



Infant & Toddler Learning Environments

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Introduction

- Been at Berkley CFDC for 6 years looping between infants and toddlers
- Researching loose parts and provocations for past 4 years
- Using research questions, anecdotal notes, observations, and pictures to drive our exploration



Objectives & Outcomes



- Learning how the set up and organization of the classroom can affect the learning and behaviors of infants and toddlers
- Understanding what loose parts and provocations are and how they can be used with infants and toddlers
- Deciding what natural materials can be used in an infant/toddler class and where to get them
- Differentiating between natural and synthetic materials and how to incorporate both in infant and toddler classrooms

Current Set up & Questions



- What do you like about your current room set up? Dislikes?
- What are your favorite materials? Least favorite? Children's favorites and least favorites?
- How are materials stored on the shelves?
- What questions do you have that you hope will be answered?





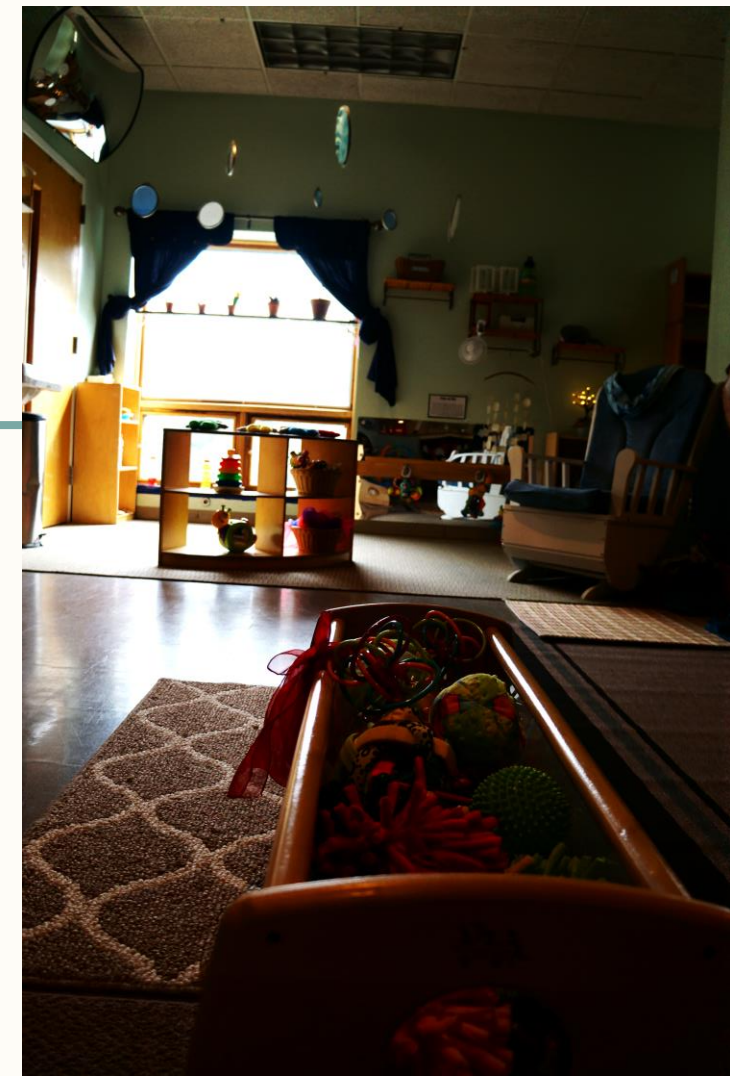
Shelves against the wall or middle of the room?



Room set up



Using the ceiling



View from the child's perspective

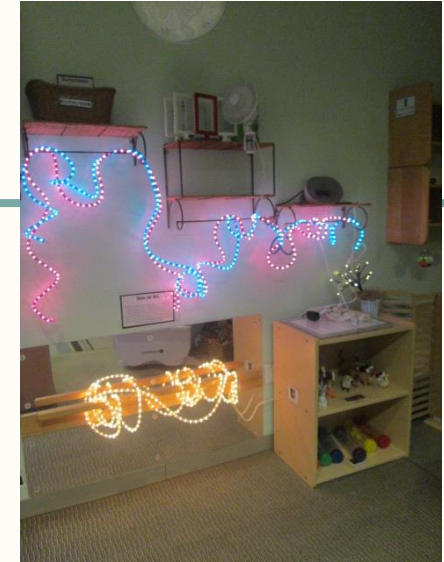
More Room Set ups



Watch for blind spots!



