LOOSE PARTS PLAY AT HOME

Children are full of play and ideas. Here are a few things adults can do to help:

Play with simple things. Provide a few everyday items such as scarves, boxes, pots, cardboard tubes, jar lids, buttons. Add things like pens, pegs, string and tape for added creativity.

Provide space to play at home. It doesn't need to be a big space or a whole room. If there is anything fragile or something you don't want played with, put it out of the way. If you have lots of toys, try putting some away.

Make time for play. Try not to rush or overschedule your child's time. When they invite you to play, try to join in. Playing and laughing together builds positive relationships.

Watch and learn. Let children take the lead in what they are doing, you will learn lots about their interests. Young children should be supervised while playing but if they are busy and safe, it's ok to step back.

Enjoy some messy and noisy play. Play can sometimes feel messy, noisy or a bit chaotic. Try to provide opportunities that work for everyone. Put down a towel, old newspapers or plastic sheets to protect surfaces. You could try playing with soapy water, ice cubes, sticky 'gloop' made with cornflour. Children may like to bang pots and pans or to squash old boxes and cartons.

Get outside. Whether you have a garden or visit a local green space, children will find natural loose parts like leaves, flowers and sticks. Outdoors, children's natural curiosity is stimulated, they are physically active and can challenge themselves. Noisy, messy play can be easier outdoors than indoors.

Tell them they are brilliant! Share what you have noticed about children's interests or activities. Your attention shines a light on children and makes them feel good.

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east lothian play association

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