

# Loose Parts Play

- Did your child enjoy using a treasure basket and being involved in heuristic play?
- Is your child older and you are unsure how to continue to develop their creative and inventive skills?

You could introduce your child to **loose parts play!**

Loose parts play is a continuation of heuristic play and is aimed at older children (three to seven year olds). A lot of the play is initiated by the child themselves and they should be given time to explore a wide range of different materials. Loose parts play involves materials and objects that can be moved, carried, lined up, redesigned, taken apart and put back together again in a variety of different ways.



The materials used in loose parts play should offer the child endless possibilities and choice. This allows them to develop a variety of skills in all areas of development. Children involved in loose parts play will learn to play cooperatively, socialise more and develop their communication and negotiating skills. Loose parts play helps children to become more creative and helps them to use their imagination. By taking part in this type of play children are physically more active especially if the play is outdoors. By giving children the opportunity to practise these skills alone and with friends, their confidence and independence will develop. Loose parts play can be carried out indoors and outdoors and different materials can be used in these situations.

## You may have some questions about loose parts play such as:

### How do I introduce loose parts play to my child?

Provide a selection of loose parts for your child to play with. Let them know they can use any or all of these items and you will find that your child will decide how these items are going to be used. Watch your child playing and see how the play develops.

### Where can I find items for loose parts play?

Items for loose parts play can be found in a variety of places such as at home, outside or shop bought.

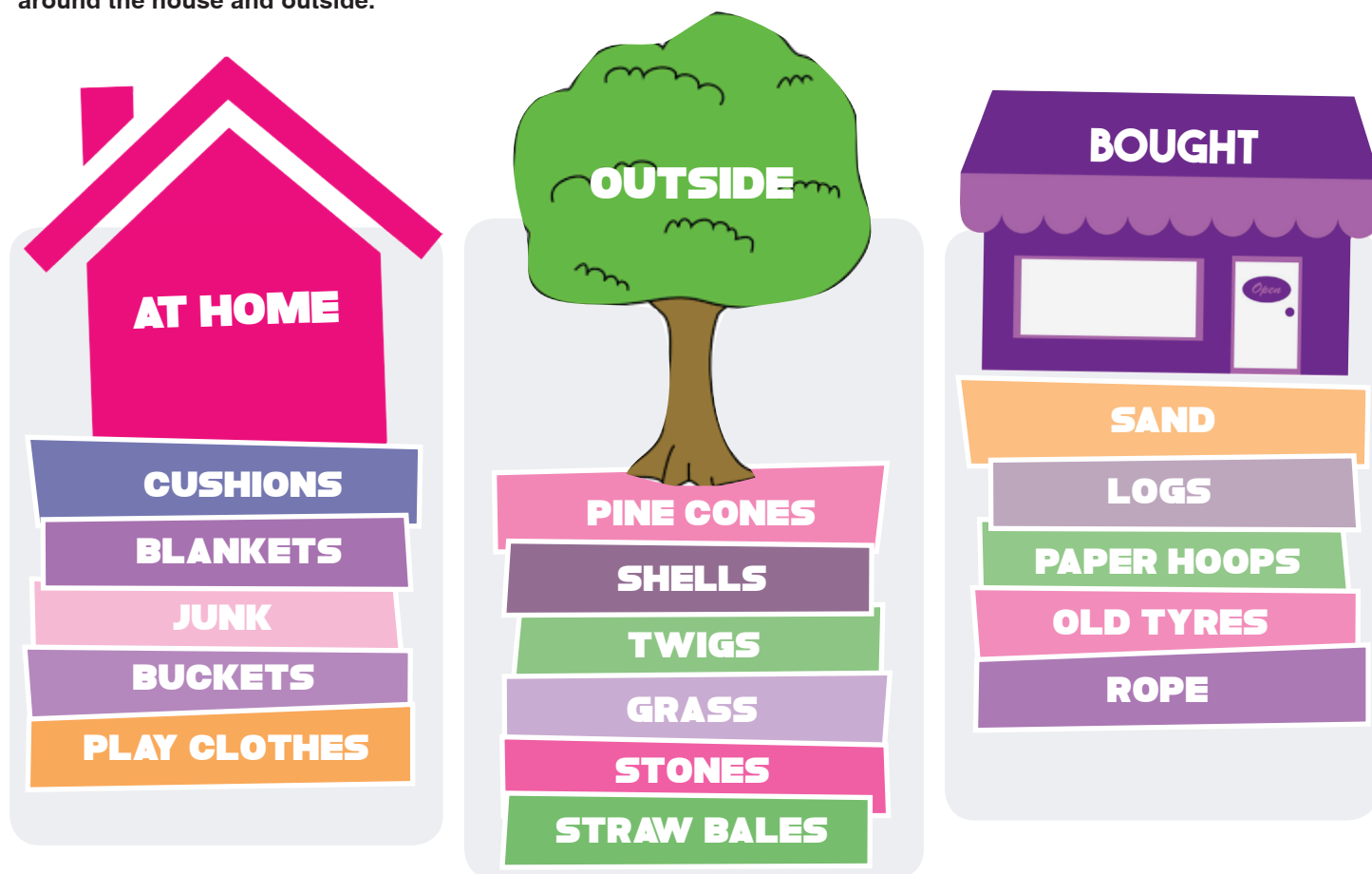
### Is loose parts play safe?

The items used in loose parts play are varied and are 'real-life' objects. They provide many opportunities for your child to learn. Make sure the items are checked and cleaned regularly.

Please turn over to find out more information on how you can get started and encourage your child to enjoy loose parts play 

# Items to help you get started with loose parts play

You can find lots of items in different places and your child will become interested in collecting things to use in their loose parts play. You may find that people will offer you different things to use such as chunky cardboard tubes, wooden planks, netting, guttering etc. However there are some things that you can find for yourself in and around the house and outside.



Other items that can be used in loose parts play include:

**MUD, PALETTES, CRATES, STRING, CHALK, WATER, LEAVES, STUMPS, GRAVEL, FLOWERS, BALLS, BOXES, CRATES, HOOPS, CUPS AND SPADES**

## Is loose parts play safe?

All resources should be checked regularly to ensure that they are safe for your child to use.

Make sure all items are

- free from sharp edges
- check if there are any loose parts that may break or splinter
- wash and clean any items as required.

If you are unsure use your common sense.

## Storage

Depending on the item it may only be used once by your child. However, some of the items you may wish to use again, therefore you will have to consider storage options. Storage can consist of bags and/or containers. How much of the material you store will depend on the space you have available of course. Remember some of the items can be left outside until the next time.

## What should I do?

You should watch what items your child plays with and what they do with them. You can ask questions that will help your child decide what they are going to do next. Remember to let your child lead the play and try not to make too many suggestions. If your child is playing with other children then let them make the decisions together.

Hopefully these suggestions have sparked some ideas. Let your child try loose parts play and watch them having fun.