



Play Materials From Everyday Items



Natural Materials

Natural materials such as stones, pine cones, and leaves appeal to children because they can be used in many different ways for many different purposes. They are accessible, plentiful, and free. Make a list of natural materials in your environment that you could use and where you would find them.

Natural Materials	Where Can I Find Them?

Real Objects

Children enjoy using the same things that adults use, such as old cell phones, pots and pans, etc. Make a list of practical, everyday objects that the children can use and where you plan to find them.

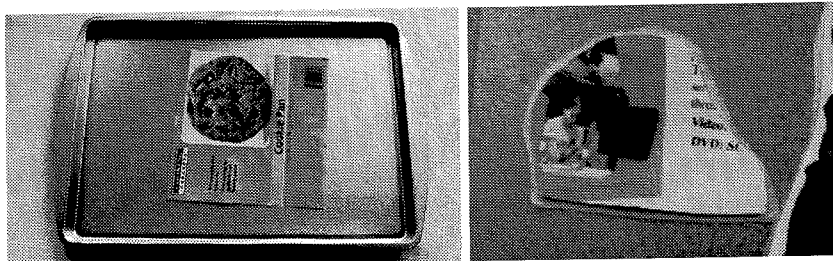
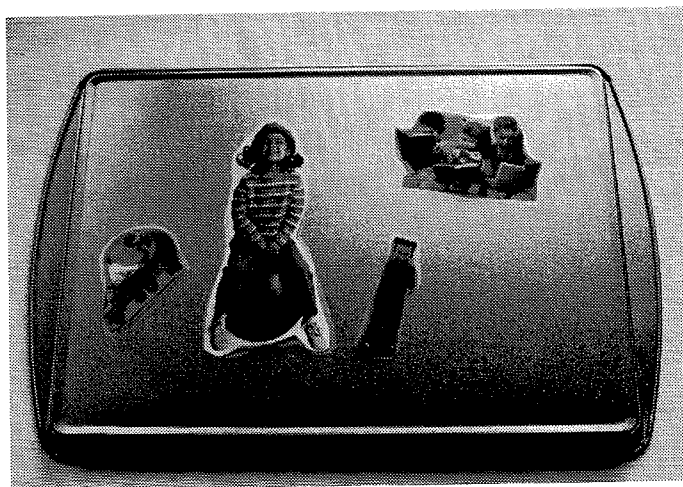
Real Objects	Where Can I Find Them?

Recycled/Scrap Materials

Materials such as cardboard boxes and clean plastic bottles that are usually thrown away or recycled provide an invaluable resource to support children in their play. Make a list of recycled and/or scrap materials that children can use and where you could find them within your own community.

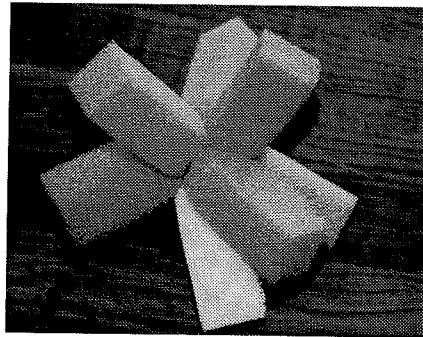
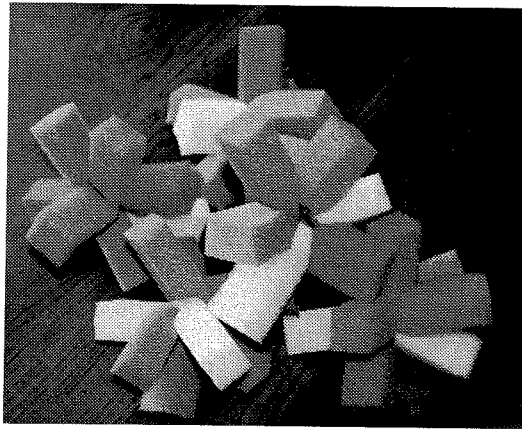
Recycled/Scrap Materials	Where Can I Find Them?

Magnet Story Board



1. Buy a tin cookie tray from the local dollar store or use one that you have at home.
2. Cut pictures out of a magazine, or use photographs of the children in your care.
3. Cover the pictures in contact paper or laminate them so they are durable.
4. Place a small sticky magnet on the backs of pictures, and enjoy.

