



# **Umbrella Program Excellence Team**

**Monthly Newsletter**

**Issue 1  
October 2023**

# UMBRELLA CHRONICLES



Hillcrest, Toddler

## OUR JOURNEY INTO PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION:

By using pedagogical documentation, children will develop a deeper level of questioning. Pedagogical documentation allows educators to look beyond teaching bias and look more authentically into children's learning.



Hillcrest, School Age

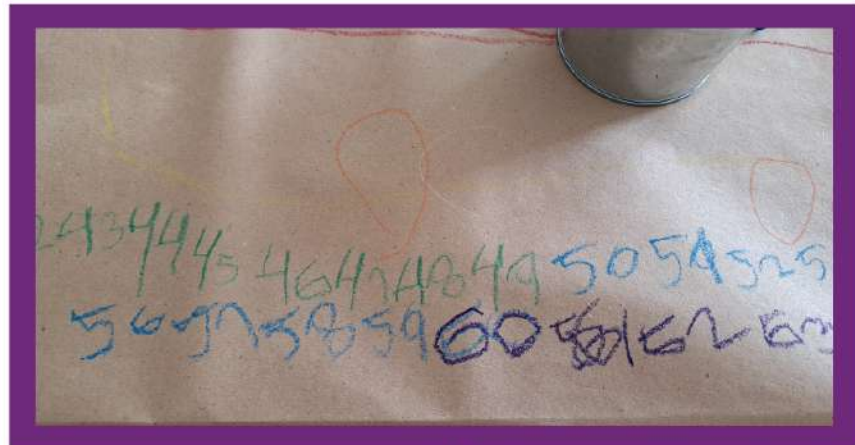
Exploring found materials also benefits children's language development. It allows them to articulate and express in words what they have made, how it works, what it does, how they feel about it and why it is important to them. Explaining their work to others not only encourages vocabulary acquisition but also fosters children's ability to think abstractly.



Sir Wilfrid Laurier - Kinder



# PLAY BASED LEARNING



Viola Desmond, Preschool

Two types of play that support children's learning:

**FREE PLAY**- Play that is child directed, voluntary, internally motivated and pleasurable.

**GUIDED PLAY** - Play activities with some level of adult involvement to embed or extend additional learning opportunities within play itself.

## CURRICULUM CRUMB

### LOOSE PARTS - IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



"As long as materials can be moved, redesigned, put together, and taken apart in a variety of ways, they are classified as loose parts."

-Simon Nicholson



Hillcrest,  
School age



# How to Use Loose Parts For Learning

It is also important to note that there are different ways to understand what they are being used for. While their primary purpose is to be used for free play, they can also be doubled up as tools for directed learning.

## Loose Parts For Letter Practice

Trace out a single letter on a large sheet of paper, and then place small loose parts on the letter, arranging them such that they form a shape.

## Take Loose Parts Outside

Loose parts play can also double up as outdoor play!  
A scavenger hunt and gather some loose parts in a little basket.  
Design a maze in the playground.

## Loose Parts Math

Loose parts can also make for a wonderful foundation for your child's early math learning skills. Write down numbers on empty cardboard boxes, and look for multiple pieces of a single object.

## Loose Parts Art

Create an artwork using the loose parts of their choice. It can be anything that inspires them.

## Loose Part Sensory Play

One of the best additions you can make to the child's loose part play experience is to make it a sensory experience.  
Use sand, clay, kinetic sand, or even just water along with loose parts to make the best of the sensory play experience.





# The Ultimate Loose Parts Material List

The best part about loose parts play is that the possibilities are literally endless. To get you inspired, here's a quick list of some of the most common materials you might find in your classroom- that qualifies as a loose part. You will, of course, need to focus on them being age-appropriate for your age group, and don't limit yourself here- use as many parts of items as you can!

