

## Preschool Themes Newsletter – March 2018

Hello Everyone,

It's hard to believe that I am writing the March newsletter already. I trust that you are all settled at school and enjoying your teaching. March can still be a very hot month, so don't forget to remain well hydrated and to ensure that the children and you are drinking enough water. Children (and teachers) forget to drink water and don't realise they are dehydrated. They just get tired, listless, grumpy, short tempered and unable to listen and sit still. In April Easter is coming up in the school holidays and the theme provides many opportunities for some fun activities across all the learning areas. I have attached a separate sheet with creative activities and some ideas to implement in other areas of the daily programme. The April newsletter will go out at the beginning of term 2. I wish you all a Happy and Blessed Easter. Take care if you are travelling and enjoy some well-earned family time.



### Price increase 1 April 2018

As from 1 April there will be a price increase from R40 per book to R50. There has not been a price increase for several years while printing costs have increased.

The price of the plastic containers and postage will remain the same.

If you order 40 or more books the delivery is free and you receive a free plastic container to store the books.



### Loose parts play

In a recent newsletter I discussed Heuristic play or which is sometimes also known as treasure baskets. These are aimed at babies who can sit and play including up to ages 1.5 or 2 year olds. They are usually smaller items in baskets played with in a set area. The teacher only observes and does not interfere or try to direct the play. The only interference is for safety and disputes.

#### Loose part play

Loose parts play is similar but has a much broader implementation and age range and is for 3 years and older. While this is not really a "new idea" it has come back into the preschool environment. You may know it as **open ended play** which is offering children resources to play with in their own ways e.g. pieces of fabric, boxes, lids etc. The teachers role is to observe, add language, suggest solutions if asked for and to be sure the play is safe and cooperative.



#### What is loose part play?

Loose parts in play are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. They are resources with no specific set of directions or way it has to be used. They can be used alone or in combination with other materials. They can be set out in the indoor area or outdoor area.

Loose parts can be natural or synthetic. Some may be small like lids or large like logs and planks of wood.

Setting out loose parts in the play space allows children to use these materials as they choose. Often children will choose to use these materials that they can use and adapt as they please rather than expensive toys or play equipment.

'Loose part' theory is about remembering that the best play comes from things that allow children to play in many different ways and on many different levels by individuals and in small groups. Environments that include loose parts are much more stimulating and engaging than static ones. The play environment needs to promote and support imaginative play through the provision of 'loose parts' in a way that doesn't direct play and play opportunities, but allows children to develop their own ideas, to be creative in their play and explore their world.

**The benefits of loose parts play are numerous but for me the biggest advantage is it's inexpensive and attainable for every preschool setting. Most of the loose parts are 'waste' items and natural items which are mostly readily available and free. Loose parts play resources don't have to be combined with purchased resources.**

Some of the negative aspects are that it can be very messy with loose parts being spread all over the classroom making tidy up time a lot more work as materials end up in places you would never expect them to be. I have found milk lids in handbags, in the oven, wrapped up in blankets etc.



**Some thoughts**

- Loose parts play can appear to parents that there are no 'decent' resources at the centre as it could look like a lot of 'junk' lying around, especially in the outdoor area. This can be overcome to some extent by storing the loose parts in an attractive and inviting way and the loose parts should be tidied up each day. Any damaged, broken or unsafe items should be removed daily.
- I would think that too many loose parts in the indoor environment may be overwhelming and have the opposite effect to creative play. To solve this there should be some limit on the choices according to your space and number of children.

**Would the children start to use the school resources as loose parts?**

This is highly likely as we see it happening at school where there are no loose parts to play with. Children take puzzle pieces and use them for play food, money, shopping items, toys for the dolls to play with etc. Solving this takes a bit of perseverance and reminding children that some toys are not to be spread around the classroom as they can get lost. Good supervision will pre-empt this from happening before it does.