Take advantage of any surface



Using areas in more than one way



Storing and Displaying Materials



Using window ledges or tables



Directly on the shelf



Low sided baskets for easy viewing



More Storage Solutions



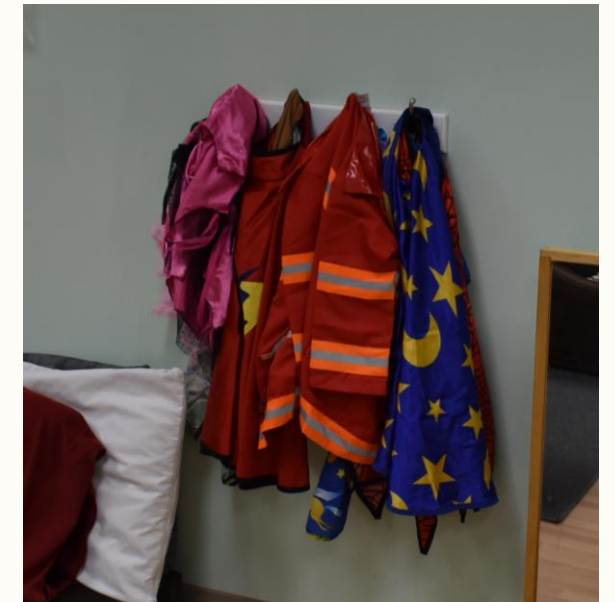
Label baskets clearly for easy viewing



Clear containers are convenient and appealing



Hanging items keeps them off shelves



Brainstorming Loose Parts

- What are loose parts? What comes to your mind when you think of loose parts?



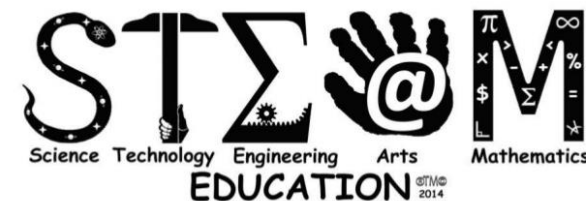


History

- Originally researched by an architect, Simon Nicholson, in 1971 in the article *How NOT to Cheat Children: the Theory of Loose Parts*.
- He talked about how the environment, including materials, provided opportunities to interact with variables such as gravity, sounds, and many others
- When an environment is rich in loose parts, children can discover many ways to use items

How do loose parts affect children's play?

- Loose parts can allow children to explore all the parts of STEAM.
- Science-children use loose parts for experimenting
- Technology-children use loose parts to find ways to make difficult things easier
- Engineering-children can recreate known objects and figure out how they work
- Art-children can work with patterns, colors, and appreciate the general beauty of their works
- Math-children can use loose parts for counting and sorting as well as spatial properties of materials



Natural vs Synthetic Loose materials



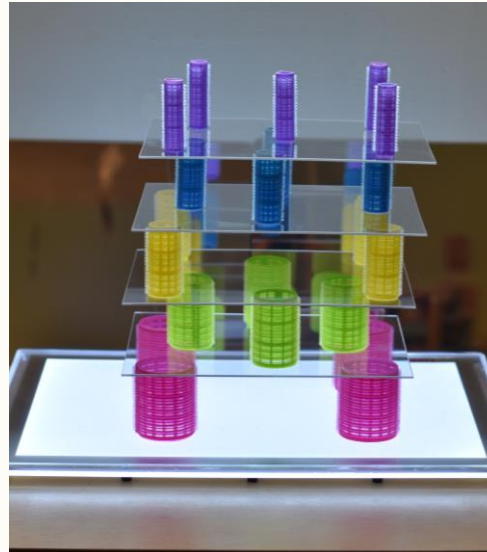
- Think about natural vs synthetic loose parts.
- What's the difference?
- What's the advantage to each? Disadvantage?
- Why have both?



