



HEADU

Montessori

MY FIRST PUZZLE

THE FOREST

This very first puzzle, inspired by the method of the famous educator Maria Montessori, enables very young children to become acquainted with a small corner of woods – thus stimulating gesture, touch, the perception of shapes, and the sense of space. This multi-sensory approach favours more thorough learning, which is very important for cognitive development in children of pre-school age. In fact, children assemble a large tree inhabited by 5 dear little wooden animals, which are to be inserted in the corresponding shapes.



THE PUZZLE AND THE WOODEN ELEMENTS

First of all, we have the large tree in the woods assembled. We let the children play completely independently, thanks to the self-correcting inserts. Help, when necessary, must be limited to several simple suggestions, without replacing the children in the individual actions. For example, we have all the paper tokens and the wooden elements placed on the playing level, with the designated painted side facing upwards. We must then encourage them to compare the designs of the tokens with the picture shown on the back of the box, attracting from the very first their attention to the details of the plant: the trunk, the branches, the foliage. We must always remember to name the elements, to point to them with a finger, and to motivate the children with stimulating questions: "This is the trunk, this is the foliage, this is an owl... Where does the owl live? This is a fox... Where does the fox live?" Once the puzzle has been assembled – or even during the game – we should encourage the children to observe carefully the wooden elements, making them analyse their shape, and inviting them to search for the picture in the corresponding sagoma. If we notice that they are having difficulties, we should help them simply by handing them the correct token.



IN SEARCH OF THE TREE

We can now play with the children by asking them to identify the animals by means of the following questions: "Where is the owl? And where is the fox?" In a second moment, we can ask them to recall the names of the animals: for example, we can ask "What is this animal's name?", pointing to the squirrel. We must remember always to point at the object of our question. We can give added value to the experience by adding information. For example, we can explain - while at the foot of the large tree in the woods - that it is here that mushrooms grow, such as the very colourful. Or else we can say that birds make their nests on the branches of the trees.



THE WISE OWL AND THE 5 SECRETS

Lastly, we can invent short stories using the wooden elements provided. For example, we can reproduce together with the children the story of the owl, who is the wisest animal in the woods. All the other animals go to the owl in order to learn the Five Secrets.

SECRET NUMBER 1: Owls remain awake all night long, because they are nocturnal animals!

SECRET NUMBER 2: Squirrels have the longest and most beautiful tail of all the animals in the woods, and are the most agile and speediest animal there.

SECRET NUMBER 3: Raccoons are also known as "washer bears", because they have often been seen washing off their food before eating it!!

SECRET NUMBER 4: Birds should not be disturbed when they are in the nest, because they are protecting the eggs from which the baby birds will hatch.

SECRET NUMBER 5: It is said that foxes are very sly.... Have you ever seen one cross the road at night? Foxes can unquestionably be found everywhere, even at the North Pole!

