

The Ultimate Loose Parts Play Resource List

for Developing your Early Years Outdoor Provision



Compiled by Juliet Robertson @CreativeSTAR

Index

1. **Notes:** a few thoughts and reflective questions
2. **Variables and phenomena:** free, interactive and essential for combining with stuff, providing ongoing and seasonal change
3. **Natural materials:** seasonally available, easily grown, locally sourced and free!
4. **Re-used wood:** it is now the age of the palette and wooden cable drum
5. **Temporary stuff:** here today, gone tomorrow, but not into landfill
6. **Manufactured items:** Beg, borrow, re-use, but try not to buy.
7. **Fabrics:** layers of glory, magic and possibilities
8. **Useful little bits:** the stuff everyone forgets or loses. Essential for so many jobs!

COVID 19 UPDATE

This document was created prior to COVID-19 pandemic. The fast-paced changes to local and national guidance means that **you will need to double check at your own setting, local and national level what is okay and not okay to do or have outside.**

Much of what is suggested can be easily adapted with a little bit of creativity and imagination. Also many things can be mitigated by handwashing before and after playing outside.

Enjoy what you can do safely and with care, rather than focusing on what you can't.

1. Notes

- This document is an addition to *Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit*, (2nd Ed) the national guidance on the use of loose parts bit.ly/2NXizaf
- The *concept* of loose parts is so much more natural materials and junk resources. Simon Nicholson refers to *variables* and *phenomena* that includes word play, gravity, sound, etc. Have a look at Nicholson's comments about variables and consider if your outdoor provision truly takes account of these. <https://bit.ly/3fhSvQ4>
- There are many spectrums that cover loose parts. It's worthwhile observing your children playing outdoors and reflecting upon:
 - Which materials are consistently well-used and which are largely abandoned? Does this change over time and through the seasons? If not, how can you build in some form of seasonality into your provision?
 - Is the use of loose parts linked to children's development? If so, in what ways and what do you need to do to further enhance their experiences, particularly for a child or group who may have an additional support need?
 - What do your children think about the provision? What's working well and what could be even better? Focus upon what children do with the materials, where they play and how. This will get more rich conversations and deeper understanding than creating wish list of resources.
 - Does the place in which children play have an impact? Often children seem to do more with less when in a natural environment such as a woodland or beach. If so, then naturalising your outdoor space by planting a range of trees, shrubs, flowers and so on, for year-round variety could help keep the play going? It may take a few years to come to fruition. In education, we need to future-think!
 - How are your children's cultures represented and what about your local community? For example, buoys, fish boxes and fishing nets are part of life in a fishing or island community. Make the most of such items.
- The real magic happens when practitioners consider the interplay between children, their environment, the weather and the loose parts. In early years outdoor play, your entire outdoor space should have loose parts that can be used flexibly. Have sufficient items to engage all your children. It is useful to consider:
 - Do you put "loose parts" just in one area outside? If so, in what ways does this reflect the original thinking in Nicholson's paper? If you are not sure, it could be time for a re-think.



- What happens during inclement weather. How does your children's play change and is this reflected in their choice of materials to use? Try to avoid boxes of resources based upon weather, e.g. a rainy day box. Part of the fascination is to see wet things dry out, or discover that some things, such as chalk or cardboard will feel different and disintegrate.
 - Nicolson talks about "How not to cheat children." Be mindful of inadvertently doing this. For example, it can be great fun creating a mud kitchen or buying one from a catalogue. But whose idea and design is it and in what ways were your children meaningfully involved in the process? Who chooses where it should go in the outdoor space? These are demanding questions but helpful in terms of giving children agency and control over the spaces where they play.
- You cannot account for all the ways loose parts will end up being used but as you learn, you can be responsive to your children's needs. This is about ensuring your interactions are timely and you follow best practice outlined in *Realising the Ambition* <https://bit.ly/2XYGZTY>
 - Think about **the elemental value of loose parts**: do you have a mix of natural, textures, materials, colours, tones (visual and aural), sizes, variations in mass, etc. Diversity matters. This helps children thinking critically, creatively and mathematically. It helps them problem solve and reason. It facilitates greater use of language. This blog post illustrates this with pegs: <https://bit.ly/3hrCzwv>
 - Look at the **Nature Design Principles** (p13-15) in the *Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit (2nd Ed)*. Ensure you have considered all the different play themes listed as you develop your outdoor play provision. This can be in a natural or concrete jungle.
 - Finally, study **Tom Bedard's elements**. This is helpful in terms of keeping the play fresh and interesting. Tom Bedard is a retired American early years educator who writes a weekly blog¹ about children's explorations at the sand and water table in his room. He uses a set of elements which help him plan and make best use of the space in ways that respond to the needs of his children to manipulate, transport and investigate the available materials. These are discussed in detail in the *Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit (2nd Edition)* p42. This means planning for the space to be used at different levels, different positions and that children will move themselves and other items through the space.

