

LOOSE PARTS



WHAT ARE LOOSE PARTS?

Loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. They are materials with no specific set of directions that can be used alone or combined with other materials.

Examples of loose parts are: tree logs, fabric, suitcases, tree slices, twigs, dress up items, guttering, sticks, tyres, hoops, planks, chairs, crates, rope, stones, pallets, sand, pegs, boxes.

WHY LOOSE PARTS PLAY?

“The imaginative activity that accompanies messing about with loose materials forms the basis of creative and resourceful thinking in the arts and sciences. Negotiating changing situations, assessing and managing risk and enjoying the sheer physicality of the outdoors, all promote a sense of well-being and confidence that stands us in good stead for the challenges of an unpredictable future.”— Julie Wilson. Education Scotland.

Importance of Loose Parts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDI5T51zhh0>

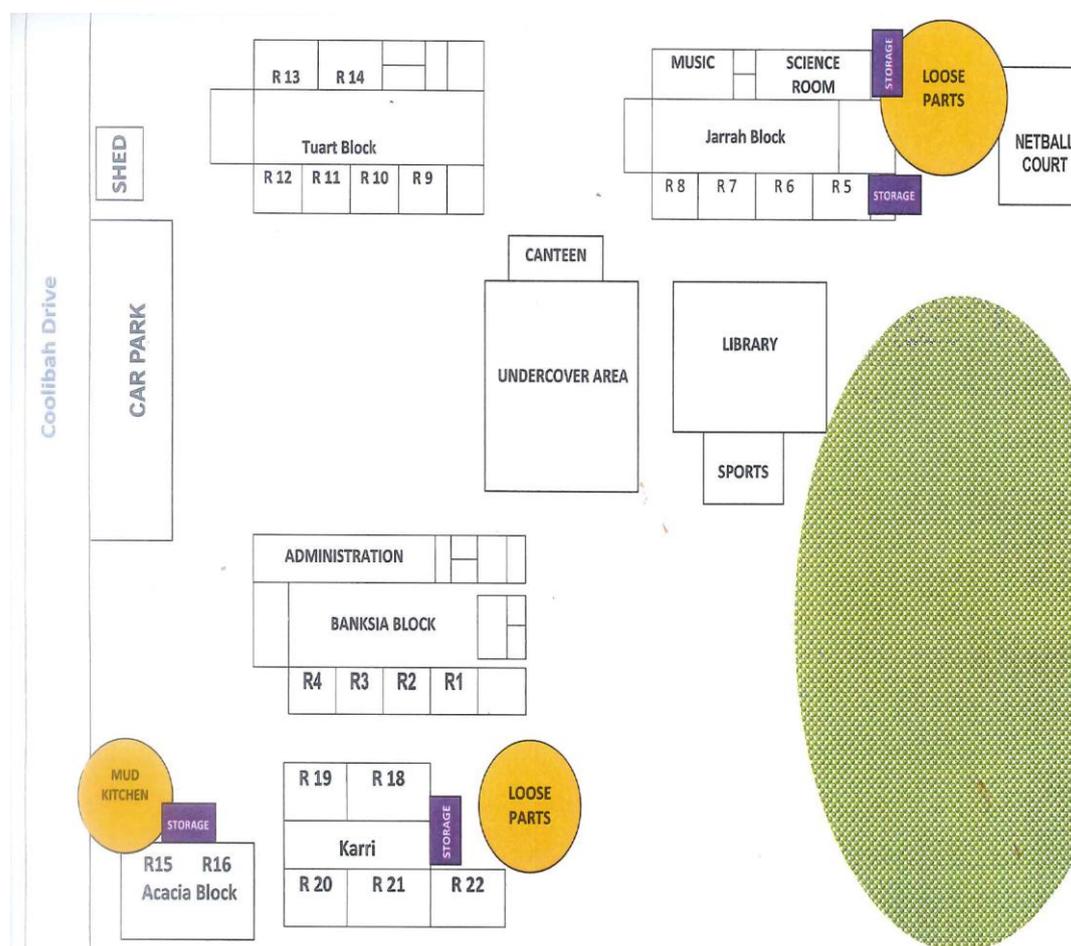
BENEFITS

- Introducing simple, everyday objects during recess and lunchtime can cut sedentary behaviour by half, improve creativity and boost social and problem-solving skills.
- Children play co-operatively and socialise more – less conflict and more inclusivity in the playground
- Children are physically more active
- Curriculum outcomes occur through informal play with loose parts
- Loose parts facilitate communication and negotiation skills when added to an outdoor space (Maxwell, Mitchell and Evans, 2008)
- Loose parts encourage open ended learning
- Loose parts are enjoyed by all ages
- Loose parts develop more skill and competence than most modern plastic toys
- Children choose loose parts over fancy toys



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1. Inform staff of benefits of Loose Parts play
2. Apply to City of Joondalup for Tamala Park funding
3. Form staff committee
4. Invite parents/community members to join committee
5. Negotiate suitable areas of the school to locate loose parts
6. School membership to Remida (source of recyclable materials)
7. Plan, purchase and install storage for designated areas
8. Collect materials
9. Develop a simple set of rules for students
10. Develop implementation plan for students – timetable for use, buddy system, etc.
11. Plan mud kitchen for Kindy/PP area
12. Monitor and adapt



JARRAH BLOCK

GENERAL

Admin will monitor this area at recess and lunch to ensure the equipment is being used appropriately and as per the rules the children have been given.

Whilst there is a lot of excitement currently, we believe the hype will die down and a reasonable number of kids will use this equipment on a regular basis.

Kids are required to take out any equipment they want to use and replace it at the end of each recess/lunch break. NO equipment is to be used after school and I have already been patrolling these areas.

