



# Using “MAP” for Loose Parts Play with Children

Loose parts play is a powerful tool for developing a wide range of skills that will benefit children throughout their lives. Use the “MAP” method to enrich the loose parts play experience at home or in the classroom!

## MAKE OBSERVATIONS

Observe how your child interacts with the materials and **describe these observations in a neutral, nonjudgmental way**. For example, “I see you’re stacking those blocks. How do you think they stay balanced?”

## ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Encourage deeper thinking with **questions that require more than a yes or no answer**. Questions like, “What do you think you could build with these materials?” or “How do you think this could be used in a new way?” help children explore their ideas further.

## POSE CHALLENGES

Introduce challenges that **prompt problem-solving and experimentation**. For instance, “Can you find a way to make this structure taller without it falling over?” or “What happens if you mix these two materials together?”



When engaging in loose parts play, allow your child to lead the way and explore with the loose parts. Resist the urge to direct their play too much; instead, support their ideas and celebrate their creative achievements. By doing so, you’ll help foster a lifelong love of learning and exploration.



## Ideas for Loose Parts Collections

1

### Color-Based Collections

Gather items of the same color to stimulate discussion about shades and patterns.

2

### Themed Collections

Collect materials from a specific area, such as kitchen utensils or nature items, to explore related concepts.

3

### Material-Based Collections

Focus on items made from the same material, like different types of fabric or various types of paper, to experiment with texture and flexibility.



Check out our video tutorial on loose parts play with our PD team!