## Natural Objects

- Leaves
- Twigs
- Shells
- Pinecones
- Flowers
- Clothespins
- Tile Samples
- Cardboard Tubes
- Wine Corks
- Cork Tiles
- Natural Loofah
- Large Wood
- Wicker or Rope Woven Hot Pads
- Bamboo Products
- Wood-Handled Brushes
- Wood Rings
- Wood Balls
- Wood Candlestick Holders

## Soft and Flexible Objects

- Scarves
- Felt
- Place Mats
- Ribbons
- Potholders
- Handkerchiefs
- Fabric Squares
- Doilies
- Knotted Rope
- Hacky Sacks
- Sponges
- Plastic Loofahs

## Pops of Colour

- Bangle Bracelets
- Large Buttons
- Silicone Muffin Liners
- Paint Sample Cards
- Shower Curtain
- Hair Curlers
- Pet Toys
- Plastic Eggs
- Sensory Balls

## Metallic and Reflective

- Objects
- Tin Cans
- Metal Utensils
- Measuring Spoons, Cups
- Metal Jar Lid Rings
- Locks
- Cookie Cutters
- Keys on Key Ring

## Household Objects

- Empty Picture Frames
- Pump Bottles
- Plastic Containers
- Phone Cases
- Coasters
- Empty Spice Jars
- Dip Bowls
- Measuring Cups, Spoons
- Funnels
- Flour Sifters
- Chip Clips



**Introducing loose parts play into your child's playtime can have a more significant impact on their growth and development than you'd expect.**



# WHAT ARE THE DEVELOPMENTAL BENEFITS OF USING LOOSE PARTS IN PLAY?

**Fine Motor** - grasp and pick up small objects.

**Gross Motor** - bigger muscles to lift, pull, push and carry larger loose parts to any area.

**Cognitive** - critical thinking, problem solving, abstract thinking, and exploration, trial and error.

**Creativity** - design and innovate.

**Development of social emotional** - children play together, taking turns.



Numeracy



Emotional Skills



Literacy Skills



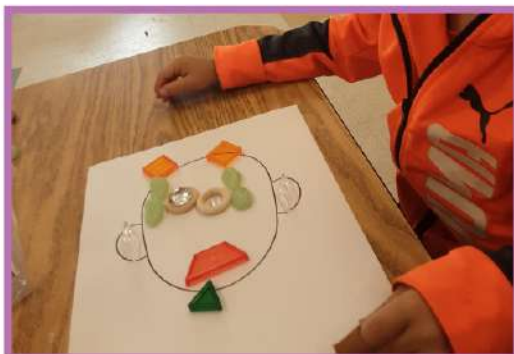
Ray Lewis - Loose Parts



Birthday Celebration Provocation w/ Loose Parts

This is where the magic happens!

You will find in your observations that each child will use the same material in a different way.



The children at Cathy Wever got the chance to make faces using loose parts. They showed creativity as they used the different materials provided by the educator. As they were doing the activity, we talked about being proud of who we are, where we are from, and what we look like. We also talked about respecting each other's differences.

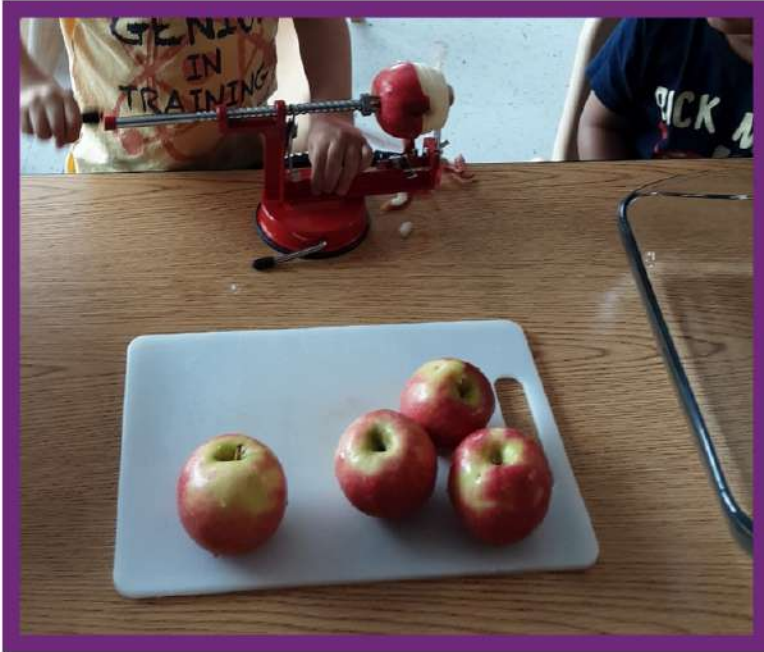




## WHAT IS THE EDUCATOR'S ROLE?

During the time the children are exploring loose parts, the educator's role is to serve as an observer and researcher as well as to provide language. Loose-parts play is a wonderful time to observe and ask questions about what the children are playing with and how they are playing.