The use of Tom's Elements can also be to progress and develop the learning that happens. By changing the height, level, surface, mode of transport, use of holes and flaps, the set up becomes more dynamic. It means you can observe your children and respond accordingly through tweaking and changing the elements. Good blog posts that illustrate these elements are:

- The "sensori" water play station <http://bit.ly/38NwGUZ>
- What makes a brilliant mud kitchen? <http://bit.ly/2GMzaHd>

¹ Sand and Water Tables <http://tomsensori.blogspot.com>

Practicalities

- Follow local and national guidance regarding the management and use of loose parts. Remember to ensure you have undertaken the appropriate safety checks, permissions and risk benefit assessments. This also includes creating semi-permanent features, such as home-made mud kitchen or a water wall. Seek professional and local authority advice if in doubt.
- This guidance is written for situations where children are supervised during their play by a competent adult. The use of loose parts happens through a risk benefit process within a framework of safety. The loose parts have been checked prior to children using them, are maintained and cared for and properly and safely disposed of, once they are broken and no longer of play value. Consider the age and developmental understanding of your children and adapt your loose parts provision accordingly.
- Dry things before storing. Wet stuff can go smelly, stagnant and is off-putting for children to use. Clean dirty stuff so that it's attractive for children when they next use it. Remember washing stuff can be an end of session activity. *HPS Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings* has guidance about cleaning schedules <http://bit.ly/2Mq4jV6>
- Be aware of your local community, the ease of access by out of hours visitors and how they may behave in your outdoor space. This will affect what you choose to leave out and what needs to be stored away.

Sourcing loose parts

- Many can be sourced for free by asking parents and wider families, staff, children, local community, scrap stores, online (Gumtree, Freecycle, etc.)
- Natural resources may be ethically and sustainably gathered by taking account of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, local by-laws and seeking landowner permission.
- Get into the habit of checking charity shops, bric-a-brac tables, car boot sales, jumble sales and other places where second-hand materials are available.
- Use of ethical companies when free sourcing not possible. Try and source British made goods and natural resources. Be mindful of the environmental impact. Low cost to us, may come at a high environmental price.
- Your local authority tree and/or environmental team may be able to assist in locating supplies. Local businesses also can be approached. B&Q have a community scrap scheme. Some towns and cities have scrapstores.



What is not covered in this guide

- Kit for visiting and using local greenspace – a comprehensive list exists within the Scottish Forestry's Forest Kindergarten training pack.
- Provision for woodwork and other tool use. Pete Moorehouse's website <https://irresistible-learning.co.uk> and book, *Learning through Woodwork* are the best go-to places for these.
- Gardening : home grown loose parts are the ultimate resource! Some are even edible!
- Traditional curriculum tools and resources, e.g. for maths, literacy, PE, Science, etc.
- Installed play equipment or outdoor furniture.
- Storage guidance: this is critical. I've known corridors piled with stuff when this has been forgotten.
- Moving into more physically adventurous play, e.g. with height, fire, etc.
- Developing your outdoor play space or school grounds. This can make a massive difference but it's a long term evolution rather than a one-year revolution.
- Generic risk benefit assessments for using loose parts
- Surfaces. This is part of Aberdeen City's *Mud, Mess and Magic: A Guide to Naturalising Your Outdoor Space* and is an essential element of loose parts play.



Loose pebbles as edging... dreamy ☺

A maintenance tool kit

Looking after your loose parts collection is an ongoing job. Almost all the work can be undertaken with children as part of the specific drop-in, planned, routine tasks. You need to have the tools available to do this at all times, in a place you can easily access but out of reach of children (not stuck in a cupboard inside). This is likely to include:

- **Scissors:** cutting card, snipping tape, Velcro, etc.
- **Wire cutters:** cutting wire (no kidding)!
- **Secateurs:** pruning shrubs and trees
- **Folding pocket saw:** Good for all sorts of maintenance job.
- **Files/rasps:** for rounding off and filing down corners and edges of wood, guttering, etc. Muddy Faces stock ones for wood work
- **Sand paper:** for smoothing splintery wood and rough edges. A cork block or sticking a piece to some wood can also help.
- **Parcel tape, duct tape, masking tape, electrical tape, etc:** for a range of sticking jobs. I'm trying to become more environmentally friendly so use masking and paper parcel tape as much as possible.
- **Cutting knife:** the old-fashioned Stanley knife with changeable blades – adult use only. I come from an era in education where every teacher had one in their desk drawer.
- **Small power screwdriver:** easy insertion of screws.
- **Hammer:** child-sized ones are useful for most jobs.
- **Gloves:** just handy! LOL! Geddit?



Do your children and staff know what to do if an item gets broken? See p29 Loose Parts Play Toolkit, (2nd Ed). Get your systems in place.

2. Variables and phenomena

(not a remotely comprehensive list. Just a reminder that they are an essential part of loose parts play outside)

There is evidence that all children love to interact with variables such as materials and shapes; smells and other physical phenomena, such as electricity, magnetism and gravity; media such as gases and fluids; sounds; music, and motion; chemical interactions, cooking and fire; and other people and animals, plants, words, concepts and ideas. With all these things all children love to play, experiment, discover and invent and have fun. Nicolson (1971,30)



Light reflections



Shadow play



Motion



Manipulating materials: making sphere balls



Wind – gases on the move



Exploring gravity




Cooking, fire and chemical interactions

3. Natural loose parts

In a natural space such as a woodland or beach, there are an abundance and diversity of natural loose parts. The environment can be described as having a high affordance, providing lots of play possibilities. If you are in a man-made or concrete jungle then you may need to import natural materials into the space.

