



# Dancing Seeds

Children will explore the characteristics of seeds and how seeds can be dispersed in nature.

## LEARNING GOALS

- Learn about different types of seeds
- Explore how seeds can be dispersed

## ITEMS NEEDED

- Different types of fruit, vegetable, tree or flower seeds; seeds can be purchased or children can gather them on a nature walk
- Print outs of the dandelion wisps, maple tree helicopter seeds and burr seed pictures
- Space to play an active game

## GET READY

With your group, view the three video clips from Episode 110: **Travelin' Seeds**, available at [pbskids.org/learn](http://pbskids.org/learn).

Organize children into small groups. Give each group a small container with different kinds of seeds. Allow children time to look at and touch the seeds. Remind them not to eat these seeds.

Show the children the pictures of the dandelion wisps, maple tree seeds, and burr seeds. Are any of the seeds in the seed containers or in the pictures similar to the ones that Nature Cat and his friends found?

Talk about what the word "dispersed" means. Then have a group discussion about how each of the seeds in the pictures might be dispersed so that new plants can grow.



## TALLY HO! LET'S HAVE FUN!

Let's pretend to be seeds. Tell children they are going to get to experience what it is like to be a seed by acting like three different types of seeds. Make sure to spread the groups of children evenly across the room or open play area. If you are in a small space, have one group try the activity at a time.

Designate one child to hold up a picture of the seed being acted out while each "dance" is happening. Give verbal reminders to children as they are spinning and twirling that they are representing seeds. For example, you can say "We're all dandelion seeds, bloooooowing in the wind..."

1. **Dandelion wisps:** Assign one child the role of 'wind.' Then assign everyone else in the group the role of 'dandelion wisps.' All of the dandelion wisps should loosely link their arms together so that they are attached. Then have the wind blow air at the dandelions. As the wind reaches each dandelion wisp in the group, that child should detach from the rest of the group and 'float' to an open place nearby as if he or she were floating on the wind. Once the wind has dispersed all of the seeds, point out how the seeds are now spread out and can start to form new plants.

2. **Burr/sticktight seeds:** Assign one child in each group to be the explorer. The explorer should pretend to be taking a hike across a field of plants that have burrs or sticktight seeds. The other children in the group are going to be the burrs or sticktight seeds. Have the children spread out along the explorer's path. As the explorer passes each seed, the seed should 'stick to' the explorer (link arms, hold hands, etc). As the explorer continues along the path, the seeds should unattach themselves and land in a new place.

3. **Maple tree seeds –** Maple tree seeds are also known as helicopters or whirlybirds. For this reenactment, each child will pretend to be a maple seed falling from the tree to the ground. Make sure each child can fully extend his or her arms without bumping in to anyone else. Once all of the children are evenly spaced with their arms extended, tell them that once you say "go" that they should slowly spin in a circle getting a little closer to the ground with each turn. Once the children reach the ground, they should freeze in position as their seed has now settled in its new location.

## ONWARD AND YONWARD FOR MORE FUN!

- Eat some seeds! Some seeds are okay to eat. Let children taste sunflower seeds or toasted pumpkin seeds or try fruits with seeds such as strawberries, cucumbers and tomatoes. Be aware of any food allergies.
- Create a flower mosaic using seeds as the mosaic pieces. Draw the outline of any kind or shape of flower. Then use glue to attach the seeds to the flower to create the colors of the petals, stems, and leaves.



## Dancing Seeds

Print and show these pictures to children during Get Ready and while each seed is being acted out. Laminate the pictures for long term or use with multiple groups.



Dandelion wisps with seeds



Maple seed pod  
(also known as a helicopter or whirlybirds)



Thistle seeds



Cocklebur Plant