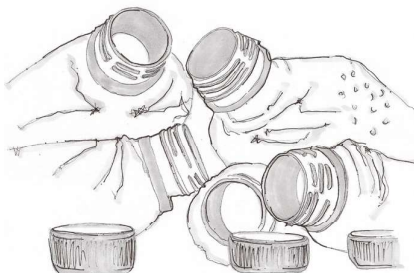
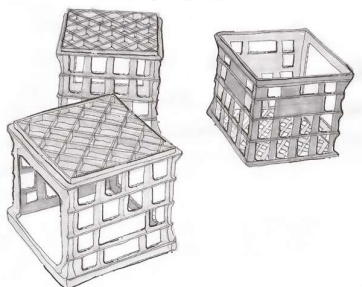
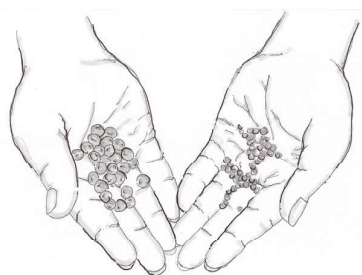


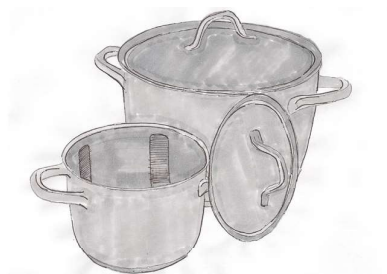
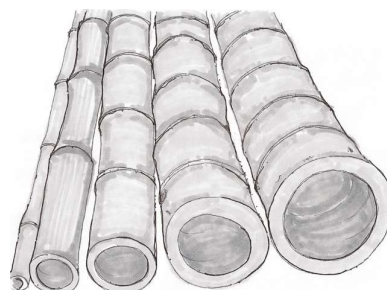
Step 2 - Gather Loose Parts

When gathering loose parts, it's useful to think in terms of both natural and recycled materials. Here are some suggestions:



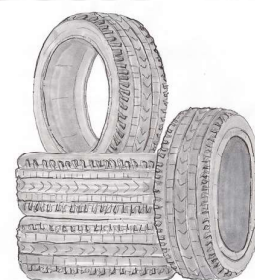
Natural materials:

- + Pebbles
- + Sand
- + Water
- + Branches or bushes
- + Large stones
- + Leaves
- + Bamboo
- + Seeds
- + Flowers
- + Sticks



Recycled materials:

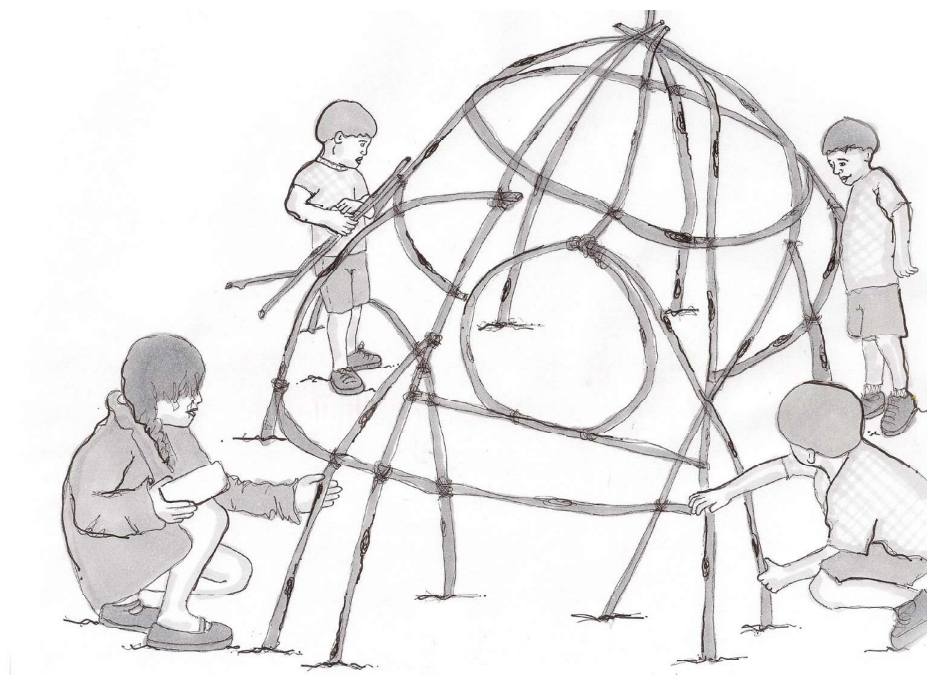
- + Soda/milk crates
- + Plastic bottles and caps
- + Cardboard tubes
- + Pieces of string
- + Clothespins
- + Tires
- + Wooden spoon
- + Mixing bowl
- + Saucepan or cooking pot



