

Open-ended resources and loose parts

Exploring loose parts and open-ended resources help children to be able to put their existing knowledge into practice. They can play and explore different uses for different materials, which materials make strong structures and how to join different materials together.

Learning aims

- Exploring
- Investigation
- Language and communication
- Mathematical development – problem solving, shapes, size
- Working together.



Resources

- Selection of loose parts and open-ended resources
 - Screws, bolts
 - Cotton reels
 - Wooden blocks
 - Cardboard boxes and tubes
 - Curtain rings (wooden is best)
 - Guttering and guttering brackets
 - Buckets, tubs, plastic containers
 - Material pieces
- Large space outdoors.

Activity outline

- Provide children with free access to all the open-ended resources and ask them what they could use them for e.g. What could they build? What shapes of resources build better together?
- How about making a large scale art project on the ground and photograph this from the top? You could make a large face using different materials for the different features
- Create a den/castle using the open-ended resources
- Leave the resources in your continuous provision for children to access freely
- Allow the children to explore and play freely and play alongside the resources, this should be a child-led activity. Step in to support and challenge e.g. how do you think we can attach this sheet to the tree? What do we have to do this?
- Encourage the children to take photos as they go along their journey to show the process from their point of view.

Working with Babies

For babies and toddlers adapt this activity by allowing younger children to have free access to cardboard boxes, cardboard tubes, treasure basket materials, scarves, ribbons etc. and allow the children to explore and investigate freely.

Remember babies and toddlers explore new items with their mouths so monitor for choking hazards and supervise at all times. Remember to wash and sterilise these items after use to avoid cross-contamination between children.