**Loose parts should**

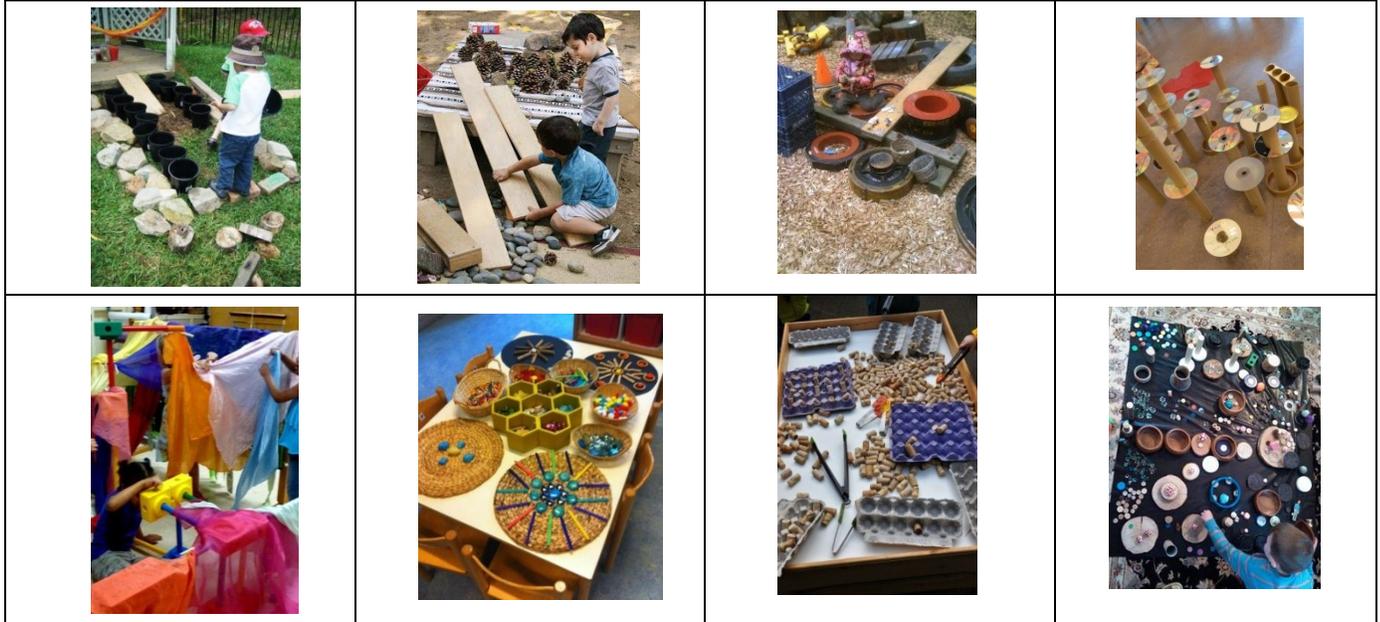
- Have no defined use and teachers must support the children when they decide to change the shape or use of them.
- Be accessible and stored where children can reach them without having to ask a teacher to help them or get them for them.
- The children should know that they can use them whenever and however they wish.
- Discuss the use of the loose parts play in a mat time.
- Be regularly replenished, changed, checked for safety and added to over time.



**Loose parts in action**

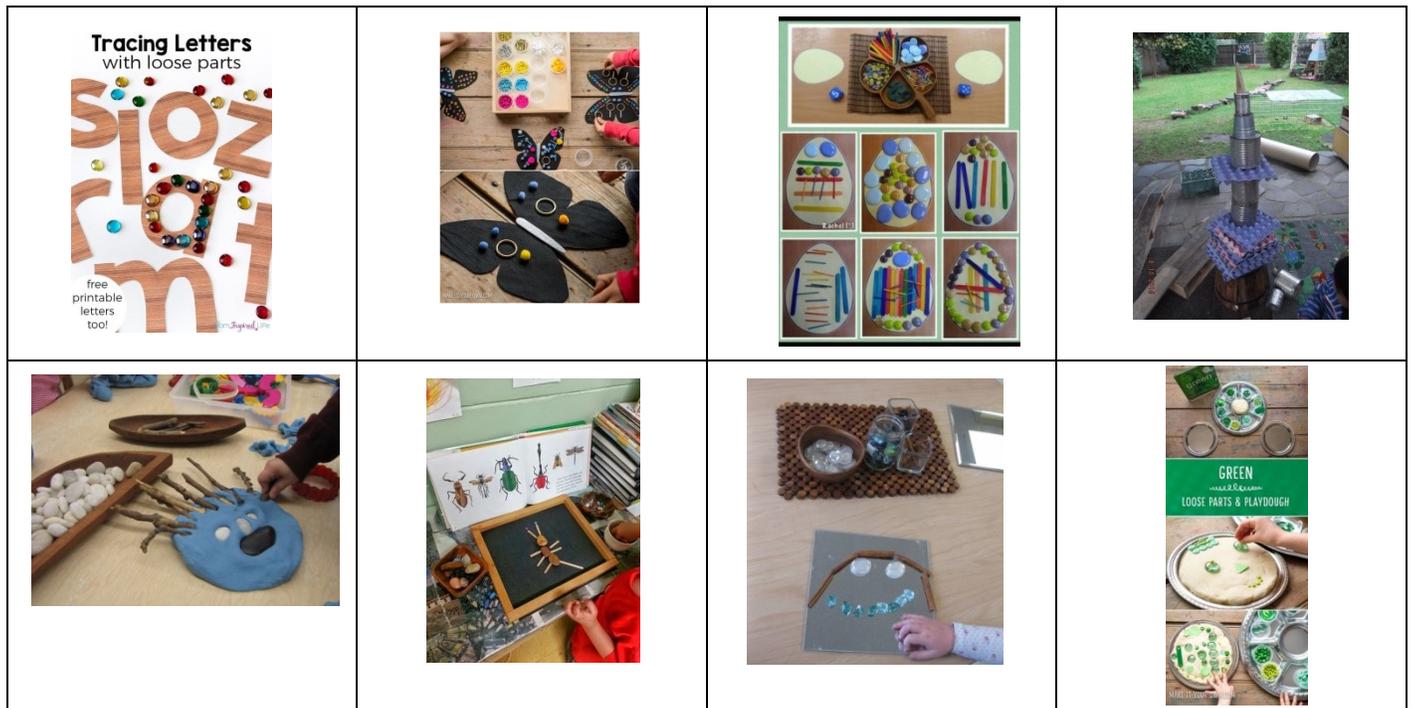
A good idea is to include some mats, frames or mirrors and other items as starting points for loose part play. Here are a few ideas for you showing loose parts play in action.





