

**Loose Parts:**  
**Caitlyn and Cheyanne**

**What are Loose Parts?**

Loose parts are thoughtfully planned out natural or synthetic materials or objects that give children endless play opportunities. They will also give the children the opportunity to expand their play development skills. Loose parts call for open-ended play, which gives children the chance to explore their curiosity and creativity, while also exploring the natural world around them.

Examples of loose parts are:

- Pinecones
- Paper towel rolls
- Beads
- Pom poms
- Sticks and stones
- Wooden blocks
- Cardboard
- Leaves
- Acorns
- Flowers

**Where Can I Incorporate Loose Parts?**

The beauty of loose parts is that they fit in anywhere in any kind of play. In the art area, they can be used to explore different textures and designs when mixed with paint. The sensory area could include a bin filled with sand, shells and cups. When considering what loose parts to provide, we think of the materials that can be carried, transported, combined with another, taken apart and put back together etc. Loose parts go hand in hand with open-ended learning. The child directs how they are used.

**How to Get Started**

Having an art area in your childcare environment or your own house is a great place to have loose parts. Having that area stocked with generic supplies (paper, pencils etc.) as well as loose parts, will spark inquiry within the children. Some children will line things up on a piece of paper and be done, while some children will want to spend almost their whole day perfecting their masterpiece in the art area. These materials should be accessible to the children for whenever inspiration hits.

**Being Resourceful**

Loose parts do not have to be expensive or difficult to get a hold of. You can go look in your recycling bin and see a multitude of possibilities for children's creations. Children can use empty plastic bottles, empty cereal boxes, aluminum cans etc. We see things that can be recycled and put out to the curb, but children could see an art project waiting to happen.