



## MetroFamily Field Guides: A Trip to the Pumpkin Patch

It's that time of year... hooray for fall! A fun, family outing to the pumpkin patch can be a perfect opportunity for enrichment.

### Before you go

Visit the library to read about the pumpkin patch. Suggested reading titles (check your local library):

- *The Pumpkin Mystery* by Carol Wallace
- *The Very Best Pumpkin* by Mark Kimball Moulton
- *Piggies in the Pumpkin Patch* by Mary Peterson

### For your outing you will need

Basic Field Guide Kit (including small notebook, pencils, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, tape measure, permanent marker, sandwich zipper bags).

Additional materials used: scale, plain white paper.

### Vocabulary to use while visiting

**Gourd:** vine bearing, including the cucumber, melon, squash and pumpkin

**Deciduous:** trees that lose their leaves

**Evergreen:** trees that do not lose their leaves

### Learning in Action

#### Math

You've enjoyed your time in the fall sun, and the time has come to select your pumpkin to bring home. But wait! Let's make this interesting:

- Estimate the pumpkin's measurements.
- In the notebook, record estimates of the pumpkin's weight, circumference, height, and seeds contained within.

#### Language Arts

Adjectives describe nouns. How can you use adjectives to describe what you see at the pumpkin patch?

While walking through the pumpkin patch, point out the changes that come with the fall season. Encourage your child to make one-word descriptions of his surroundings while you make record of the adjectives he uses. Examples of words that may be used include: crisp, yellow, bright, orange or bumpy. Then, review the list together once the trip is complete.

## Science

Discuss the plant life cycle. So why *does* a leaf change color, then fall to the ground? Because plants make their own food, and when the seasons change, days become dryer and shorter and the plant is no longer able to make its food.

## Social Studies

While at the pumpkin patch, on a blank sheet of paper, have your child create a map by using simple symbols to represent each section. For example, “x” may represent the pumpkin patch field, a squiggly tail may represent the petting zoo and rectangles may represent where you board the hayride. Remember to have him add a Compass Rose to the map (N, E, S, W), and include a map key (or legend) to help determine what each symbol represents.

## Visual Art

While visiting, have your child collect various fallen leaves to place in their small, paper sack. Encourage your child to describe the differences in the texture, color and shape of the leaves. Remember to use vocabulary such as *deciduous*.

## Bring It Home

### Math

After returning home, together find the actual measurements. Use a simple chart such as that shown below to compare predictions to the actual measurements.

	Prediction	Actual Measurement
Weight		
Circumference		
Height		
Number of seeds		

*Hint: While counting seeds, it will be easier to make groups of ten, then, count by tens for the total.*

## Language Arts

After returning home, cut and remove the top portion (stem) of your pumpkin. Allow your child to be the one to remove the “guts.” As he does this, ask him to orally describe what he is feeling. On paper, record his list of adjectives. For example, he may describe the pumpkin to be wet, slimy, cold or stringy. Challenge him to come up with as many descriptive words as possible.

## Science

Further investigate the plant life cycle. For an excellent explanation along with picture diagrams, visit <http://www.sciencemadesimple.com/leaves.html>.

## Visual Art

After returning home, make leaf rubbings.

- Place leaves you collected underneath a blank sheet of white paper.
- Peel the paper off a crayon, and place the crayon flat onto the paper.
- Secure the paper still while your child rubs the crayon over the textured surface, revealing the leaf.

For more resources, visit [www.metrofamilymagazine.com](http://www.metrofamilymagazine.com)