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs including sourcing
Wood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wooden pennies (slices of wood about 3-6 inches thick) Logs of different heights and widths A variety of lengths of wood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much loved for stacking, building, construction, stepping stones, role play, etc. Useful for working out tree species, age of tree and environmental conditions where it grew Range of weights and sizes help develop children's concept of measurement: length, width, height & mass. Pennies may split after a few weeks or months so avoid buying, if possible Larger logs and stumps may be heavy. Think about the ages of your children and what is manageable for them regarding lifting and moving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand down any splinters, rough parts or sharp edges. A great job for children Once wood rots or breaks then add the parts to log piles and habitat homes Source locally wherever possible - aboricultural teams sometimes have wood free or for a small fee.
Willow or hazel rods at least 1.5m long Sticks – various lengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for den building, creating temporary shelters, role play, simple constructions Broom handles are also popular. Longer rods are harder to lift so require cooperation to do so, by younger children. Useful for a variety of maths and other investigations http://bit.ly/2FzaJMw Can be used to create a variety of wildlife habitats Worried about fighting or using sticks as weapons? Begin with twigs and slowly replace the sticks with longer, wider ones until staff can cope and children have lots of ways of playing with sticks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saw ends with care and sandpaper down if needed or if rods break and leave jaggy ends. Prune willow tunnels, fedges, dens and other features during winter. Use these for a variety of play activities Plant hazel and coppice every few years for sticks Gather in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Consider the ethics of gathering and do so sustainably and in place where sticks are not needed as dead wood – seek landowner permission in advance, if in doubt.
Tree brashings,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are the branches of conifers, e.g. from Xmas trees. Much loved for den building and general play http://bit.ly/2U7Kabr The stem of Xmas trees can also be used. Some settings put a dead tree beside a growing live tree for comparisons and conversations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid sitka spruce which has very sharp needles Put a call out for donations just before and after Christmas

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs including sourcing
Cones (sometimes mistakenly called acorns)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for small world play, pattern work, games, decorating, role play and so on http://bit.ly/2ODRYfc Good for tree identification and developing observation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use locally available cones, sourced ethically and sustainably in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, local by-laws and landowner permissions in advance. It's worth asking your local botanic garden politely.
Stones, pebbles, cobbles and chuckies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for small world play, pattern work, games, decorating, role play and so on http://bit.ly/2V9wkBR Think about use in landscaping for play purposes Use dug up stones to create stone piles for wildlife and in minibeast hotels Add donated polished rocks and stones as special items but be prepared for scattering and disappearing so do so with care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common sense approach to use – choose type and size of stone according to age and developmental abilities of children (think choking and throwing) Encourage children to check and remove any that have become dangerously sharp. Use locally available stones, sourced ethically and in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, local by-laws and landowner permissions in advance Wash and dry if they get grubby. Best done in rainy weather!
<p>Seasonally available natural loose parts</p> 	<p>Many have high cultural significance. Look for stories, folklore, traditional recipes linked to their appearance and use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flowers: fresh and dried Seeds, fruits and pods Moss Shells and seaweed Feathers Leaves Herbs <p>Once the materials have been well used they can usually be composted, used to make leaf mould, leaf piles and other wildlife habitats.</p> <p>Note about lichen: these are very slow growing. Whilst they have been traditionally used as a product for dyeing textiles, try to avoid picking for play purposes. Instead, encourage children to look closely at them as they grow using very strong magnifying lens. For more information, visit the British Lichen Society http://bit.ly/2PfYScV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the Wildflower Collection Code and collect only where you have permission. See advice in <i>Out to Play</i> guidance Moss growing on school buildings and playing fields is okay to use. Elsewhere, leave to grow Lichen – only gather ones that have fallen off trees, etc. Avoid picking as much as possible Shells and seaweed– watch for broken shells being jaggy. Be mindful of ecological impact of buying or gathering Birds moult after the nesting season and to grow in winter plumage. Gather from grassy areas in parks.

4. Re-used wood

- Sand down any splinters, rough parts or sharp edges. A great job for children
- Look for protruding nails – hammer down or remove
- Use screws not nails when creating semi-permanent play structures
- Be aware of the difference between plywood, mdf board, laminate, chipboard and actual wood. They have different qualities and strengths. Know what you are being donated and how it can be used. Not all types work well in an outdoor environment.
- Some very old products such as railway sleepers and telegraph poles are probably best avoided as they may have chemical treatments that no longer meet the standards today. You can buy heat-treated products for many purposes these days.

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs: Thinking about sourcing and how to look after products, people, wildlife and environment
Whisky barrel planters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal for group mixing, story telling, role play, making potions and as a general dumping place for items needing to be transported • Think about the size and weight of the barrel – heavy ones are harder to move and empty. • Some come with blackened insides that rubs off and can mark clothing. Probably best used as a planter or miniature pond if you get these ones. • Whisky barrels can be used to create miniature ponds. Follow RHS, RSPB or Wildlife Trust guidance to keep pond safe and healthy, e.g. http://bit.ly/2V4II7b Use a wide grille or mesh to avoid disturbance by children and as a visual safety feature along with ensuring barrel is raised (above ground level) and not sunk into the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean out after use as per HPS <i>Infection Prevention & Control in Childcare guidance</i> (Appendix 10) • Source from garden centres, DIY stores
Decking and other planks of wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comes in a variety of lengths and widths • Tough, good for construction, creating paths, physical activities • Widely available • Scaffolding planks are particularly strong • Big sleepers make good borders for play area – ensure edges and corners aren't too sharp • Rustic planks from Cosy have a natural feel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIY stores, builder's merchants and Cosy all have a variety.
Palettes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Versatile – adds small amounts of height into a play space • Useful for attaching objects when safely secured to a vertical surface • Get strong ones that you know are safe to use https://bit.ly/2JsXJz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check fastenings/attachments on a frequent and regular basis. Remove any protruding nails or wood. • Ensure palettes are a sufficient distance from building to meet fire and crime prevention expectations in your LA

