

Noah's Ark Preschool - Our Philosophy and how it supports the principles within our mission statement by the use of loose parts as our provision.

Noah's Ark Preschool Mission Statement

"We believe that is the right of every child to be treated as a unique individual.

We will provide good quality, hands on experiences and the praise and encouragement to enable them to develop a positive self-image and respect for others. We believe that this will allow every child to reach their own individual learning potential.

We welcome children and all those involved in their well being into our preschool community."

At Noah's Ark we believe that loose parts are not just random open-ended materials. They are resources with their own personalities and soul, waiting for children to find their potential.

***"Loose parts call out to children, saying; Use me to show your ideas and creations."* (Curtis and Carter)**

We believe that commercial toys have their place, however, we look for high quality resources that can be used as props for our play, are open ended and have many ways to be used or tools we need in our explorations.

Why Loose Parts ?

Children thrive with the freedom to use the loose parts in their own way. There is no right or wrong way to play with loose parts, so they are free to explore, experiment and play however they like. It's also an holistic activity – that means it allows children to practice and develop skills across all areas of development. They are using fine and gross motor skills, they can practice problem solving, social skills, maths, science, language, and literacy skills, they are using their imaginations, being creative and getting a variety of different sensory inputs.

- When children are able to use materials in their own way they develop skills such as predicting, analyzing and making sense of their world. It really engages scientific and critical thinking .
- Using abstract materials instead of play objects that look overly realistic increases children's abstract thinking and imagination and creativity.
- Exploring open ended materials with no prescribed use develops creativity. These open ended materials offer many possibilities to the child to communicate their ideas, show imagination and represent their thinking.
- As children arrange, classify, categorize, pattern and count, they are developing Maths and Numeracy skills.
- These materials offer many opportunities for children to achieve their desired learning outcomes and to consolidate their learning. They can re-visit new concepts in many different and creative ways to enable them to engage in deep learning.
- Many of these materials help children make connections between built and natural worlds. They also connect to each other, sharing materials and negotiating.

Connecting to larger ideas - Loose parts play :

- Promotes sustained shared thinking as materials create opportunities for extending ideas.
- Supports children's confidence and self-esteem as they can use materials in their own way, being able to access them independently.
- Connects children to nature through observation and exploration.
- Connects children to sustainability, recycling and awareness of looking after their environment as we repurpose many materials and find new uses for them.

How Will the Children Use Loose Parts?



★ *This is where the magic happens!*



We have discovered through our observations, that children use the same materials in many different ways. A stick to one child might be a flag pole added to their pirate ship, but to another it might be used to stir a cauldron or as a magic wand. The beauty lies in allowing the children the freedom to explore the materials, use them as they wish (as long as they are being safe), and take them to any area of the preschool they feel the need to.

When we were doing our initial research into the use of loose parts provision in our preschool, we conducted several experiments and discovered that the children's ability to share and negotiate, instigate and sustain communication, solve their own problems and create their own self- chosen challenges was incredible when the closed, fixed-use resources were replaced with loose parts. Experimentally, we then removed the loose parts and returned to our previous provision for a session and the difference was astounding. There were many petty squabbles because several children wanted the same toy and children struggled to negotiate with each other and engage themselves without adult support. Needless to say, this was all the evidence we required to introduce loose parts as our core provision.

What is the Practitioner's Role?

The practitioner's role within the loose parts provision is to serve as observer and researcher as well as to provide and extend language, introducing new vocabulary as appropriate . Loose parts play is a wonderful time to observe and assess what the children are playing with and how they are playing .Being available to offer suggestions and ideas without interrupting their play takes some skill and understanding. A good knowledge of every child's interests, individual learning goals and personality is required to enable the practitioner to offer the tailored support and encouragement to meet their needs. As a balance between child and adult initiated play within the loose parts provision, practitioners make skilful use of the resources to ensure that all children are achieving at their highest possible potential.