## Loose parts play and theme teaching

While loose part play is intended to be open ended and for the children to choose how and what they play with you can use incorporate aspects of it for theme teaching. Here are a few examples and you may already be doing some of these in your daily teaching.

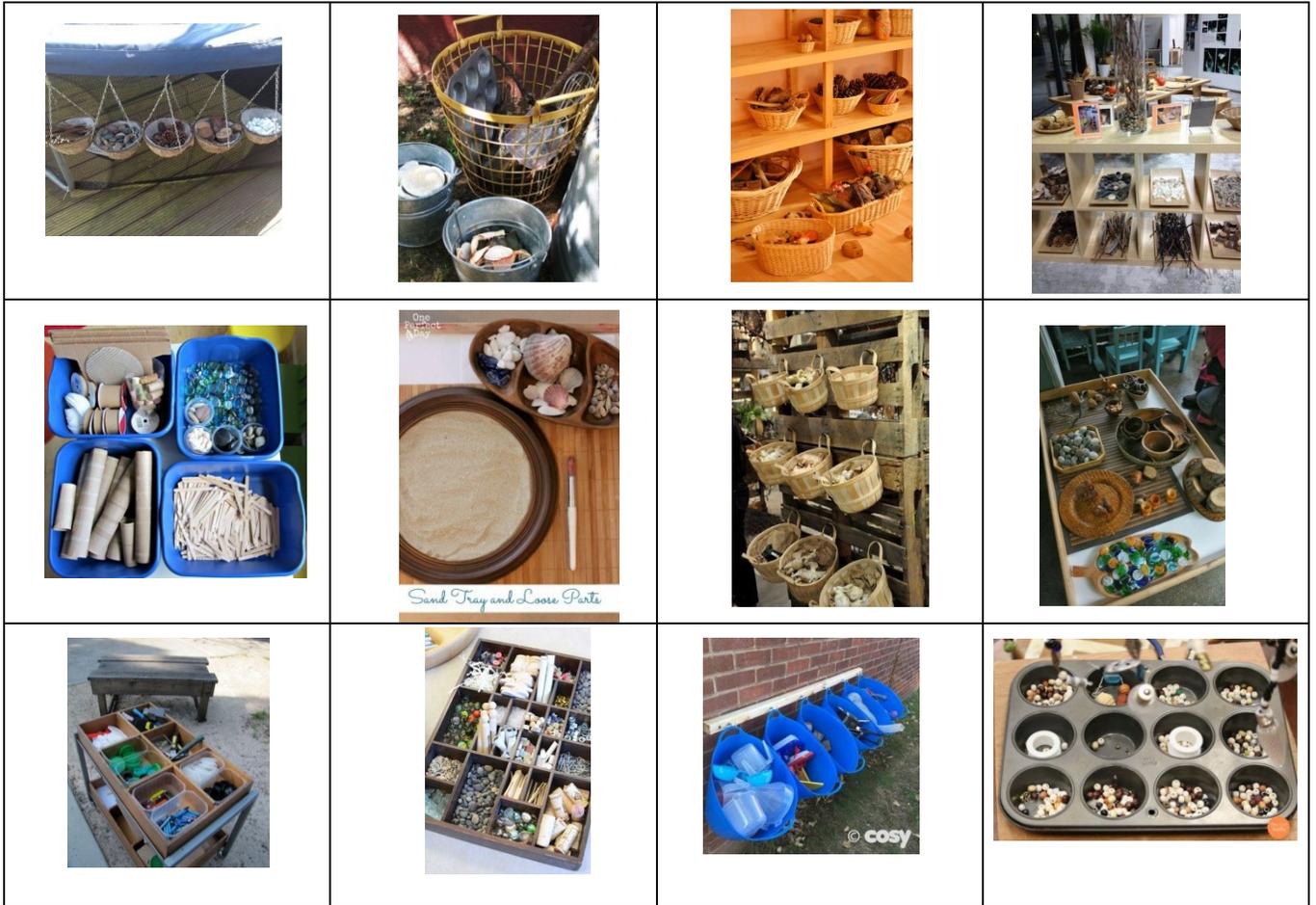


## Presenting and storing loose parts

Loose parts can be stored in many different ways as long as they are easy for the children to access and tidy up again. Here are some ideas to get you thinking.

For more ideas please visit the Pinterest board

<https://www.pinterest.nz/kstedall/loose-parts-play/>



### Easter activities

I have included a separate attachment with a few Easter activities. These are not my own ideas and instructions for the activity can be found at the link below the activity. This is the link to the Pinterest Easter school board where you can find many more ideas.

<https://www.pinterest.nz/kstedall/easter-school/>



Happy teaching  
Regards Karin