

Early Learning Newsletter March 2020

Heuristic Play and Loose Parts– Trash or Treasure?

Dear Parents,

Have you thought about using, open ended play to support your child’s learning and development at home? It’s a sustainable way to provide play materials for your children, and can save you lots of money on conventional toys....read on for more information!

What is Heuristic/Loose Parts Play and why is it important?

Heuristic play (Goldsmeid 1986) (from the Greek, *heuriskein* meaning ‘to discover’) allows a child to explore open ended, everyday materials at their own pace under the close supervision of their play partner (key person).

Heuristic play provides children with opportunities to use all five senses to learn about mathematics, develop language for communication and thinking as well as supporting their creativity. They learn about different media and materials and how things work and develop personal and social skills. All areas of learning are supported by open ended, loose parts play, and children of all ages are able to benefit.

So what’s the point? Well, heuristic/loose parts play provides:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfaction | <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages imagination and creativity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended activity | What are they learning? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No pre- determined outcome | <input type="checkbox"/> Sorting and categorising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guaranteed success | <input type="checkbox"/> Comparing objects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developing concentration- cognitive development | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem- solving (slotting, posting, balancing, weight, forces) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Piling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration | <input type="checkbox"/> Rolling – force/trajectory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages social interactions | <input type="checkbox"/> Selecting independently |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fully inclusive for all children | <input type="checkbox"/> Developing schema |

Children develop their understanding of their world and extend their attention examining natural materials, such as wood, leather, metal and interesting fabrics that are furry or sparkly or smooth. They find new ways to use everyday items; for example, a cork can become a cake in the role play area; a box of buttons can be used to sort by colour and extend descriptive language to talk about colour, size, shape and textures.

What does this mean for me?

We would like to invite you to join the pre-school team for a drop in session of active learning to experience loose parts play for yourself and consider how this supports children’s imagination and brain development, to support learning across all areas of the EYFS curriculum. We have a limited number of places available on the Tuesday 5th May 2020, from 9.15 – 10.30. If you would like to attend the session, please complete and return the slip below. A maximum of 10 places are available, so if we have lots of interest, we will repeat the session next term. Your place will be confirmed by your child’s play partner before the end of spring term.

What do you need?

Even if you can’t make the active learning session, you can increase the range of heuristic play/open ended materials at home to expand on your child’s existing collection of resources.

You can find ‘free and found materials’ in charity stores, boot sales and home recycling.

You need quite a few of each of the items below.

Plastic and metal caps and lids (detergent, milk containers, jam jars, face cream, etc)

Corks – natural and plastic

Shells, fir cones & conkers

Tubes – toilet rolls, kitchen rolls, parcel rolls, carpet rolls

Plastic bottles – as big as possible. Does anyone have a water fountain at work with big bottles?

Tins and boxes with lids – biscuit tins, tea caddies, small tins, gift boxes, ring/jewellery boxes etc

Old curtain rings – wooden and plastic

Ribbons, scarves

Necklaces with coloured beads (plastic, wood),

Bracelets,

Door- keys or large keys from locks,

Electrical Cable reels or similar.

Also, don't forget its time to nominate your play partner or other staff who have Made a Difference to you and your child over the past few weeks. It's time for our MAD award, where the member of the team with the most nominations wins a certificate and a voucher to spend on themselves as our way of saying 'thank you' for their commitment and hard work. MAD award nomination slips are in the nursery under the red box on the wall in the calm area. Please take one.

Finally, don't forget to make an appointment to see your play partner for your learning conversation in the week commencing 16th March. You will be able to talk about your child's progress and contribute to their learning journal.

Thanks everyone for your support!

Caroline, Vanessa and the team.

Name: Parent/carer of:.....

I would like to join the active learning 'loose parts play' session in pre-school on Tues 5th May from 9.15 – 10.30

Signed: