voice, without a puppet

Puppet: An animal hand puppet, for example a hedgehog. Any other animal works too; just change the name and the food to suit.

Getting ready

Put the leaves, conkers and apple in a basket and cover it with a cloth. The hedgehog is already hiding under the cloth. Keep the word cards within reach, picture side down.

Tips for playing the roles

- Give the hedgehog a voice that is a little higher and slower than your own.
- Sniffing: move the puppet's head back and forth in small, quick nods.
- When the hedgehog is talking, look at him rather than the children. Then the children will look at him too.

- ✓ Don't be afraid of pauses. Wherever it says 'let the children answer', wait calmly.
- ✓ Each time a word appears in bold, turn over the matching word card.

Script

Stage directions are in italics. Words in **bold** are on the word cards.

You put the basket in the middle of the circle. Something is moving under the cloth.

You: Can you hear that? Something is rustling in the basket. What could it be?

Let the children guess.

Prickles: *(His snout pokes out from under the cloth and sniffs.)* Sniff, sniff … it smells like autumn in here!

You: It's a **hedgehog**! Hello, who are you?

Prickles: I'm Prickles. I'm collecting things for my winter bed.

You: A winter bed? What do you need for that?

Prickles: Leaves! Lots and lots of leaves. Have you got a **leaf** for me?

A child gives the hedgehog a leaf. You turn over the word card.

You: That's a leaf. What colour is it?

Let the children answer: red, yellow, brown …

Prickles: *(nudges something round with his snout)* Ooh! What's this? It's round and shiny and brown.

You: That's a **conker**. Who would like to hold it?

Pass the conker round the circle.

Prickles: And this one smells sweet.

You: That's an **apple**. Do you like apples, Prickles?

Prickles: No, thank you! I'd much rather have beetles and worms.

You: Beetles and worms? I think the children would rather have apples. Wouldn't you?

Let the children react. There is usually some laughter here.

Prickles: *(turns his head to one side)* Look, a **mushroom** is growing there!

You: We'll leave that one where it is, Prickles. Mushrooms are just for looking at.

You drum gently on the floor with your fingertips. The children join in.

Prickles: Drip, drop … **rain**! I'm getting all wet!

You: What do we need when it rains?

*Let the children answer. Turn over the **umbrella** and **wellies** word cards as you go.*

Prickles: An umbrella, yes! But wellies? I've got four feet. I'd need two pairs of wellies!

You blow hard. The children blow too.

Prickles: Whoooosh, here comes the **wind**! It's blowing the leaves all over the place.

You slowly turn over the kite, squirrel and pumpkin cards, one after the other. The hedgehog is amazed by each one.

Prickles: *(looks up)* Is that a **kite** up in the sky? *(looks at the next card)* And the **squirrel** is hiding his nuts!

You: And here's a **pumpkin**.

Prickles: A pumpkin! It's as big as a house! *(yawns)* Now I'm sleepy. Will you help me put the leaves in a pile?

The children put the leaves together. The hedgehog creeps inside.

Prickles: My bed is ready. I'm going to sleep until spring. Night night!

You: Night night, Prickles! Now we'll be very, very quiet.

You leave the hedgehog in his bed of leaves, because the finger rhyme needs both hands. Move on to the finger rhyme 'One Leaf Falls'.

Finger rhyme: "One Leaf Falls"

The second time through, the children say the rhyming words at the end of each line with you. The third time, everyone whispers.

1. **One leaf falls, then two leaves fall,**
   One hand floats slowly down from above, then the other.

2. **till the tree has none at all.**
   Arms up like bare branches, fingers spread wide.

3. **Hedgehog comes on tiptoe feet,**
   Fingers patter along your own forearm.

4. **gathers leaves up, soft and neat.**
   Use both hands to scoop something up from your lap.

5. **Builds a bed all snug and deep,**
   Cup your hands to make a little den.

6 **curls up tight. Shh, he's asleep!**
One hand curls into a fist; put the index finger of the other hand to your lips: 'Shh!'

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Word cards

The twelve words from the puppet play come as a printable A4 sheet: twelve cards with a picture and a word, ready to cut out. If you like, draw some more cards with the children.

hedgehog	**leaf**	**conker**	**apple**
mushroom	**rain**	**umbrella**	**wellies**
wind	**kite**	**squirrel**	**pumpkin**

Notes for practitioners

1 The set works well for circle time or a small group of four to eight children, any time from September to November.

2 A suggested running order: the puppet play first, then the finger rhyme two or three times, and finish with a word card game. For example, 'What's missing?': lay out the cards, the children close their eyes and the hedgehog hides one card underneath himself.

3 Real objects first, cards afterwards: a leaf the children can actually hold sticks in the memory in a different way from a picture. The cards help you revisit the words over the following days.

4 All twelve words come up in the puppet play. Children who are more confident in English can 'teach' the hedgehog the words. The hedgehog is allowed to get one wrong now and then.

5 Home languages: ask the children or their parents what ‘hedgehog’ or ‘rain’ is in their home language. The hedgehog repeats the word and lets them correct him.

6 Conkers (horse chestnuts) are not edible. With children under three, just show them the conkers and don't pass them round.

Suitable puppets: Hedgehog hand puppets and other woodland animals at Daliono. Many puppets you already have will work just as well.

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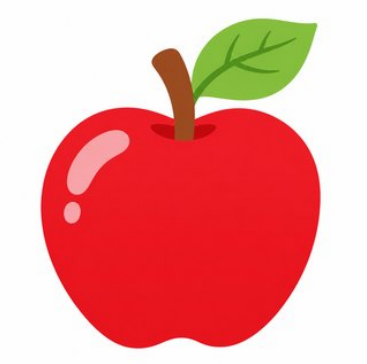
hedgehog



leaf



conker



apple



mushroom



rain



umbrella



wellies



wind



kite



squirrel



pumpkin

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PUPPET PLAY WORKSHOP

Autumn

Dear family,

At nursery we have been playing with our hand puppet, **Prickles (the hedgehog)**. Our theme was **Autumn**. Along the way, we learnt these words:



Our words

 hedgehog	 leaf	 conker	 apple	 mushroom	 rain
 umbrella	 wellies	 wind	 kite	 squirrel	 pumpkin

Our finger rhyme to join in with

1. One leaf falls, then two leaves fall,
2. till the tree has none at all.
3. Hedgehog comes on tiptoe feet,
4. gathers leaves up, soft and neat.
5. Builds a bed all snug and deep,
6. curls up tight. Shh, he's asleep!

Ideas for home

- Ask your child which words they still remember, then say the same words in your language.
- Talk with your child in the language you know best.
- Do the finger rhyme together, in your language too if you like.

Best wishes from all of us at nursery

You can also find this letter, the rhyme and the words here:
www.daliono.de/puppet-play-workshop/autumn/

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