

Junk Modelling

As parents we all know that young children and babies often show more interest in the wrapping and packaging of presents than in the contents. How often have you been desperate for your child to open their present so that you can see their delight in the new toy you have bought them, only to watch them linger over exploring the wrappings or moving a bit of the sticky tape carefully from one finger to another?

Children love the freedom of playing with open-ended resources such as boxes, cartons, plastic tubs, wrapping paper and cardboard tubes that allow them to give free reign to their imagination. The same resources can become a different 'toy' each time they play - from castles to spaceships or dens to houses.

Junk modelling, that is creating new and exciting things from discarded items, not only provides hours of free or minimal cost fun for your child, but also helps to develop their imagination and creative abilities while challenging them to explore, investigate and problem solve as they bring their plans and ideas to life.

Children can work on their own or co-operate with others, learning to negotiate and share ideas. When they create something new it can give their confidence and self-esteem a big boost. They can also consider how their plans have worked out as they think about what they might have done differently or how they might improve their model, but remember, it is the process of creating that is important rather than the end product.



You may have some questions about junk modelling with your child such as:

- What sort of modelling items should I provide?
- Where should this activity take place?
- What else might we need?
- Is there a cost involved?

Please turn over to find out how you can provide your child with exciting junk modelling opportunities. 

Junk modelling can be an indoor or outdoor activity depending on the types of items used and their size. If using paint or glue cover the tabletop or floor with old newspapers to protect it. Always ensure that the junk you are using is clean and safe.

Here are some suggestions for resources:



Indoors

- Packets — various sizes/ shapes
- Shoe boxes
- Large cardboard boxes
- Cardboard tubes
- Yogurt/dessert pots
- Used wrapping paper
- Tissue
- Bubble wrap
- Buttons (with careful supervision)
- Cotton reels
- Plastic bottles
- Sweet wrappers
- Foil
- Jar lids
- Fabric scraps
- Egg boxes
- Wool/string

Many of the suggested indoor resources could also work well outside

Outdoors (incorporate natural materials)

- Leaves and twigs: great for decoration or creating a pleasing picture
- Petals: great for wetting and sticking over stones to cover or decorate
- Pine cones: they can become all sorts of features on a model
- Stones, pebbles and shells: build without gluing or decorate to transform into a creature
- Old bricks: ideal for loose building, defining areas
- Large cardboard packing boxes (e.g. from household items) make good dens and caves or whatever their imagination suggests.

Extra Tips

- You may also need glue sticks or sticky tape if your child wants to make their model more permanent.
- If using scissors ensure they are the children's variety with rounded tips and never leave your child alone while using them. However, children can often just tear paper or card to suit their needs.
- Models can be painted or glitter added if your child wishes - but this is not essential. They might just decorate them with felt tips pens or crayons.
- Junk modelling costs are minimal (glue, sticky tape, paint or glitter if used).
- Taking a photo is always a good idea as junk models have a limited life.

Re-cycling

The green revolution means that we are used to sorting and separating our rubbish everyday and by re-using it for junk modelling you will be giving items a new lease of life and purpose - always good for the planet and good to talk about with your child! Outdoors models from natural objects can be left to go back to nature if no glue is used.

A large cardboard box can be transformed into whatever your child's imagination wants it to

