



USING LOOSE PARTS IN THE CLASSROOM

- EXAMPLE SPARKING CREATIVITY AND CURIOSITY

Loose parts can be used indoors as well as outdoors. In any environment, keep in mind that play is child led and that loose parts should be used in any way children choose, following their imagination and interests. Much of the benefits of loose parts play comes from it being led by children's ideas and their drive to explore. Once adults have a desired outcome behind using loose parts, this "looseness" and the benefits quickly disappear.

A playful approach using loose parts can make classroom lessons more engaging. Introducing small loose parts in the classroom such as chestnuts, bottle caps, ribbons, (the more varied the better), can boost children's creativity. With these resources children can use their imagination, be creative, engage more senses and learn in a fun way.

A primary school teacher exploring the topic of the animal world provides a good example of this approach. The teacher gathered a large collection of loose parts (bottle caps, ribbons, wires, pieces of leather, fake fur, etc.), which she took to class. The teacher first showed the children images of different animals and provided information, as she would normally do in a lesson.

The teacher then introduced the basket of loose parts along with scissors, tape and glue. The children were excited to look through the basket and discover materials. Using these, the teacher invited children to create their own animals. She explained they could use anything they found in the basket to create an animal they would like to be around. This could be a real animal or imaginary.

The session was very creative, the children used their imagination to create their animals and their habitat. At the end of the lesson, the children made an exhibition of the creations and invented stories around this animal kingdom: who is neighbours with whom, who has arguments with others, etc.

This session "taught" quietly about animals' anatomy, about habitats, about relations between different types of animals, as well as developing children's social skills. The children had fun, they were creative, they used their imagination. They also learnt about the animal kingdom and were excited to learn more.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**



east lothian
play association

In Scotland, the project was co-ordinated
by East Lothian Play Association

www.elpa.org.uk

Scottish Registered Charity SCO50202