Sponge Balls



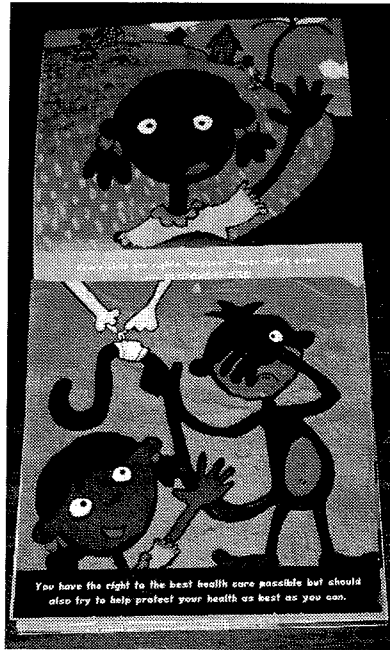
1. Find sponges that don't have a rough side or are not too rubbery.
2. Cut the sponges into strips.
3. Lay about four strips on top of each other in a criss-cross pattern.
4. Tie the middle of the sponge strips with a pipe cleaner or string.

Homemade Puzzle



1. Print a picture, or cut one out of a magazine (a large, 8 x 10" picture works the best).
2. Use a glue stick to glue the picture to a piece of cardboard (the back of a cereal box works great).
3. Draw a faint pencil line in a slight swirl vertically down of the back of the picture.
4. Then draw one or two (depending on if you want your puzzle to be four or six pieces) lines horizontally across the back of the picture.
5. Make a small, identifying mark on the back of each piece to distinguish it from other similar puzzle pieces (i.e., a plus sign or a circle or a square — just make sure all the pieces have the same mark).
6. Laminate the picture or use contact paper.
7. Cut the pieces of the puzzle out along the predrawn lines.
8. Place the puzzle pieces in a baggie or a box or some other storage container.

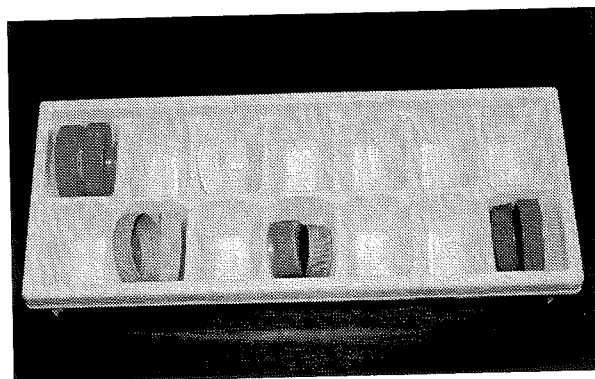
Homemade Book



1. Collect old calendars or pictures from magazines.
2. Cut pictures out that you want to use.
3. Glue the pictures front to back to create a booklike format.
4. Punch two or three holes across the side or top of the completed pages.
5. Put rings or string through the holes to connect the pages.

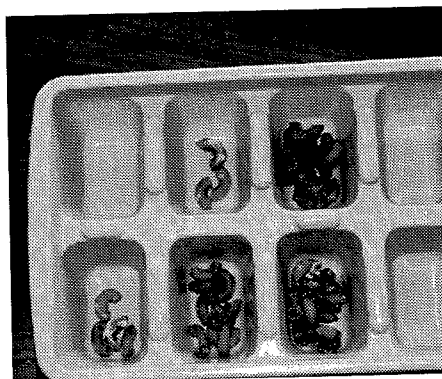
Variation: You can also use a photo album to make a book.