Year 3 students are permitted to be at the area close to Jarrah block for the purpose of using the Loose Parts equipment

Alison D has said she is happy to keep an eye on the area with some students (earlier finishers etc) to ensure it is relatively tidy

Some staff who have already used the equipment have seen the potential to bring classes across for reward time and so on and we have no issue with this.

RULES

We have walked the students and staff from these classes through the following basic rules, without any incidents during their induction time, or recess/lunch. We kept them to a minimum, so they were easy to remember

1. Under no circumstances can milk crates be stacked. This is to prevent them collapsing while students are on them, or just because of the unstable ground underneath.
2. The large spools cannot be stood upon to be ridden like circus wheels, due to the risk of falling as they are likely to go forwards whilst children go backwards.
3. Children can't tie anything to themselves for risk of obvious rope burn etc
4. Any large poles, pvc pipes, wooden beams etc that were carried, had to be carried vertically, to prevent kids being 'taken out' through lack of spatial awareness.
5. Children were allowed to climb to the fork of the very large tree and that tree only, to that height only

With only these basic rules we had not one problem, with approx. 50 students there at recess/lunch. I accept that won't last and there is always a risk of injury, but the rules stated above removed the bulk of the risk and all other common sense around safety etc were applied.

WHAT THINGS WERE ALLOWED

Students used the crates, or spools (on their base) to stand on, which allowed them to make stepping stones, build bridges across platforms etc.

Students tied rope to some of the equipment and pulled it along while other students sat on the equipment and got taken for a ride

Students used the large PVC pipes to make giant sized marbles runs

Students used the beams of wood and the spools to make see saws

Students ran a large beam of wood from the fork of the tree, to make a slide (it was the laminated wood, so no splinters!)

Students used random pieces of equipment to simply make large 3D structures, like replica planes, cannons and so on

I accept there is a risk to be managed around using this equipment, but it is one that I believe we will manage appropriately. I intend on doing a parent update advising parents of the loose parts and asking them to contact admin if they have any major concerns with their children using the equipment. Given all the possible things that could have gone wrong today, we ended up with zero arguments, zero ice packs, zero injuries and one bee sting!