While we don't want to tell children how to play with these materials, it's often useful to think about what they offer in combination.

For example:

Pebbles	+	Cardboard tubes	=	A marble run or rain stick
Branches	+	Fabric & pegs	=	A little house or animal cave
Soil & water	+	Cooking pot	=	?



When you are looking around and wondering what makes a good loose part, ask yourself the following questions:

- + Is it flexible? Can it be used and reused in a different form without breaking or becoming hazardous?
- + Is it something you comfortably can give to children, to do whatever they want with? Even if that means using them up or destroying them?
- + Is it something that you can gather up afterwards relatively easily, or something you can leave out all the time?

If your setting will have limited or no supervision by adults, think very carefully about the materials you supply and whether they will be safe for children to use unsupervised. You can read more about safety and risk on page 20.

Where can these materials be found?

Once you start keeping an eye out for good loose parts, you'll start seeing them everywhere! Take another look at your setting, in the backs of cupboards, to see what can be repurposed. Then, get yourself ready and go out! Whether urban or rural, your local environment has lots to offer children for play.

Extend your reach through personal networks. Ask friends and community members for what they don't need anymore, and if there's anything they'd like to donate. Ask local businesses if they have leftover materials to donate. Perhaps a carpentry workshop has wood cutt-offs, a restaurant has empty bottles or pails, or a garage has old tires they can donate. It's amazing how many people want to help out a project that is both important and fun.



This is also a great way to strengthen relationships with the families of children you work with. Consider making a list of the kinds of materials you would like to receive and posting this where parents will see it.

Encouraging other adults to contribute loose parts helps to build community investment in your project - in all senses.



Budget

The materials we've recommended will vary in terms of cost depending upon your location. It's worth being clear that this approach can be taken without spending any money at all, particularly in terms of loose parts. At the same time, a small amount of investment will go a long way.

When spending from a limited budget, prioritize a sturdy storage system. Though keep in mind you can start with something as simple as a cardboard box. We'll talk about different types of storage systems in the next section. Then build a collection of tools and materials which can be used for a variety of purposes. Over time you'll get better at spotting great materials for free and in knowing how to invest the funding that you have. This means that the greatest investment is really in your staff's understanding and experience of play.

Global Games

Play is a universal part of humanity. Some games have been played traditionally by people all around the world, often with nothing more than a handful of pebbles or length of string.



Snail (Bosnia), Little Plane (Mexico), Chapel (Hungary), Hopscotch (US, UK): Players begin by drawing a series of boxes on the ground, in a row with arms or curled in a spiral. Players throw a pebble and jump on one leg through the boxes, often singing a rhyme and picking up their pebble as they return down the same path.

Gris/grille (Somalia), Jacks (US/UK), Gongghi (Korea): This game is played with pebbles and either a shallow hole in the earth or a chalk circle. Its goal is to throw one pebble in the air and gather more quickly, before it hits the ground.

Queen, Beautiful Queen (Italy), Grandmother's Footsteps (UK), Red Light Green Light (US): In this game, one person stands at the front with their back turned, and everyone else lined up at a distance. In some versions, the person at the front calls out the name of an animal and number of steps that the other children can take towards them, while pretending to be that animal. In other versions, the one at the front looks away while the other children try to 'steal' steps forwards, before they are seen.

Fah (Somalia), Tapatan (Philippines), Noughts and Crosses (UK), Tic Tac Toe (US), Achi (Ghana): Two players have counters or pebbles, and draw a grid. The grid may be many different sizes, but players either place or move pieces across the board. Some versions of this game can be played alone.