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs: Thinking about sourcing and how to look after products, people, wildlife and environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a look at Stramash Fort William's interactive palette play station http://bit.ly/2WHsUGR and Westpark outdoor space http://bit.ly/2YMRQPd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get strong ones in good condition. Replace promptly those that become unsafe Large deliveries sometimes arrive on palettes Local business sometimes donate Have an RBA in place to create and maintain features and semi-permanent play structures
Wood off-cuts	<p>Useful for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woodworking, especially softwoods Creating signs Artwork where a board is needed underneath Open-ended constructions. See Pete Moorehouse's website https://irresistible-learning.co.uk and book, <i>Learning through Woodwork</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common sense approach to use – chose type and size of wood RBA required for woodworking
Cable drums or reels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of sizes and types available Good for temporary tables, constructions, rolling the lighter ones Large ones have bigger possibilities. See the blog post about the cable drums at Stramash Fort William http://bit.ly/2UcFY9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose type with care, taking into account the development age and abilities of your children Move heavier ones in line with best practice over manual handling If creating a feature, ensure the big ones don't wobble or topple over Use on soft surface, e.g. grass if children want to climb on and jump off.
Wooden furniture including crates and boxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawers, boxes and other items. The shelf life can be limited outside Can be useful at a tinkering or woodworking area for deconstructing or adding to. Often items can be laid on the ground rather than presented in their original position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donations are the common source Avoid furniture that children can get shut inside, or remove locks and fastenings and potential entrapments Each item will need careful consideration as to its suitability for play
Wooden picture frames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great for role play, art work and general explorations Go for robust, old fashioned ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best used on dry days. Charity shops, car boot sales, bric-a-brac shops
Cork items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wine bottle corks, cork mats and noticeboards Lots of uses, especially around transporting, science investigations and creative artwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember plastic corks, though useful are not biodegradable Donations from staff and parents

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs: Thinking about sourcing and how to look after products, people, wildlife and environment
Willow baskets and other woven stick or grass products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little children enjoy carrying objects around. Can be taken on walks for this purpose (a cheaper alternative is to put a cuboid ice-cream tub on a piece of string to be pulled along) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snip back or weave in any protruding pieces to extend the life of the basket Very occasionally staples, wire and nails are used to create these products so check carefully.
Bamboo guttering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small, light, natural, unique. Not as robust as plastic but lovely aesthetic appeal. Every piece slightly different in feel and appearance Cosy also stock bamboo off-cut products too. This resource is more likely to have been bought rather than donated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See care of bamboo and play ideas: http://bit.ly/2ViEbwU Many EY education suppliers stock this product.
Commercially available blocks	<p>There are now many block kits that can be bought. Look for ones which can be left outside in all weathers. They can be very expensive. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Playthings: http://bit.ly/2UhlBrs Cosy Imagineering set http://bit.ly/2FYEZ54 and Beefier blocks http://bit.ly/2FNAnxt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the care guidelines and follow them.



5. Temporary loose parts

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Chalk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for creative art work, and communications Children can use up a lot of chalk very quickly so it can be come expensive to have lots available. Have small quantities available to use in places where it's okay to chalk on the ground/walls Raid cupboards for forgotten supplies If left with the old ends, encourage children to mix with a little water using a pestle and mortar to use completely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use in an open space to avoid dust irritating the eyes or being inhaled. Provide gloves for children with sensitive skin, if it helps – take advice from child and parent/carer
Straw bales and hay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best used on dry days or under shelter to avoid rot and fungi Straw will get everywhere especially on windy days, so plan for this or contain within a sheltered space Be mindful of any child with an allergy Source fresh from a farm at harvest or purchase small amounts of non-allergenic hay from pet shops. Dead plant material after a winter clearance can sometimes work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bale can be very heavy so move in line with manual handling training. If kept for more than a day or two, check for presence of small mammals prior to using. Can be composted.
Cardboard boxes and packaging – various sizes and shapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use outside on dry, calm days – may blow away on windy days Have masking tape or similar available to help children create cardboard constructions Flat packs can be a problem-solver for children to make 3D Provide pens or art materials for decorating Keep small pieces for homemade signs, notices and flower presses Cereal boxes and similar card useful for art, craft and drawing Carpet roll inner tubes can be used like guttering for dry activities Ribbon wheels, egg cartons, kitchen & toilet tubes for junk modelling and role play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw children's attention to any staples and remove if necessary (rarely is, btw) Recycle when beyond play, add to a compost bin in small amounts or use for art work
Aluminium foil products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Floats and sinks and is waterproof so useful addition to water play Art and technology play outside Good for solar radiation investigations Can be used to create little or large tin foil rivers to enjoy miniature water flow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid old containers and foil with traces of food Foil can reflect sun's rays when used as a sheet or in large quantities and left out. So keep in a shady place or take inside after use. Remember to recycle.

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful replacement for play dough (which isn't okay to use outside as it has a high salt content which can harm wildlife if left outside) Use to stick leaves, flowers and other natural items to the ground, trees or walls when undertaking environmental art activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check no child has sensitive skin that may not cope with the drying properties of clay Store in a sealed plastic bag with a wet paper towel to avoid drying out Avoid the clay that contains nylon or other plastic components
Pumpkins, other squash and turnips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good for carving faces around Halloween. Can be used as part of an approach to helping young children how to learn to hammer Turnips (swedes) are best used freshly dug up. They are easier to carve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst animals do like to eat left over pumpkin, do this within your outdoor space and don't leave to rot in a wood.




Sweet wrappers stuck to transparent tarp on a frosty morning



*Nature painting sticks made with found plant materials, sticks and masking tape.
Spot the one made from human hair!*

6. Manufactured loose parts

Remember that metal conducts heat so can get very hot or cold with extremes of weather. Also watch the dazzle on sunny days and its ability to direct sun's rays. Great for solar ovens but can become a fire risk – strange and true! Metal bowls in mud kitchens spoiler alert!