Set of apples that the children have been playing with consistently. They have been observed using the apples to count, to pretend to cook, for stacking, and for singing.



Shannon K, Preschool



### Extension:

The educators decided to extend the children's learning and with cooking a delicious apple crumble!



# PROGRAM EXCELLANCE TEAM

## UPDATES

### Manager of Program Excellence - Jen Allen

#### EDI Update

We wanted to provide a brief update on our EDI role. We will be taking some time to assess our needs as an organization. Because this is a busy time of year for our child care programs, the focus of the PE team is on supporting in our classrooms right now.

In the absence of an EDI Specialist, you may experience a gap in resources. We encourage you to review the Annual Diversity Calendar to see what special events will be happening over the next few months. If you have any questions related to diversity, equity, inclusion or belonging in your programs, please reach out to Jen Allen, Manager of Program Excellence. Jen has significant experience in the area of EDI as it relates to children's programming and is happy to help.

#### Vecta Sensory Carts

We are excited to announce that Umbrella was successful in a grant for the Federal Government's Enabling Accessibility Fund. This fund provides funding for projects that make Canadian communities and workplaces more accessible for persons with disabilities. With this funding, we were able to purchase four VECTA Deluxe Mobile Sensory Carts. The VECTA turns any room into a relaxing, distracting, and empowering Multi-Sensory Room. The unit features LED lights, projection, soothing sounds and more. These units will help Umbrella in meeting the unique needs of our children. Based on various factors, four sites were selected to receive these units over the course of the fall: Shannen Koostachin, Viola Desmond, Cathy Weaver, and Sir Wilfred Laurier. The PE Team will support in the implementation of these units within programs.





## **New Committees**

We are excited to launch our EDIB and Quality Committees. Thank you to those who replied to the expression of interests earlier this month. Those who have been selected to join the committees will be contacted and we look forward to starting this amazing work together. The committees will be an opportunity for educators to share their knowledge and experience with quality child care and equity, diversity, and inclusion. They will help to guide decision making for the broader organization. We can't wait to get started!

## **Communities of Practice**

**"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" -Helen Keller**

In addition to our Committees, we are excited to launch new communities of practice. These monthly opportunities for connection will be hosted by Jenny Redmond, our Pedagogy and Program Specialist, or Ashley Codispodi, our Ministry and Licensing Specialist. Interested staff can register through our training portal which will be populated with training dates over the coming weeks. Topics will vary month to month. We look forward to connecting with you! A training calendar will be provided for October and November.

### **Ministry and License Updates from Ashley Codispodi:**

This month we have had many licensing inspections for renewals. A big congratulations to the BASP Teams at Eastdale, James Macdonald and Queensdale for receiving ZERO non-compliances. In response to previous inspections and recommendations from our Program Advisors at the Ministry of Education, we are updating our Medical Forms. This includes a new form for - Allergy List, Individual Plans for Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Medical Needs and Non-Life Threatening Allergies, Authorization to Administer. These will be rolling out over the month of October and will be uploaded to the Employee Portal under Forms. Other exciting news regarding our menus... The cook's have come together to review the Ontario Dietitians in Public Health document on Menu Planning and Supportive Nutrition Environments in Childcare Settings. Collaboratively, the cooks reviewed our Menus and have revised them to meet these standards. We are very excited to share these with everyone in the coming weeks (which will also be available on the Employee Portal).

### **Pedagogy and Program Specialist - Jenny Redmond**

We would love to see your provocations and learning in action. Please send an email to [progspecialist2@umbrellafamily.com](mailto:progspecialist2@umbrellafamily.com) to be featured in our upcoming newsletters. Thank you!