

Our Family Tree

Create a family tree made of real branches and homemade leaves.

In your yard or neighborhood, find a 12-inch branch with several small twigs. Place modeling clay at the bottom of a large plastic cup. Stick the branch upright in the cup, using the modeling clay to secure it in place. Next, draw a leaf pattern that's 6 inches long on cardstock, then cut it out. Your preschooler and school-age child can trace the pattern on green construction paper, then cut out the

shape to create leaves for themselves and their younger siblings. Your children can then write their names (with help, for the younger ones) on the back of the leaves and decorate the other side with crayons or stickers. Use paper clips to attach each leaf to a twig on the branch to create a family tree.

What You'll Need	All Ages	Baby	Toddler	Preschooler	School-Age Child
12-inch branch with twigs	✎				
Modeling clay	✎				
Large plastic cup	✎				
Pencils	✎				
Cardstock	✎				
Child-safe scissors	✎				
Green construction paper	✎				
Ink pad		✎			
Crayons	✎				
Stickers	✎				
Paper clips	✎				
Wet wipes		✎			

Baby

Your baby can help create his own leaf. Gently press his thumb onto an ink pad and then onto the leaf several times to create a fun design or even to write his name with thumbprints. Have wet wipes nearby to clean his hand when you're done. While designing his leaf, sing this song to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot":

*I'm a little baby, special and small.
Here is my family; I love them all.
When we add the branches to this tree,
See the names of my family.*

Before attaching your baby's leaf to the branch, let him admire the artwork he helped create!

Toddler

Write your toddler's name in big bubble letters on the back of her leaf. If her name is too long to fit, write her initials instead. Say each letter as you write it. Let her use crayons to color in the bubble letters.

Preschooler

After your preschooler has decorated one side of his leaf, help him write his name on the other side. Have him hold a crayon, then put your hand over his. Print his name on the leaf while guiding his hand so he can practice writing and strengthen his hand movements. Make sure to say each letter as you write it. If your preschooler knows how to write his name, challenge him to write it with bubble letters.

School-Age Child

After she makes her own leaf, your school-age child can make leaves for other family members to complete the family tree. She can create leaves for parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and even the family pet!

Parent Tip

If you like, add a decorative touch to the completed family tree: With your children, think up a title for your tree, such as "The Smith Family" or "Our Family Tree." Cut a piece of brightly colored fabric to cover the large plastic cup, and write the title on it with fabric markers. When you're done, glue the fabric around the plastic cup.