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Milk, bread and H crates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different types have different levels of stability and use. Can be stacked, used as seats, shelves, in role play, to create different areas. Highly versatile http://bit.ly/2OH176F H crates are particularly versatile http://bit.ly/2YGVc6I Go for a 12pk. Sadly these are unlikely to be donated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some crates have moveable rod handles. You may prefer to secure these using cable ties or equivalent or to use ones which don't have these. Every type of crate is a bit different. Some feel more slippery and trippy than others. Assess on a crate-by-crate basis and use ones that suit your children.
Tough buckets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go for little silicone buckets that can withstand a lot of use http://bit.ly/2OGGkAg Hoofproof horse buckets. If they get knocked out of shape they will mould back into shape. Cosy builders buckets do the same http://bit.ly/2Ylw1A9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragile buckets can crack or shatter if excess weight or force applied. Watch out for shards. Cheap buckets are not good value and will often easily and quickly break (sigh)!
Bilge, hand or other pumps 	<p>These are fixed or loose pumps that can pump water easily. There are a range of options beyond the rather feeble toy pumps such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barrel pumps: aesthetically they are the bees knees but all the ones I've encountered seem to break. They were usually designed to be water butts http://bit.ly/2VGFdUM Bilge pumps http://bit.ly/2VGFdUM are designed for boats to extract water quickly when there is a leak. You can buy hand held bilge pumps at a good price that provide lots of play possibilities, e.g. http://bit.ly/2M6kYwk Brilliant value and really tough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat the wooden barrel water pumps like water butts and clean out on a regular basis to avoid the build up of scum algae. Watch the marine bilge pumps for potential finger traps. The ones from Cosy should be okay. Hand held bilge pumps seem to do the job nicely ☺
Tubing and hoses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a variety of lengths, widths, colours, etc. Think about tubes that need attached to things such as hoses and pumps as well as those that will be used for communication. Extendable pipes are versatile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for cheap pipes and hoses in supermarket sales during the summer months As the hoses and tubing wears, cut into smaller pieces and keep using

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in RBA for ropes and long things, if tubing or hoses are thin enough to coil
Guttering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavyweight guttering is more robust than lightweight guttering • Ones with straight sides work best on water walls. Drill holes in the centre to make a see saw effect when attaching to a wall (try to avoid cable ties). • Connectors can be surprisingly fiddly for young children. Adult help needed • A mix of half pipes and full pipes works well. • Clear guttering is less robust but has brilliant play value owing to its transparency, lightness and flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guttering will need duct tape at the ends to reduce cracking – half pipes from Cosy are brilliantly flexible. http://bit.ly/2K55Nos • If clear guttering does crack, fix with duct tape. You can also trim the ends if they crack. You can even get transparent duct tape – but it is posh and expensive.
Bore pipes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid strong pipes in different sizes. Children can crawl into the larger sizes. Some may want to be rolled around by other children • Smaller pipes have construction and sound value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick to a length that avoids a young child getting stuck inside, e.g. 1m or less • Remind children not to hold onto the edges if rolling inside – a potential finger crush
Plumbers' pipes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The white pvc pipes are surprisingly versatile. The attachments are easier to use – grease ends lightly in advance if concerns about little children's ability to attach the pieces together. • Think about children's ability to build downwards as well as upwards – hang up some pieces for children to create open-ended mobiles. • Attachments are useful for building. These are pricey so look for donations. • It's possible to get clear PVC pipes – these are considerably more expensive but enable children to see the flow of water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand down any rough sawn edges • Thin ones are more prone to being snapped or breaking • Avoid leaving out and filled with water in sub-zero temperatures. PVC pipes will shatter.
Funnels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible silicone ones are particularly robust but unlikely to be donated • Go for a range of sizes • Use funnel tops off paint pots • Cut off the tops of a soda bottle, file down or tape the edges and turn upside down to use as a funnel. • Have fun: can be used as megaphone, for blowing bubbles, making wacky ears, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like plastic buckets, some types of funnel are surprisingly fragile. You are better off going for a few good quality ones which will last a long time. • Large leaves, cardboard and paper can be folded into cones that can act as temporary funnels.

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Tuff or builder's tray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlikely to be donated but good for a wide variety of play including shallow water, mixing, small world play and so on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should last many years
Sponges and foam sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water play, washing items Use biodegradable washing up liquid Big sheets are good for bare feet explorations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can get gunky outside Wring and dry thoroughly between each use Use sponge from sofas, cushions, etc. but double check suitability.
Plastic sheets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corrugated plastic PVC sheets Long thin trays Drainage boards with a lip at the end 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This includes sheets of corrugated plastic and wide or narrow lengths. Good for water play and the exploration of movement of water and objects down a slope Items such as Lego can be added Look at Tom Bedard's Sand and Water Table blog http://tomsensori.blogspot.com It's indoors but the elements and dimensions and concepts work very well outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> File down and/or duct tape any rough or sharp ends and splits
Tyres – bicycle, go kart, motorbike and car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car and larger vehicle tyres can be heavy. Choose size and type according to developmental age and stage of your children. Can be used for many different play activities. Do your homework and check you have the right sort of tyre for its intended purpose. Check out this blog post: http://bit.ly/2GazpLM Loose tyres left outside can pose a fire risk. Put procedures in place to store safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults to model good practice around manual handling of tyres and should ensure children know correct procedures too. See p30 Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit, (2nd Ed) Empty out water daily and check regularly for wear and tear: black marks, protruding wires There's a lot of different perspectives in and across local authorities about the use of tyres so make sure you have up to date and accurate information and follow guidance around storage and perspective on fire risk
Steering wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real ones are heavy but much loved. You can also buy lighter toy ones Avoid attaching to posts and items as it can limit creativity. They are best left free. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> File down or remove any sharp wires and areas before using. Some garages are willing to prepare and donate.
Computer keyboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have freely available. Do not consign to an office. Useful in all areas of play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove wires/cables and file down any sharp ends before use. The keys may become dislodged so bear in mind if working with very young children.