Sorting Materials



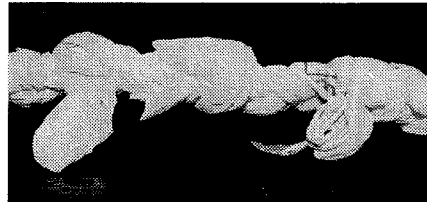
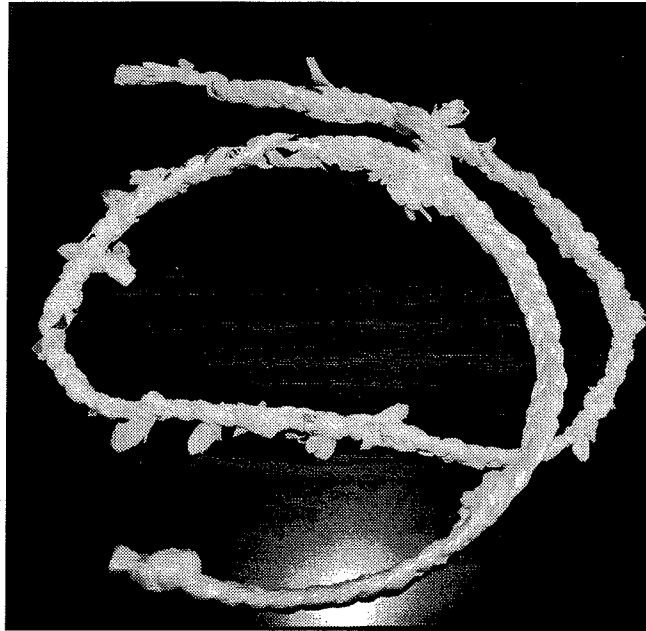
1. Find materials around the house that have divided parts (such as ice cube trays, cupcake tins, or clean egg cartons).
2. Pair the trays with materials that can be sorted, like buttons of different colors and sizes; bottle caps; noodles; poker chips; rocks; or shells.

Colored Noodles



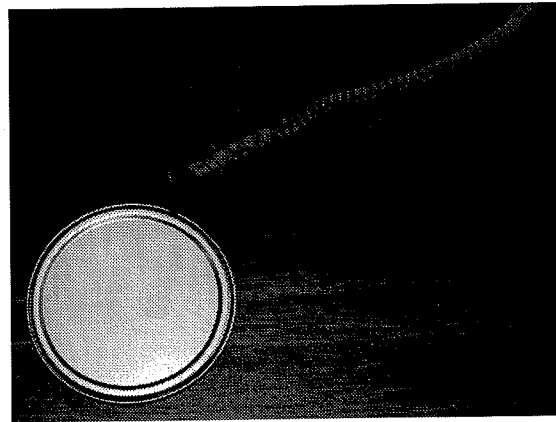
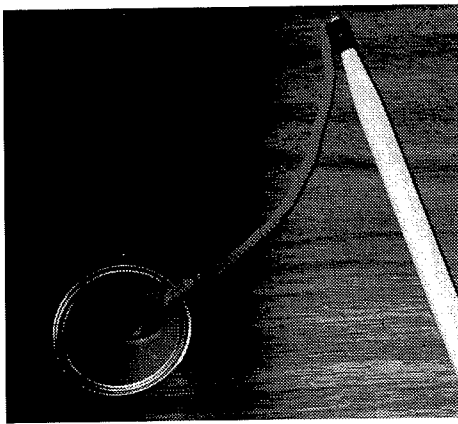
1. Place any type of pasta or noodles in a large, resealable plastic bag.
2. Add food coloring to a small amount of water.
3. Mix colored water into the bag and shake until all of the noodles are colored.
4. Spread noodles out on waxed paper, a cookie sheet, or tray and let dry overnight.

Jump Rope



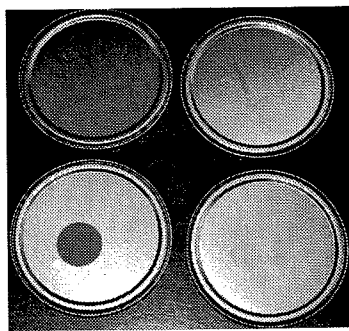
1. Collect plastic grocery bags.
2. Start with three bags, and tie all three of them in a knot.
3. Braid the bags in a tight, normal braid.
4. When you get to the end of a bag, overlap a new bag in the braid and continue; the tightness of the braid will hold the new bags in place.
5. Continue the process until you have a rope long enough for a child to use as a jump rope.

Magnet Wand



1. Find a smooth stick, dowel rod, drumstick, etc.
2. Tape a pipe cleaner to one end.
3. Twist a magnet on the free end of the pipe cleaner (magnets can be found at most hardware stores).
4. Use the wand to pick up juice lids, other magnets, or even fish cut out of paper with a paperclip on the end.

