

STICK PLAY

Create an open-ended outdoor play space anywhere!

Children pick up sticks no matter where they go, and kids' imaginations can transform sticks into fishing poles, magic wands, horses, swords, paint brushes, and so much more. With a few simple safety suggestions, stick play can help you create an open-ended outdoor play space anywhere! Did you know that the stick was inducted into the Toy Hall of Fame in 2008? And why not!

Materials to have on hand:

- sticks of various sizes
- rope
- paint
- chalk



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Adult Role

Looks like:

- Sharing ideas with kids for stick safety. Suggest keeping a hand over each end of the stick when moving; moving the sticks “low and slow;” and making a stick-length safety circle when swing sticks.
- Stepping back and giving space and time for children to play alone or with friends.
- Modeling curiosity and engagement by engaging in your own stick play.

Sounds like:

- “I noticed how you were careful with that stick when you were playing with a friend, how kind!”
- “How can you be safe when you’re....”
- “I wonder what will happen if you...”
- “How does it feel when you...”
- “What’s your plan?”



What are the benefits for children of loose parts play?

- Caring for others
- Communicating with others through role play
- Sharing and turn taking
- Developing language by being immersed in play with all sorts of tools and materials
- Developing fine and gross motor skills
- Fostering imagination and creative thinking
- Developing sensory systems by using senses of touch, hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting to explore the environment
- Practicing problem solving
- Experimenting with cause and effect
- Developing a sense of agency as they move objects, change their environment, create their own games and play



Books

Not a Stick by Antoinette Portis
Ruby's Sword by Jacqueline Veissid