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Water canisters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use 10 litre canisters with a tap at the bottom • Hang up or fasten down using Velcro to avoid the contents being emptied in one go. • When it's gone, it's gone. Decide if you need to limit water supplies. • Add bubble wrap to insulate! • Have one available at a hand washing station outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty out and refill daily. Ensure there are collection basins, buckets and containers so that children can re-use the water • Children can be shown how to turn the tap off and on – some are more fiddly than others.
Acrylic mirrors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory explorations of nature • Add to cardboard for a wider surface • Good for making smaller places feel large • Can be used for sightlines – seeing children round a corner, etc. • Will suffer wear and tear – less robust than many resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many acrylic mirrors can have their corners rounded by snipping with scissors • Keep the plastic film on as long as possible to protect from wear and tear • If putting on a vertical surface consider position to avoid birds accidentally flying into it and reflecting sun's rays – think of the dazzle!
Ladders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work well horizontally as well as vertically • Mini ladders are available to buy • Old bunk bed ladders sometimes donated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need regular checks as will be taking body weight • Stability and easy access to height. This needs a clear agreement about supervision levels and an RBA in place
Car number plates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attaching to wheeled constructions • Environmental print • Reflective surface in the dark • Role play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File down corners and other parts of metal if sharp or rust exists
Magnetic sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be the side of an unwanted larger item • Useful for storing nuts, bolts, keys, chains, hair clips, washers, bottle tops and small metal loose parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File down corners and other parts of metal if sharp or rust exists
Kitchen utensils and items: pots, pans, sieves, mashers, muffin trays, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mud kitchen and other role play • Water and sand play • Music and sound explorations • Transporting items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycle or repurpose once they break • Discuss with children the use of cutlery and other kitchen items – do they feel they are ready for using in their play?
Household junk – plastic bottles, trays, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use for role play, filling, pouring and emptying, transporting, in constructions • Highlight half full with permanent marker pens • Leave labels on for environmental print 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure bottles, trays, etc. are clean and free from gunk • Recycle when play value has ended

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Glass items: bottles, vases, pots, little glass stones, marbles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to plastics becoming available, glass items were common Children can be taught to handle with care Keep in a designated place if it helps while you get used to glass being available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach children what to do, if a glass item breaks. Removed chipped or cracked items and recycle. Risk benefit assess to ensure the benefits of use outweigh the risks.
Various re-purposed little bits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk bottle caps, film cannisters, shower and curtain rings, CDs, unwanted indoor items retired outside Lots of possibilities, for art, role play, construction, water, sand, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the appropriateness of the resource for the developmental age and stage of children CD's are prone to shattering so treat with care. Think about scatterability and the impact on wildlife... avoid stuff that could harm other species outside in some way.
Old suitcases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for storing and transporting loose parts Role play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put a call out to parent/staff/community just before and after holidays Ensure locks are disabled especially if the lock is a type which does not require a key Try not to overload with stuff otherwise it can be difficult to use Follow best practice in manual handling.
Trolley on wheels to help aid tidying up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garden trolley, sack trolley, tub truck trolley, large metal trolley or small trolley, wheelbarrow Much loved for transporting items everywhere. Breadcrate dolly's – for the adventurous thrill seekers. Need careful handling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember to use brakes to keep loaded trolleys stationary, especially on slopes Try not to overload with stuff otherwise it can be difficult to use Follow best practice in manual handling.



Spa taps



Splash pools – tyres covered in tarp



Buckets of different sizes



10-litre canisters

7. Fabrics

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Quick drying materials such as organza, fleece blankets, lycra, mesh and shower curtains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a diversity of sizes, textures, colours and so on. This facilitates conversations, decision making and problem solving. Fleece provides extra warmth during cold months as do child-sized sleeping bags Organza and netting enables children to be seen but provides a feeling of privacy. Ripstop nylon useful for kite making and all round good fun. Good range of colour s Any lengths of stretchy material have play value such as lycra All good for capes and dressing up Wrap around hoops, and pine cones for floaty experiences – strange but true Use to make flags! Scarves and small pieces of material also of use Freebie flags – surprising and true Any donated old sheets can always be used for art activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch for children wrapping each other up in non-breathable material – mostly not a problem but keep an eye out. Dry thoroughly before storing Look in charity shops and material shops Add cones to corners with paracord or similar if rivets become loose – then you can tie anywhere. Watch out for fake outdoor fabric – hessian sacks and carpet tiles are good examples as they take ages to dry when they get wet and store dirt fantastically well.
Tarpaulins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a variety of sizes, types and colours - big, small, green, blue, white, camouflage, transparent etc. Use for water play in addition to den building, hammocks, etc. Parachutes useful for group shelter - Search online for a bargain ex-military variety. Muddy Faces stock these https://bit.ly/2TsEoww 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch for children wrapping each other up – mostly not a problem but keep an eye out. Extend shelf life by creating maths tarps when holey http://bit.ly/2UaU3Ft When threading cord through eyelets, make a loop through each rivet and add a stick. This stops the material from bunching.
Nets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for den building, homemade hammocks, role play, camouflage, etc. http://bit.ly/2YGBIZl Avoid camo netting which is prone to tearing and ripping easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some types of netting get more tangled than others. Choose bright colours if possible, to make visible and avoid trips Fishing nets are the bees knees – see if you can get from a fishing contact. It's also possible to make your own... just saying... (never tried)

