

Collecting open ended resources

Open ended resources don't have to cost you any money, you can source them from parents/carers, grandparents and local services.

Loose parts are open-ended items that can be used alone or combined with other materials. They allow children to use them with no instructions or directions.

They can be natural or manufactured, found, scavenged or bought, different sizes, shapes and materials.

Natural loose parts can include twigs and sticks, logs, branches, stones, pebbles, rocks, gravel, shells, driftwood, dried seaweed, bark, leaves, feathers, petals and flowers, bamboo, grass, plants, conkers, pine cones, sand, water and ice, mud and soil, slate and much more!

Other sources of loose parts include recycled materials and sourced loose parts from, for example, building yards, tree surgeons, supermarkets or bakeries.

You can also visit car boot sales and charity shops - and have you heard of scrap stores? scrap stores are places that charge you a small membership fee and then allow you to fill your baskets with all kinds of different "scrap". This could be different materials, reels, crates, nuts, bolts. Each store will have different items and these are likely to change each time you visit. A must for any early years setting!



Consider collecting the following:

- Large cable drums can be found at electrical suppliers (that often they want to dispose of them)
- Large cardboard boxes, crates etc. can be sourced from the local shops, due to no longer being needed
- Loose parts can be found in family and friends sheds (just ensure these are not rusty!)
- Pieces of materials could be off-cuts of material from used/old curtains, duvet covers etc.
- Tyres can be sourced from tyre suppliers (normally free for the old ones – just check no metal is sticking out!)
- Old wooden pallets could be found at garden centres or building suppliers
- Salt, sugar and flour to dissolve
- Herbs, mud, wood and metal to look at under a microscope
- Different resources to experiment floating and sinking
- Glue, sticky tape, nuts and bolts to join materials together.

If you have space, create an area in your outside shed / storage area specifically for these resources so the children can access them freely and explore and investigate.

Other community schemes

B&Q stores also run a Community Re-use Scheme - sign up with your local store (check whether your store is part of this promotion) for FREE items of unsold stock e.g. wood, tiles, turf which could be used to [build a bug hotel!](#)

The scheme is in place to donate un-sellable products and materials for re-use by local schools, other educational institutions and community groups, for the benefit of the local community and the environment. These items are donated on the understanding that they will be re-used or disposed of responsibly if they are not used.

[Find out how to register in your local area.](#)