



LOOSE PARTS SHELTERS

Materials you need:

For this activity you need to access your loose parts and open-ended materials collection and decide what you want to bring out – the materials below are simply suggestions!

- Cardboard boxes and rolls
- Old sheets or fabric offcuts
- Carpets and mats
- Tarps or vinyl tablecloths
- Packets of pegs
- Reel and spools
- Crates and pallets
- Branches, palm fronds
- Tubes and pipes
- Rope, string, measuring tapes

Setup for play:

- Use some of the materials to create a basic shelter structure that is a sturdy base.
- Help the children drape the bigger items like material, tarps and sheets and clip together using pegs
- Encourage the children to continue building their shelters on their own using the materials you have made available.
- Allow them to move pieces around, change designs, swap materials and direct their own play as much as possible.

What are they learning with this activity?

As the children construct their shelters using loose parts they are learning to:

- Use descriptive language and become independent communicators
- Persist even when they find a task difficult
- Work together in a group with others, negotiate, problem solve.
- Use hand/eye coordination skills and demonstrate spatial awareness
- Express their ideas creatively
- Manipulate equipment and real-life tools with increasing competence
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, control and spatial awareness
- Use their upper body dexterity as well as balance and coordination skills
- Cross their midline and move in different directions
- Coordinate, strengthen and balance their large muscles as they bend, stretch, turn and swing the rope.
- Create with different mediums and textures
- Use the eye-hand coordination and dexterity skills needed to manipulate objects

Extending the play:

- Explore different types of shelters around the world using books, photos and the internet.
- Ask the children if they can make a tunnel together out of the loose parts to lead to their shelters.
- Add a basket of soft furnishings and props to encourage dramatic play in the shelters outside.

