LOVE OF LEARNING THROUGH LOOSE PARTS PLAY

By Loree Greenwood and Devin Mawhorter
WHAT IS LOOSE PARTS PLAY?
THE THEORY OF LOOSE PARTS


“In any environment, both the degree of inventiveness and creativity, and the possibility of discovery, are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it.” - Simon Nicholson
Loose Parts Play is open-ended

Loose Parts can be anything and be used in any way

They can be moved, manipulated and changed throughout the play

Loose Parts Play encourages children to explore, experiment, design, create and construct
- Loose Parts should be attractive, intriguing and attention-grabbing
- The opportunities that Loose Parts provides are infinite
- Loose Parts Play works well with varying age groups
What does loose parts play promote?
- Provides an opportunity for the children to be problem solvers, critical thinkers, be flexible, resilient, independent, self-motivated and creative

- Encourages many skills such as concentration, hand-eye coordination, fine motor, language/vocabulary, literacy, math and social/emotional
How does loose parts play align with ECDC’s curriculum?
- Loose Parts Play aligns with Indiana Foundations for Early Childhood and Kindergarten Standards
- Loose Parts Play also aligns with COR Advantage
- Literacy: Promotes emergent writing- tracing the shape of letters, shape and/or construct letters; letters as loose parts (magnet letters, letter beads, wooden letters)
- Language/Vocabulary: Children communicate their plan while creating, describe their creation, talk with friends while creating; increases vocabulary
- Math: Counting, sorting, patterning, spatial awareness and geometry
Science: Engineering, natural world exploration
Fine Motor: Strengthens small muscles in fingers/hands/wrists, dexterity and encourages pincer grasp
Creative Arts: Creative expression, art appreciation and the process of creating
HOW DO YOU IMPLEMENT LOOSE PARTS PLAY?
THE LIST OF LOOSE PARTS

Young children can choke on small objects, materials and toy parts. All items used for children under 3 years of age and any children who put toys and items in their mouths should be at least 1 ¼ inch in diameter and between 1 inch and 2 ¼ inches in length. Balls and sphere shaped materials should be at least 1 ¼ inches in diameter.
Can be done for...

- Art
- Small Group
- Science/Discovery Area
EVEN OUTDOORS!
- **Explorations** - Providing Loose Parts, may have a suggested idea or topic
- **Invitations** - Loose Parts that can be completed individually with less teacher guidance, may or may not have a suggested idea or topic, can be at science/discovery area
- **Provocation** - Loose Parts that provoke inquiry, solves a problem, engineering
- Allow the children to do it more than once
- Creations evolve and become more detailed and complex over time
What is the teacher’s role during loose parts play?

- The teacher should act as a facilitator and provide guidance
- Ask open-ended questions
WHAT ARE SOME OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING LOOSE PARTS PLAY?

- What did you use to make it?
- Why do you think...?
- What do you think will happen if...?
- How much/many ___ will we need to...?
- What could we do differently next time?
- How will you make a new... (design, pattern, etc.)?
- How are you planning to do that?
- I wonder what would happen if...?
Skeleton Hiccups by Margery Cuyler
WILLOUGHBY AND THE LION BY GREG E. FOLEY
FALL/APPLE TREES
Georgia O’Keeffe - “Oriental Poppies” and “Red Poppy”
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S "FALLING WATER"
EXPLORE THE STATIONS!
What questions do you have after exploring the stations?
Would you like to find out more?

- Books About Loose Parts Play:
  - *Loose Parts: Inspiring Play In Young Children* by Miriam Beloglovosky
  - *Beautiful Stuff: Learning with Found Materials* by Cathy Weisman Topal and Lella Gandini

- From the Internet:
  - Fairy Dust Teaching- fairydustteaching.com or follow them on Facebook
  - Open Ended Play by Nursery Nook- Join Their Facebook Group
  - Loose Parts and Intelligent Playthings- Join Their Facebook Group
  - Loose Parts Play- Facebook Page
  - Pinterest (Search for Loose Parts Play or Transient Art)