Juice Lid Magnets



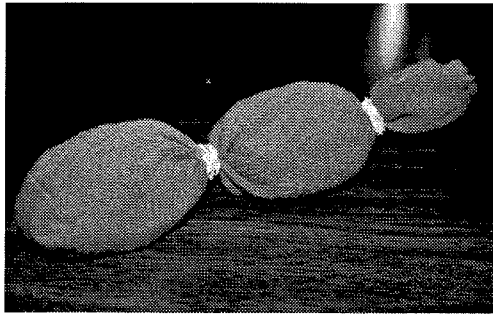
1. Collect juice lids (the ends of the cans of frozen juice concentrate); wash the lids.
2. Place dot stickers, letters, or other things on the lids with permanent markers.

Beanbags



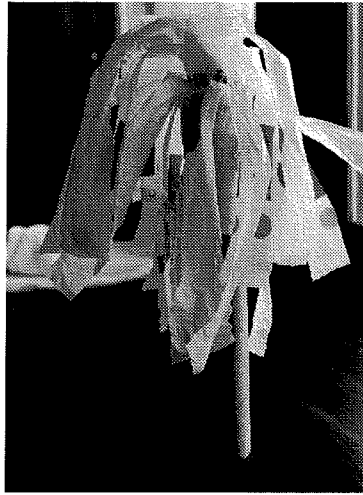
1. Find children's socks and wash them.
2. Fill the bottom of the sock with any size bean that you have.
3. Cut the sock about one-half of an inch above the top of the beans.
4. Hand-sew the sock closed.

Double Beanbag

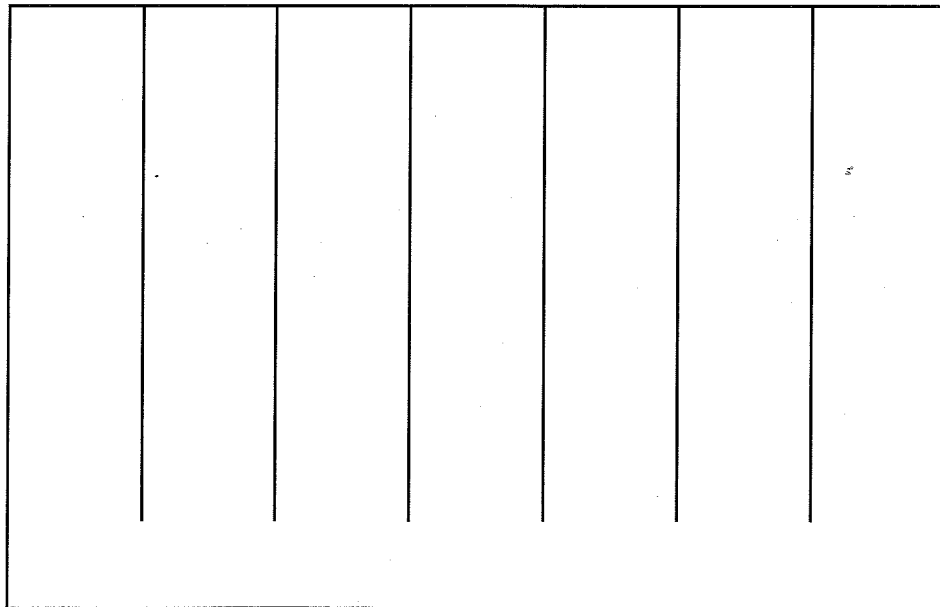


1. Find children's socks and wash them.
2. Fill the bottom of the sock with any size bean that you have.
3. Tie a rubber band on this part of the sock, above the beans.
4. Then fill another section of the sock.
5. Tie a rubber band above this top section of beans.

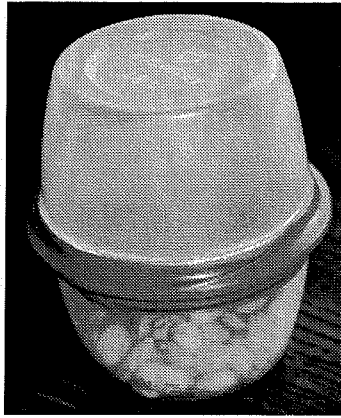
Plastic Bag Shaker



1. Cut the top and bottom off of a grocery bag, so that you have a rectangle.
2. Cut the top of the bag in strips, making sure not to cut all the way down.
3. Tape the bottom of the bag around a paper-towel tube.

