

OPEN ENDED PLAY: A PARENT'S GUIDE



Have you ever watched your child play with a cardboard box in wonder? 'Why aren't you playing with the toy that came in it?'

It's because the box presents endless opportunities for your child to be imaginative. A box, unlike the toy which comes in it, is what we call an open-ended resource. That means an item that can be

played with by a child where there isn't a specific purpose or outcome.

WHY PROVIDE THESE RESOURCES?

To increase language skills

To increase their imagination skills.

To develop challenge

To develop their ability to move their whole body and their fingers

Providing these types of resources is easy and usually free. You can use anything around your house and garden. Children can find these things themselves if they're left to it (think about when they go to the park or a beach and discover 'treasure') or you can give them things which you've found yourself. Just be sure that whatever you let them use is safe.



RESOURCES TO PROVIDE:



Bean poles
Garden netting
Boxes and baskets
Pines cones, conkers, sycamore
keys and acorns.
Stones and pebbles
Sticks, bark and twigs
Pipes, guttering and rubber seals.
Bottle tops, drinking straws and
jar lids.
String and wool (in short lengths).

If you're struggling just ask your child's key person for some more ideas or search Instagram, Twitter and Facebook for #looseparts or #openendedplay

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THESE RESOURCES?

When they have the resources they don't need to make anything in particular. They might choose to make a house, or a bridge, a sky scraper or Spiderman's cave. But they might just choose to make something without a name. Play alongside your child and ask where different resources can go. You'll soon see that the play evolves slowly but in an incredibly imaginative way.