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use over a sandpit at night and for play during the day. Keeping it taut can work better according to some sources. 	
Old clothes for dressing up, e.g. jacket suits, waistcoats, handbags, quick dry scarves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use quick dry clothes outside as much as possible or have a drying system in place Accessories such as handbags are additional props 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All pockets/interiors checked prior to use for hidden items, rips and holes Only accept clean clothes in good condition
Sit-upons: aluminium, bubblewrap, camping ones, gardening mats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a traditional camping mat to a hammock for extra warmth in winter Use on top of ground sheet or tarp on cold or wet days Yoga or camping mats cut up Aluminium bubblewrap cut up, e.g. https://bit.ly/2GLF2BV Make your own https://bit.ly/2Gs3jh5 	<p>You can also purchase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lomo folding sit mat https://bit.ly/2X5qjYs DIY peg loom mats https://bit.ly/2Gr5OjL and https://bit.ly/2DKIf1o DIY merino wool felt seats https://bit.ly/2GtUmDR Highlander https://bit.ly/2N7JM5Z Muddy Faces range of sitting mats https://bit.ly/2S4dnyb
Hammocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For rocking, resting and enjoying movement. DD Scout Hammock via Muddy Faces https://bit.ly/2tplfzf There are other varieties but not all are suitable for little children Buy slings or quick fitting mechanisms and teach children how to create 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find good places for hammocks and ensure these are the sites used, e.g. soft floor with no protrusions underneath and using healthy trees to attach. Teach children to check hammock before use Avoid leaving long lengths of rope trailing down at either end – add to RBA
Bandages, large stretchy elastic, old tights, lycra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good general play plus role play Old tights/socks also useful for adding balls to create games and for creating puppet heads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat as ropes and long things re risk benefit assessments and procedures around use Watch for slips, trips, strangulations and elastic with a serious ping!
Ribbons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use for art and creative textile work such as weaving Weave objects not just fences http://bit.ly/2Wlao1f Weave other stuff as well as ribbons Good for dancing, music and movement – add to sticks or soft band attached to a wrist Re-use plastic bags cut into strips – but remember to collect all the pieces afterwards to avoid inadvertently littering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat as ropes and long things re risk benefit assessments and procedures around use Use biodegradable forestry tape is a more environmentally friendly option and costs as little as £2.20 for 70m. Great for tagging boundaries when in greenspace. http://bit.ly/2M6kYwk

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Bubble wrap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst not technically a fabric, it works like fabric. Children like to bubble wrap themselves, e.g. their legs, arms, etc. Add to ramps in water play. Compare large and small bubblewrap and impact on flow Use to insulate water canisters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind children to keep their faces free Pick up all remnants to avoid plastic going into the environment Only use unwanted bubblewrap rather than buy.
Fake grass off-cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape companies and artificial lawn installers often have scraps which can be donated Useful for small world play, Be aware that carpet off-cuts aren't always suitable for outdoor use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch when cutting – plastic bits of grass can fall off – tidy up to avoid inadvertent ingestion by animals or children Wash clean as needed Watch in hot temperatures (yes, I know, a rare event in Scotland, sigh!)
Foam and sponges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for water play Have a range of sizes and types – big ones are especially sensory if children can walk on them, e.g. when placed in a tarp 'n' try splash pool. Source from old upholstery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dry out thoroughly after using.



A bothy bag monster



Splat! Lying under transparent tarp



Den weaving at Highway Farm, Cornwall

8. Useful little bits

These are accessories to larger loose parts. It's easy to lose these items or for them to become scattered within a mass of other resources. To avoid this – put in little bags, hang up and teach children how to access – treat like tools rather than loose parts. So a child learns to return the item promptly after use. Initially you may feel the need for adult support to access which can be reduced over time.

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Velcro straps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be reused extensively to attach items. Good for children with poor motor skills or dexterity or with cold hands in winter. For a variety of ideas and reasons, look at http://bit.ly/2HRWMNk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once cut, can be linked together quickly Mostly available in black which is harder to see. Muddy Faces stock coloured Velcro http://bit.ly/2VdGu4v which may be better Include in rope, string and long things RBA
Duct tape, masking tape, parcel tape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masking tape is the most child-friendly and can be ripped so does not need scissors or a dispenser. Expect young children to want to use a lot of masking tape – in which case consider swapping to bandages http://bit.ly/2UaR9Av Duct tape is mainly for fixing broken items Parcel tape works best for sticking over tins and tubes to create drums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid leaving lying around – can harm wildlife Masking tape can be squashed up and used for printing activities afterwards
Wire: anodised, covered in rubber or foam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use soft varieties which are easy to cut and tie Useful for attaching items and re-attaching! Make nature kebabs and jewellery by threading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharp ends do need to be watched by children and staff. Show children how to bend and thread back into itself. You can also seal with electrical tape. You will need a small pair of wire cutters. Avoid using scissor, secateurs or other tools.
String, twine, wool, bright coloured plastic washing line, old shoelaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a clear distinction between long things which are okay to cut and those which aren't. These items are usually cheap enough to be cut. Encourage children to collect any small cut items and not leave lying as it is litter and may be harmful to wildlife who get caught up in it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old bits and pieces can be added to scraps at an art area (inside or out) Avoid leaving lying around – can harm wildlife
High vis guy ropes, nylon braid of different widths, paracord	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More robust and thicker than string, etc. Useful for attaching material in shelters Generally more expensive and aims to be re-used. Use bright colours that can be easily seen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some rope and cord require the ends to be burned to stop fraying High vis guy ropes will fade over time but useful as easily seen and have reflective weaving useful for playing in the dark.