Natural Loose Parts for Infants & Toddlers



Synthetic Loose Parts for Infants & Toddlers



Children's Exploration of Loose Parts

DRAMATIC PLAY

Make-believe play is not only one of the great joys of childhood, it also offers abundant opportunities for children's development. Children develop interpersonal skills, particularly cooperation and conflict resolution, and improve their language and problem-solving abilities in pretend play. Dramatic play fosters emotional development as children work through fears and worries in a safe context. Social skills are promoted as children communicate and negotiate their roles and actions. Children use language more frequently and more elaborately in make-believe play than they do in virtually any other activity.

Family Friendly Communication, p. 15

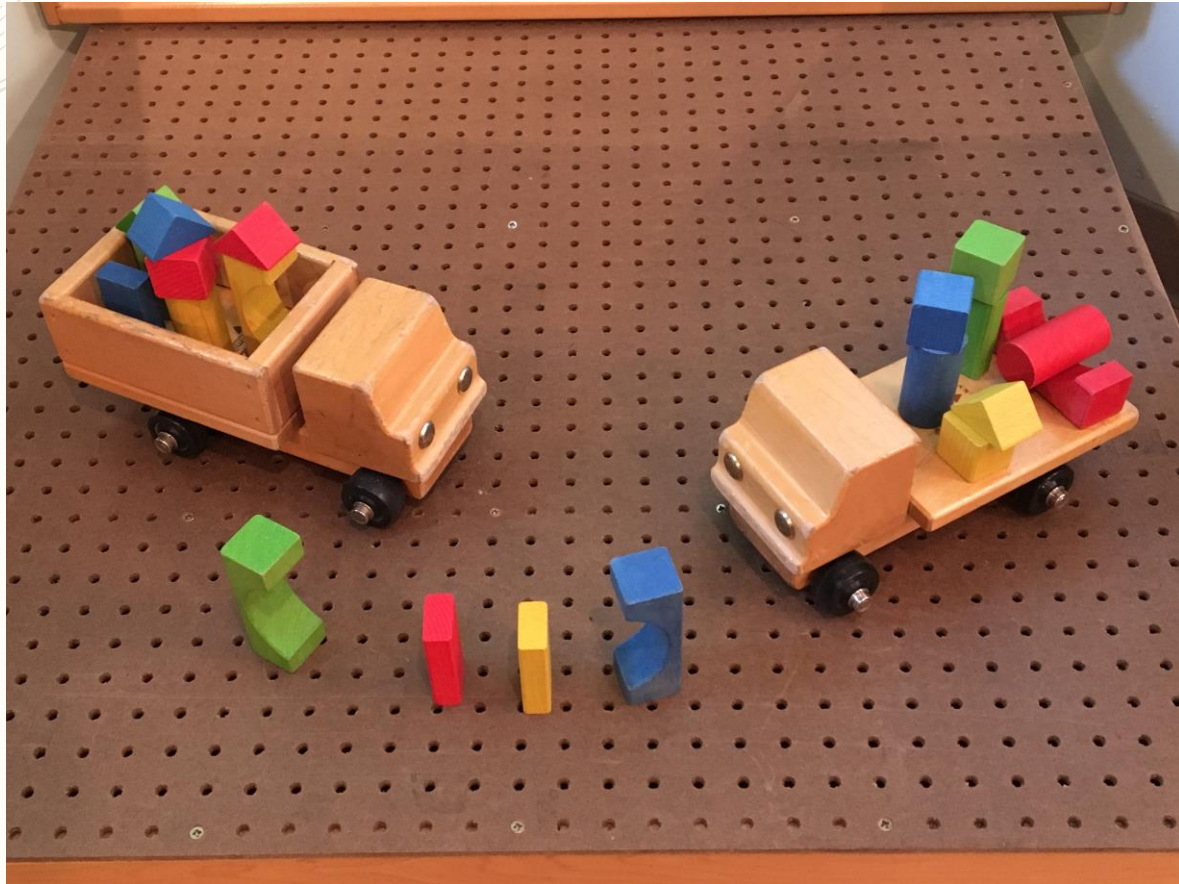


Where to find them?