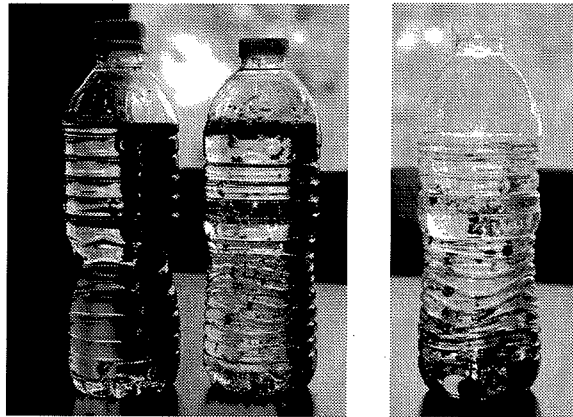


Shaker



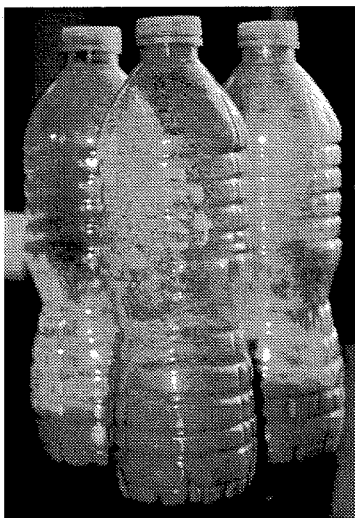
1. Collect yogurt, applesauce, or other recyclable containers.
2. Fill one cup with beans, rice, or pebbles.
3. Place another container on top of the first one.
4. Tape the edges together with electrical or duct tape (you can also hot glue or super glue them together).

Bottle Shakers



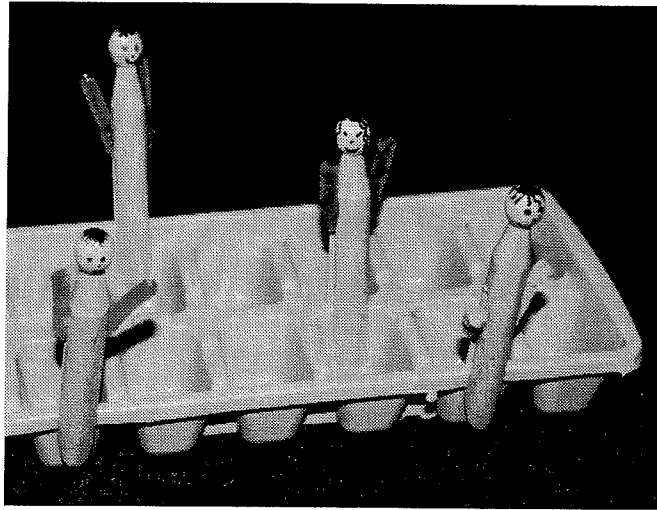
1. Collect plastic water bottles; remove labels and wash.
2. Fill bottles with colored water, glitter and water, sequins and water, or beads and water.
3. Use super glue or hot glue to permanently attach the tops.

Bowling Bottles



1. Collect plastic water bottles, take the labels off, and wash them inside and outside.
2. Add several inches of sand to each bottle (you can add food coloring and shake to color the sand if you prefer).
3. Use super glue or hot glue to permanently attach the tops.
4. Add a ball to make your own bowling game.

Clothespin People



1. Collect several peg-type clothespins.
2. Draw faces and hair on clothespins with any markers.
3. Cut small pieces of pipe cleaners.
4. Glue the pipe cleaners in the opening of the clothespins to create arms.

Container Game



1. Collect cylindrical containers that have lids (formula, oatmeal, etc.).
2. Cut a small hole in the top of the lid.
3. Place clothespins, bottle caps, or anything else in the container.

Other Unique Ideas

- Offer golf tees for children to stick into styrofoam.
- Cover an oatmeal container with paper and use it as a drum.
- Cut geometric shapes out of felt, use on a large piece of felt as a felt board.
- Add baskets of real materials to your toys, such as pine cones, rocks, sea shells, etc.
- Hammer nails in a 10 x 10 grid pattern partway into a square board. Use rubber bands to create shapes on the nails.
- Cut a hole in a recycled laundry detergent container and string rubber bands across the opening to make a guitar.

My Plans

Look back over your booklet.

Put an asterisk (*) by the materials you want to add to your playroom.

What is your timeline for getting these materials?

Now, look over the toys that can be made from inexpensive materials or household items.

Put an asterisk (*) by those items.

List the materials you'll need to get to make those items:

What are your ideas for getting these materials?

What is your timeline for making these toys?