

LIVING & MOVING GREEN - SUPPORT PACKAGE



Loose Parts Play

Loose parts are natural or synthetic materials that can be moved, redesigned, carried, combined, lined up, taken apart and put back together. Many benefits of unstructured loose parts play have been highlighted in the news across Canada. See our resources below for articles. Opportunities for children to play with loose parts provide vast fuel for the imagination of the child. Loose parts allow kids to create, move, manipulate, problem solve and make discoveries. These are tactile lessons that are being learned socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

Loose parts play has been spreading across school boards in Nova Scotia and as a result we may see a decline in disciplinary action during recess time. The Tri-County Regional School Board has recently launched a Loose Parts Play Pilot Project with support from numerous organizations such as [Waste Check](#), [Department of Health and Wellness](#), [Acadia First Nation](#), [Schools Plus](#), [Nova Scotia Community College](#), and [Yarmouth Recreation](#). In the Spring of 2016, [South Shore Active Communities](#) hosted an Outdoor Play Symposium where they featured Petite Riviere Elementary School's and New Germany Early Learning Center's loose parts play. This Symposium inspired more schools in the South Shore School Board to add loose parts to their playgrounds. Let's get started with an action plan to implement loose parts play at your school!

Action Plan

Step 1- Build your team. Find out who is interested in working together on this initiative. Consider all possible people such as school staff, parent groups, parents, regional recreation staff, First Nations band councils, Divert NS, and NSCC, among others.

Step 2- Pick a location. Decide where the loose parts will go in your playground. Look for natural boundaries and locations where kids can be most creative.

Step 3- Gather the loose parts. Publish and promote the request for loose parts. Start by highlighting the benefits of adding loose parts to your playground. Have a detailed list of suggestions to share with parents and the community. Your list should include parts that range in size and shape. Although a general request will bring in some loose parts, direct requests may work better. Brainstorm who would have what you need and ask them. Some ideas include plumbers, contractors, hardware stores, foresters, and local businesses.

Step 4- Start loose parts play. Plan the introduction to loose parts. Education before and



during the integration of loose parts is essential. One possibility is to have your Physical Education teacher introduce the loose parts during class. It helps to let the students know they hold some responsibility for the success of the initiative. Students need to want it to work and help with problem solving as more loose parts are added. Petite Riviere Elementary stressed the importance of having the leaders of the loose parts initiative outside with the students as they get started.

Step 5- Create a rhythm and a framework. Have a reset date where everything gets returned to one place so creativity can restart and students don't feel they own certain parts. Maybe every Friday or once a month. Some parts can be temporary like large boxes from local furniture stores that will last until the next big rain.

Step 6- Share the results of loose parts play! When we communicate about these innovative and imaginative ways to use loose parts, we are celebrating and inspiring others. Redefine waste items, be creative, and have fun!

- Baskets
- milk crates or wooden boxes
- Nets
- PVC pipe and connector pieces
- Nuts, bolts, washers
- Lumber and planks (non-pressure treated)
- Wood pieces (non-pressure treated)
- Nails and screws Logs (various lengths)
- Tree stumps and cookies (slices of tree trunks)
- Gravel, sand
- Driftwood
- Large wooden blocks
- Various sized spools (i.e from electrical wire, rope, etc.)
- Plexiglass pieces
- Seashells
- Chains, rope
- Tarps
- Pallets
- Tools
- Watering cans
- Hoses
- Wagon
- Funnels
- Kitchenware - cutlery, pots, pans, dishes
- Buckets and shovels
- Locks/keys

Resources

[Green School Story: West Northfield Forest Play Area Video](#)

[Green School Story: New Germany Early Years Learning Center](#)

[Green Schools NS Natural Playground & Outdoor Classroom Support Package](#)

[Let The Children Play Blog: Theory of Loose Parts Play](#)

[Kings County Academy Launches New Loose Parts PlayPod](#)

[Kids with Autism Benefit from Outdoor Classroom- The Star](#)

[The Movement to Bring Back 'Risky' Play for Children - Globe & Mail](#)

[Let Kids Be Kids: Blog post by Fix.com](#)

[Loose Parts Play in the Outdoors: Video](#)

[Evergreen Canada - Outdoor Play and Learning: Loose Parts Video](#)

[Evergreen Canada - Outdoor Play and Learning: Loose Parts Routines Video](#)

[TD Friends of the Environment Outdoor Classroom Guide](#)

[TD Friends of the Environment Funding](#)

[Toyota Evergreen Foundation School Ground Greening Grant](#)

[Evergreen Canada - Loose Parts Design Ideas](#)

[Scrapstore Playpods from UK](#)

[Green Teacher Magazine](#)

[Take Me Outside Day](#)

[Outdoor Classroom Day](#)