

HOW LOOSE PARTS MAKE PLAY BETTER²¹

WHAT ARE LOOSE PARTS?

Loose parts are materials that can be moved around, combined and put together, and moved again. Children can play with them however they want; they don't have one specific use or instructions. They're perfect for play because children can use them over and over again in so many ways, with any combination of other materials. They can be manufactured or natural materials, and some of the best loose parts would have been recycled or thrown away items such as tires, milk jugs, tire tubes, cardboard boxes.

LOOSE PARTS SHOULD BE:

- Used however children want to use them; they shouldn't have directions or one single purpose
- Made available and easily accessible so children can use them independently
- Rotated in and out of a play space
- Well maintained; ensure items don't have sharp edges, wires, rust

EXAMPLES OF LOOSE PARTS

NATURAL

- Stumps
- Sand
- Gravel
- Twigs
- Wood
- Straw bales
- Driftwood
- Cornstalks
- Seeds
- Acorns
- Logs
- Wooden blocks
- Shells
- Stones
- Dirt

MANUFACTURED

- Tires
- Plastic tubing
- Buckets
- Tea pots
- Garden tools
- Fabric
- Baskets
- Crates
- Boxes
- Hooks/pulleys
- Hula hoops
- Ribbons
- Milk crates
- Nets
- Wooden planks
- Rope
- Baking pans
- Tarps
- Old keyboards
- Sacks
- Scarves
- Scoops
- Balls

Adapted from playwales.org.uk

This content forms part of a larger booklet entitled "Why Outdoor Play Matters for Children: A practical guide for parents and caregivers". To see the full booklet, and references, please go to recreationns.ns.ca.