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
Ropes – can be nylon, polyester, hemp, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bright colours easier to see. See play possibilities here: http://bit.ly/2U8HhXY and http://bit.ly/2YJx6Yr Static rope stretches less than dynamic rope so better for many jobs Slack lines require ratchets and are sometimes considered as an adventurous activity item – seek further advice. Cotton rope gets very soggy. Add 1m tags with electrical tape to turn into a giant measuring rope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need a risk benefit assessment in place for rope, string and other long things Have clear procedures in place around the use of ropes and their supervision. Begin small and grow your competence as well as that of the children.
Shock cord: loose, bungee cord karabiners and hooks, ball bungees and shockcord ties, wide knicker elastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use with tarps to reduce impact of wind on eyelets Good for attaching items quickly, e.g. to fences, tree branches, etc. Muddy faces stock a good range www.muddyfaces.co.uk but the kit is in various sections so you will need to hunt about Ball bungees - black is shorter and gets easily lost in woodland, white is longer and more easily seen. Knicker elastic is cheap but the elastic does get tired more quickly than shockcord. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid or closely supervise very strong shockcord with a high ping factor especially those with metal ends such as bungee cords. Reducing the length of shock cords and having them fixed (i.e. firmly attached such as when creating a shelter) can also reduce risk of accidents. Tend to be used by adults for fixing things more than young children.
Karabiners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of types and sizes Little children love them for connecting or joining up Useful for pulley work, attaching items, including rope and things that need to swing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know which karabiners are weight bearing and which aren't if play involves weight bearing activities. The weight bearing ones will need to be treated according to PPE guidelines and looked after in accordance with your risk benefit assessment. Check the locking mechanism on the climbing ones – have those which are easy to use and gentle to avoid being “bitten.”
Pegs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go for a variety of sizes, types, colours, materials to promote maths, literacy, science and technology skills in young children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage children to remove broken pegs on an ongoing basis or check each session Check springs are okay for the age and ability of the children who are using them. Ecoforce have spring-free pegs
Tent pegs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children love hammering these into the ground – it can be a bit of a treasure hunt finding them all so bright coloured ones are best for this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many do have points but a discussion with children beforehand tends to deal with any potential issues

Item	Benefits, advice and considerations	Care needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all pegs fit tarp eyelets. Be aware of this when purchasing A plastic, rubber or wooden mallet can be useful for tough ground. Show children how to hammer in pegs at 45 degree angle as this means they are less likely to be pulled out. 	
Pulleys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children love being able to transport items via pulleys: Set up temporary vertical pulleys on suitable installed play equipment Set up horizontal pulleys over soft surfaces – little children are tempted to rock backwards and forwards if they are positioned at the wrong high and tension, and can give themselves a head bump. Swivel pulleys are best as they have more give. They come in a range of sizes. https://www.cosydirect.com/set-of-six-swivel-pulleys.html Avoid the expensive wooden pulleys with a figure of 8 type of rope system – they seem to get knotted quickly and take ages to sort out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove or store tied up and well out of reach Pulleys are not normally classed as weight bearing – tempting though it is to ride one. Learning how to set up a zip wire safely is a positive alternative.
Little storage bags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for storing little bits and pieces – within or outwith reach Some prefer bum bags for key staff Have a fixing station for broken items where these bits are stored – but fix promptly with children. 	<p>Tried and tested options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smartsack peg bags http://bit.ly/2TRAFIq, Lomo 3l translucent dry bags (larger ones may pose suffocation risk) http://bit.ly/2I31jvK Sports Direct also stock a range of dry bags



Finally

Within this website and during any of my training sessions you will find lots of ideas and accompanying photos that contain elements of risk. It is important that you consider all the suggestions on a case-by-case basis to determine whether they are appropriate for the developmental age and learning needs of your children.

You also need to ensure that you are suitably competent and confident to ensure the routines, resources and environment are as safe as necessary. Remember to undertake a risk-benefit assessment for anything you feel needs it, be this using tools and ropes, experiencing fire, climbing trees and other experiences involving heights, moving heavy objects, working off-site, near water and so-on. Creative STAR Learning is all about enabling great outdoor practice but every educator and establishment needs to undertake this within a framework of safety.

Likewise it is important that wherever you are working you follow the land access laws of your country . Being respectful of others, leaving no trace of your presence and considering the impact of your practice on the environment are all part of your responsibilities as educators.

About Juliet

Juliet is an educational consultant who specialises in outdoor learning and play. Previously, she was the head teacher of three schools ranging in size from 6 to 277 pupils. Juliet has worked at a national level since 2008 writing case studies, documents and doing behind the scenes work to help shape strategy and support for schools and ELC establishments. This includes heading up the team that wrote the Education Scotland document, *Outdoor Learning: A Practical Guide for Scottish Teachers and Practitioners* (2011), co-authoring *Loose Parts Play – A Toolkit* (2016 & 2019) and being part of the Scottish Government strategy group that created *A Play Strategy for Scotland* (2013). Most recently, Juliet contributed to *Out to Play* (2018), a Scottish early years document supporting practitioners to develop off-site provision in local greenspace. Since 2008, she has been one of the key people behind the scenes that has worked with Scottish Forestry staff to develop the SQA Forest Kindergarten award.

She is the author of two award-winning and best-selling books: *Dirty Teaching: A Beginner's Guide to Learning Outdoors* (2014) and *Messy Maths: An Outdoor, Playful Approach for Early Years* (2017). Her website, Creative STAR Learning is a source of information and support with more than one million visitors in the past four years. Juliet continues to work directly with staff and children in many ELC settings in the North-East of Scotland looking at practical ways to achieve excellent outdoor practice.

Please get in touch if you wish to know more about the training and support she offers to ELC settings and primary schools. Email: info@creativestarlarning.co.uk

See you on the outside! - Juliet@CreativeSTAR

