

### A tree walk.

Kindergarten is proving to be quite a fun place for my daughter. They went on their first field trip the other day; it was a 'tree walk'. They have been studying trees: how they grow, and how they change with the seasons, so a tree walk was the perfect ending for their studies. I volunteered that day, and arrived at the school a few minutes before the bus left. There were several mothers there, and we all helped the teacher line the children up and get them ready for their big trip. When I say 'big trip', I mean that it was big for them, because it was exciting, and their first so far this year. It was actually just a five minute trip, up the road, to the Wenatchee Valley College grounds. The bus parked and let us off. We walked over to a shady area where one of the college staff greeted us. There were several stations of fun activities, all to do with trees. One was an observation of chlorophyll. The children had to find a large leaf, put in on a wooden board, under a white sheet of material, and then bang it all over with a hammer. Kindergarteners with hammers? Now, that sounds risky! They loved it! And they could see, as they banged, the green chlorophyll come out of the leaf and soak into the material. Another activity, which I'm sure was one of their favorites, was to build habitats for wild animals out of bark and pine cones. They paired up for this, and had a little toy mascot representing the kind of wild life that is found in the forest. Some had beavers, or squirrels, and others had mice. There were habitats of all shapes and sizes built for the little furry forest creatures. And, of course, when the children had finished, they wanted to keep the soft toys. It took some convincing to get them to put them back into the boxes for the next group of children. The last station was where we sang songs in the shade of a big tree. The songs were carefully chosen by two of the school district's music teachers; they were, of course, all about trees. The teachers passed out different percussion instruments to various groups of children, and each was told to play the instrument when a certain part of a tree was mentioned. So, for example, one group of kids would play the triangle when they heard the word "roots", other kids would play the wooden blocks when they heard "branches" etc. It was a well organized event for the first year students, and, I think, a great way to, solidify their knowledge of trees.

Grammar notes.

Useful expressions: so far..., to soak, pine cones, solidify.

1. So far this season, the pumpkins have stayed quite small. Let's hope they get bigger for Halloween.
2. Let your shirt soak in water with a little bleach in it; that should get rid of the stains.
3. We collected pine cones as fire starters. They catch light very quickly because of their natural oils.