



# Loose Parts Play

AT CORNHILL NURSERY

"Aberdeen is a city of play where all children and young people are empowered to play, are encouraged to direct and define their own play spaces and have access to high quality play opportunities and resources at home, in early learning, childcare and school and in the community"  
(Aberdeen City of Play, 2018)



"Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons."  
(Playwork Principles, 2005)

Play is an important part of a child's early development. Playing helps young children's brains to develop and for their language and communication skills to mature.

- Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their:
- Imagination
  - Dexterity
  - Physical, cognitive and emotional strength



It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them.



# Why take Risks?

"The Care Inspectorate supports taking a positive approach to risk in order to achieve the best outcomes for children... to support children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities such as woodwork using real tools, exploring nature and playing in the mud and rain."  
(The Care Inspectorate, 2016:18)

Children and young people enjoy challenging, adventurous play.  
They can test themselves and extend their abilities.

**Some risk in play is beneficial, if not essential!**

(Loose parts play toolkit, 2019)

What are the benefits of risk and challenge in play?

- The chance to learn how to assess and manage risks for yourself
- Fun and excitement
- Making choices for yourself
- Learning through experience/ trial and error
- Resilience
- Perseverance

Loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. They are materials with no specific set of directions that can be used alone or combined with other materials.

A 'loose parts' toy, is open-ended; children may use it in many ways and combine with other loose-parts through imagination and creativity. Nature, which excites all the senses, remains the richest source of loose parts.

(Richard Louv, Author)



## What is loose parts play?



# Benefits of loose parts

"Loose parts create richer environments for children, allowing them to do what they need to do, to follow their interests and go where their curiosity takes them...Environments full of loose parts lend themselves to a blurring of distinctions between learning and playing, allowing children to experiment, enjoy and find things out for themselves."

(Loose parts play toolkit, 2019)

Further benefits of using loose parts during play:

- Gives child control on how to play
- Provides great sensory experiences
- Supports cognitive development
- Encourages curiosity, imagination and creativity
- Improves communication
- Further understanding of the world
- Develops gross and fine motor skills
- Can help with concentration skills

Engages children in learning across all areas of the curriculum  
(in particular literacy, numeracy and health and well being)

# Examples of loose parts

## Natural

- Wooden slices
- Logs of different heights and widths
- A variety of lengths of wood
- Willow
- Sticks – various lengths
- Stones, pebbles, cobbles
- Whisky barrel planters for mixing and collecting
- Pieces of decking
- Sand
- Bark chips
- Mud



- Tarpaulins (various sizes, types and colours)
- Milk and bread crates
- Wooden pallets – tough ones in good condition
- Tough buckets
- Cable drums or reels
- Tubes, guttering and funnels, hosepipe, bore pipes
- Corrugated transparent plastic
- Nets
- Tyres – bicycle, motorbike, go-kart and car tyres
- Large shallow tray

## Man-Made

- Trolley to aid tidying up
- Wheelbarrow
- Old suitcases or wheeled shopping bags
- Baskets for collecting and transporting
- Steering wheels
- Computer keyboards
- Old clothes for dressing up, for example, jacket suits, waistcoats and handbags
- Portable seats and things to sit on: aluminium bubble-wrap, camping mats and gardening mats.

## Small items

- Chalk
- Cardboard boxes and tubes – various sizes and shapes
- Leaves, feathers or shells
- Pine cones or acorns
- Plastic bottles and containers.
- Pegs
- String
- Rope
- Baskets
- Pots and pans
- Curtain rings



# Outdoor learning



"There's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing"  
(Alfred Wainwright, 1973)

In order for our children at Cornhill to fully experience loose parts, the following clothing should be worn/provided from home:

- Wellies
- Waterproofs
- A spare change of clothes

This includes even on the sunniest of days as water and mud will always be available to play with!

At Cornhill we are always looking for donations from parents, families or businesses.

If there is anything you no longer need please send them our way - the nursery team and children will always find a use for them!

Do you work for a trade?

Come and show off your skills by building something for our nursery!



As always - If you have any further questions or queries, please come and speak to a member of the nursery team or contact us:

01224 483234

[cornhillprimary@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:cornhillprimary@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

# Still interested?



Check out some further information and documents on loose parts play:

- Loose parts play toolkit, 2019
- Aberdeen City of Play - Play policy and strategy, 2018
- Playwork principles, 2005
- Play Scotland - Loose parts leaflet
- "What makes a brilliant mud kitchen" - <https://creativestartlearning.co.uk/developing-school-grounds-outdoor-spaces/what-makes-a-brilliant-mud-kitchen/>
- The Scottish Government - Out to play, 2018