- Donations
- Dollar Tree
- Wal-Mart
- Home
- Craft stores
- Discount stores (TJ Maxx, Marshalls, etc)
- OUTSIDE!!!

Provocations





What are provocations?

Provocations are materials set up in intentional ways to provoke the children. They are intended to provoke exploration in new ways, curiosity, questions, discussions, ideas, interests, thoughts, and creativity. It can even expand on previous experiences. They are created for the children to explore in new and different ways, to see materials in a new light, or to draw interest to something specific. These provocations can be something small such as a picture set out or as big as a tower creation. As long as it's inviting, open-ended, and provides a means for creativity and exploration.

Different reasons for provocations



Introduce a new activity or concept



Different reasons for provocations



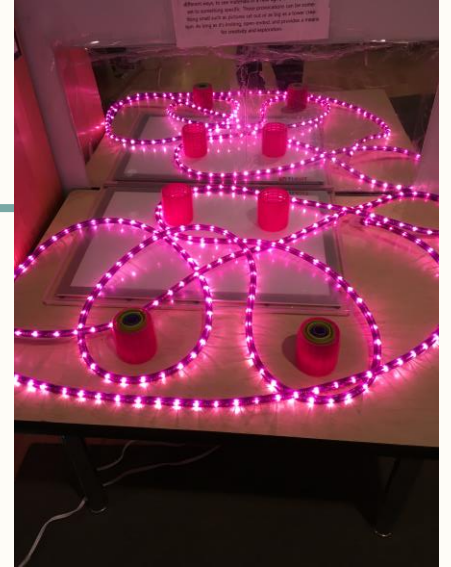
New ways to explore classroom materials



Different reasons for provocations



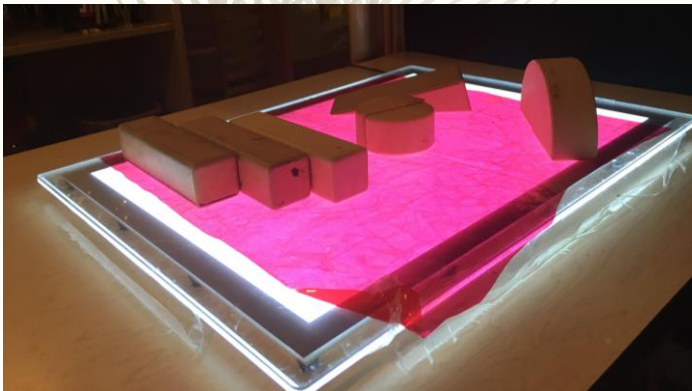
New perspectives



Different reasons for provocations



Child created provocations



Invitation to create



New provocation experiment

- In the infant room this last year, since we felt we didn't have as many surfaces to display provocations, we turned all of our shelves into big provocations
- Materials and shelves were labeled at the top with pictures that said, "These items live on this shelf. Please display creatively"
- Many people loved coming in and playing with the set up of the shelves! It gave part time employees and practicum students ownership of the room as well
- We felt it made clean up easier. Less dump and run. More interactions with different materials

Shelves as provocations





Now what? 1 week, 1 month, 6 months, 1 year

- What could you take back to your class? Break it down:
- What can I do in next week?
- Next month?
- In 6 months?
- In 1 year?

Thank you to the teachers of Berkley Child & Family Development Center for sharing your ideas and photos for this presentation. Especially my coteacher, Jessie Newman.



Resources

- Daly, L., & Beloglovsky, M. (2015). Loose parts: inspiring play in young children. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.;
- Beloglovsky, M., & Daly, L. (2016). Loose parts 2: inspiring play with infants and toddlers. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.;
- Deviney, J. (2010). Inspiring spaces for young children. Silver spring: Gryphon House.;
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