

Loose Parts Play

Loose parts play is open-ended, it spurs the development of lots of different skills: creative thinking, communications, exploration, critical thinking, self-confidence and independence, just to name a few. Kids are naturally drawn to objects that encourage open-ended play, so anything parents can do to foster that natural sense of curiosity is beneficial.

Loose parts play helps children develop creative and critical thinking skills by encouraging them to use their imagination and experiment with new ideas freely. Loose parts play should be child-directed, here are some prompts to take the play further. The prompts follow the "M.A.P." approach.

Make observations - State things in non-judgmental ways to spark conversation. This is also a great opportunity to introduce new words.

Ask open-ended questions - Think of questions that can't be answered with a simple yes or no. For example: What do you think this is used for? Or, what do you notice about it?

Pose challenges - Give children the opportunity to problem solve by pointing out challenges and encouraging them to make connections with past knowledge. Try asking questions like: What do you think would happen if you built something with that? Or, what would happen if you lined them all up?

Spark your child's curiosity by letting them take the lead and explore with loose parts. Then watch as your child reimagines items into time machines, musical instruments, new inventions, other-worldly creature or whatever else their creativity comes up with.

Loose Parts Play and the EYFS

Personal, Social and Emotional Development - children get to choose the way in which they construct and use the loose parts leading towards independence and collaboration with others

Communication and Language - discussing ideas, listening to others and expressing size, shape, colours, how and why they are making something and learning new words

Physical Development - using materials and promoting large and small motor skills

Literacy - work on books and stories they have heard in order to promote play

Mathematics - size, capacity, classifying, sorting and grading, designing and building

Understanding The World - learning about properties of materials and where they come from, recycling and sustainability

Expressive Art and Design - creating freely, experimenting and using imaginations.