

# Blocks and Loose Parts

## Key Learning Opportunities (From Development Matters Birth to 5)

### Communication and Language

- Understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important.
- Learn new vocabulary.
- Use new vocabulary through the day.
- Ask questions to find out more and to check they understand what has been said to them.
- Articulate their ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences.
- Connect one idea or action to another using a range of connectives.
- Describe events in some detail.
- Use talk to help work out problems and organise thinking and activities, and to explain how things work and why they might happen.
- Use new vocabulary in different contexts.

### Maths

- Count objects, actions and sounds.
  - Count beyond ten.
  - Understand the 'one more than/one less than' relationship between consecutive numbers.
  - Select, rotate and manipulate shapes to develop spatial reasoning skills.
  - Compose and decompose shapes so that children recognise a shape can have other shapes *within* it, just as numbers can.
  - Continue, copy and create repeating patterns.
- Compare length, weight and capacity.

### Literacy

- Spell words by identifying the sounds and then writing the sound with letter/s.
- Write short sentences with words with known sound-letter correspondences using a capital letter and full stop.
- Re-read what they have written to check that it makes sense.

### Expressive Art and Design

- Return to and build on their previous learning, refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them.
  - Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills.
- Develop storylines in their pretend play.

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Build constructive and respectful relationships.
- Show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.
- Identify and moderate their own feelings socially and emotionally.
- Think about the perspectives of others.

### Physical Development

Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.

### Understanding the World

- Draw information from a simple map.
- Explore the natural world around them.

## Characteristics of Effective Learning

### Playing and Exploring

- Show curiosity about the objects in the blocks/loose parts area.
- Show interest in their own creations and those of others.
- Engage in open-ended learning and be receptive to exploring resources by themselves and with others.
- Pretend that objects are things from their own experiences at home and elsewhere.
- Initiate building/creating activities with others including peers and adults.
- Challenge themselves to create bigger/better/faster items and take learning further.
- Take calculated risks and learn by trial and error.

### Active Learning

- Maintain focus on their activity for a sustained period of time (around 10 minutes).
- Show high levels of energy and interest in building/creating and talking about what they are doing.
- Pay attention to details in the things they are creating.
- Persist in finding a different way when things don't quite work.
- Show belief that a different way will pay off and bounce back after difficulties.
- Set themselves goals and show pride at the process they take not just the end goal.
- Enjoy meeting their own challenges not just for rewards or praise.

### Creative and Critical Thinking

- Think of their own ideas for building/creating.
- Find ways to problem solve or new ways to build/create.
- Make links and notice patterns in their experiences.
- Use vocabulary linked to building/creating (see below)
- Make predictions to what they think will happen (e.g. I think when it gets this big it will fall over.)
- Plan out their ideas and make decisions on how to create/build.
- Change strategies as they work when needed and review how their approach is going.

## Blocks and Loose Parts

Resources	Organisation	Intended Experience	Key Vocabulary	Role of the Adult
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wooden blocks</li> <li>• Colourful wooden blocks</li> <li>• Soft building blocks</li> <li>• Wooden poles/sticks</li> <li>• Cotton reels</li> <li>• Corks</li> <li>• Cellotape/Masking tape centres</li> <li>• Glass gems</li> <li>• Wooden rings/hoops</li> <li>• Empty spools/Reels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open shelf with boxes/bowls/baskets holding different objects.</li> <li>• Large cable reels in area for building on/around.</li> <li>• Large carpeted area to encourage big scale building and scenes to be set up.</li> <li>• Photos of children's creations using blocks/loose parts to inspire creativity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children make decisions about the resources they need to fulfil their ideas.</li> <li>• Plan out and communicate their ideas with others.</li> <li>• Express thoughts as they build and make.</li> <li>• Cooperate with peers sharing resources and helping to problem solve.</li> <li>• Creating real and imaginary buildings based on their experiences.</li> <li>• Design and create settings for small world play.</li> <li>• Invent stories around the settings they create.</li> <li>• Narrate their play.</li> <li>• Re-tell stories using their creations.</li> <li>• Problem solve and use trial and error to bring their ideas to life.</li> <li>• Label designs using letters they know.</li> <li>• Use mathematical language and descriptions when creating.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low Frequency Words</b> create, construct, arrange, combine, explore, flexible, rigid, assemble</p> <p><b>Medium Frequency Words</b> balance, stack, pattern, create, pinch</p> <p><b>High Frequency Words</b> bricks, blocks, gems, sticks, reels, corks, move, large, medium, small, slow, fast, build, sort, roll,</p>	<p><b>Play alongside</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe children and take note of key interests.</li> <li>• Respond to requests and ideas</li> <li>• Suggest possibilities to extend play/thinking.</li> <li>• Consider additional stimulus and add to the area immediately or in the following days.</li> <li>• Play alongside children to push play forwards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Role model/direct teach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model how to play imaginatively.</li> <li>• Model thinking aloud "You've really made me think about..." "I'd not thought of that before..."</li> <li>• Model correct language use and extend vocabulary.</li> <li>• Model and manage behaviours including self-regulation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Raise questions to stimulate ideas and add challenge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "What do you notice about...?"</li> <li>• "I wonder how...?"</li> <li>• "Can you tell me about...?"</li> </ul> <p><b>Use appropriate language linked to key learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathematical language linked to shape, position, size and counting.</li> <li>• Geographical language linked to locations</li> <li>• Scientific language linked to gravity and stability.</li> <li>• Story language linked to scenes and characters.</li> </ul>