



At Hillside School we will be introducing Loose Part play to our playground during lunchtime. Prior to doing so we want to share some information with parents/carers to help our families understand the rationale for encouraging this kind of play.

We have designed this leaflet to include a range of frequently asked questions, up to date thinking around play and information from our children. We hope you enjoy reading this leaflet ☺

## What is meant by Loose Parts?

'Loose Part Play' involves making every day and natural items available for children to use in their play, in whatever direction they choose.

Loose parts create richer environments for children to play, giving them the resources they need to be curious, imaginative, creative and problem solve. Loose part materials could include

- Milk crates
- Tarpaulins
- Wood
- Mats/Camping Mats
- Tubes, guttering, funnels or hosepipe
- Buckets
- Small cable drums
- Pots and pans
- Bricks
- Steering wheels
- Wooden ladders



Loose parts aren't prescriptive and offer limitless possibilities. For example a milk crate can be used to create a stage, car, bus, boat etc. The ideas are endless!

Children need environments they can manipulate and where they can invent, construct, evaluate and modify their own constructions and ideas through play.

## Why have Loose Part Play and what does the research say?

There are many, many recorded benefits to loose part play. Some of the most notable ones include:

- Increased levels of creativity and imaginative play
- Children play co-operatively and socialise more
- Children are physically more active
- Improves children's readiness to concentrate when returning to class
- Curriculum outcomes occur through informal play with loose parts (Wagland, 2015)

- Loose parts facilitate communication and negotiation skills when added to an outdoor space (Maxwell, Mitchell and Evans, 2008)
- Improvements in young children's physical coordination (Fjørtoft and Sageie, 2000)

## What do the children say about Loose Part Play?

We trailed Loose Part Play in term 4 last year and some of our children have experience of Loose Part Play from their time at other schools in Aberdeenshire/city. Here is what some of them had to say:

*"Loose parts are really good because you can make them into anything you want them to be, you just use your imagination."* **Phoebe P5**

*"If you are playing a game and get bored, you can just stop playing and make it into another game."* **Aston P5**

*"When we had Loose Part Play before people made things like cars and dens."* **Ross P5**

*"I remember one time, me and my friends made a light house out of some rope and a blanket. We had a little bit of an old ladder, it was just a little bit of a ladder, and that was the steps to the lights. All we needed was a torch and we could have had a light!"* **Mason P3**

*"I made something with loose parts at home. I made a ramp for my bike. I like loose parts, they are fun. You have to be careful with bricks and hold them in two hands."* **Ross P3**

*"One time, we made a restaurant out of rope. We had a steering wheel and some people would do home deliveries."* **Cooper P3**

## Are their risks associated with Loose Part Play?

Like almost every experience in school and in day-to-day life, there are risks with Loose Part Play. At Hillside School we have risk assessed our approach to Loose Parts Play and are developing a policy, but minor injuries can still happen in any given situation.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) says:

*"You can't teach young people about risk from a text book - they need some practical experience. That's why cossetting children and seeking to remove all risk from their experiences ultimately leaves them ill equipped for adult and working life. "*

*"We should not deny them the opportunity to learn by taking risks. Seeking to protect them from every conceivable hazard, rather than sensibly managing the genuine risks they face, ultimately leaves them in harm's way, not to mention robbing them of memories that last a lifetime. "*

**Judith Hackitt, Chair of HSE**



## What is Risk Benefit all about?

Risk-benefit assessment is an approach to risk management which considers benefits alongside the risks. It is a concept which is supported by the Health and Safety Executive in their high-level statement, *Children's Play and Leisure: Promoting a Balanced Approach*. It is about taking a balanced and proportionate approach to the risk assessment process.

Risk management involves a number of elements:

- A play policy or statement setting out the approach to risk in play
- Written risk-benefit assessments containing judgments and actions to be taken
- Where adults are present, dynamic (on-the spot) risk-benefit assessment of play as it happens
- Technical inspections for fixed equipment

## How will Loose Part Play be organised at Hillside School?

We plan to introduce Loose Part Play on a phased basis. We will have a school assembly - coming up with agreed rules for play. This will be followed with all children participating in a class session before introducing loose parts into the playground, with each year group having a designated day.

Our Loose Parts are safely stored in a container and will be checked before every session. Anything that does not look in good condition before a session will be discarded. All our resources are stored in our red container and are only accessed by a class teacher or PSA.

Our pupils will be regularly reminded about safety during the session. If any pupils are not listening to the adult supervising, or thought to be acting dangerously, they may be asked to step away from the loose part area. The PSAs will support and scaffold the play for any children that require this.

## Where can I learn more?

*Inspiring Scotland - Loose Part Play*

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Loose-Parts-Play-web.pdf>

*Play Strategy Scotland*

<https://beta.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/publication/2013/10/play-strategy-scotland-action-plan/documents/00437132-pdf/00437132-pdf/govscot:document/>

*The Theory of Loose Part Play*

<http://www.readingplay.co.uk/GetAsset.aspx?id=fAAyADUAMqB8AHwARgBhAGwAcwBlAHwAfAA4AHwA>