

# Pure Play!

## Workshops

**Want a day of play?** Adults should only offer the provisions for these play events and prompt the beginning of the play, children should soon take over using other “stuff” discovered at the playground. Adult’s very best contributions in the playground are two-fold; play facilitation as described below and non-intrusive supervision for safety. The developmental advantages provided by these play activities come from the very fact that children can be independent and self-directed during play. Resist the temptation to direct the play episode for the children – give them these tools for play, step back and watch the magic of engaged play happen.



1. Gather up \$5 worth of sand toys or some clean surplus plastic containers from the kitchen. (Parents are a great resource for these too.) Take the new playground treasures and a child or two to your local playground. The toys are for everyone to use – a gift for the playground to be left behind. The next time you are at the playground you may find that your generous gift of toys has begun to multiply – other adults will bring sand toys too.

2. Make sand scoops from clean 1/2 gallon milk jugs. Glue the cap in place and cut an interesting shape from the bottom. Cut shapes or holes in some jugs for a different play experience.
3. Take bubbles to the playground. Bring purchased bubbles or make your own. Many plastic kitchen utensils (like the very cheap ones from a dollar store) make great bubble wands; slotted spoons and spatulas, hand strainers and potato mashers all can be great fun for play. Bring a plastic bag to take the soapy utensils back in.
4. Is it hot outside? Playing with water can cool everyone. Paint the sidewalks with water! Plastic paint trays, a bucket, rollers and various sizes of paintbrushes are just the trick. If your playground doesn’t have water accessible save a few gallon milk jugs for the job.



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5. Check with the park manager – set up a water (lemonade) stand in the playground. What do you need? A small lidded plastic pitcher for water and ice, cooler of refills, paper cups and small trash can (children should be allowed to direct the whole operation). Let the children pour and “sell” their wares. Pretend money can be leaves or anything they can find at the playground. They will like to “work” under a play structure or in a shaded spot!

6. Another activity to check in with the park manager before you begin is sidewalk chalk. Bring the bucket of chalk (plenty to share) and some homemade stencils from card board boxes. Some large shapes to trace and color; squares, circles, triangles, hexagons, house, trees, stars and moon shape will add to the children’s creative repertoire. Make some simple edge designs, like a scallop edge, to trace. Select a place that naturally gets low foot traffic for the activity and in the shade would be best. A bucket with water and paper towels will make clean up for all easier.

7. Take sheets, blankets and cloth pins to the playground to create tents. Attach the sheets to the nearby fence or play structure – stones can be used to stake the edge. Adults should only offer the beginning of the tent making children should soon take over using other “stuff” discovered at the playground.



8. Nail aprons (like the ones you get in a hardware store) small baskets or little buckets are great for children to use to carry things around the playground. Take several to the playground and place them where children can find them during play. To learn about the concepts, big and small, heavy and light, thick and thin and various colors children must have things to handle. Natural things are best because there are many factors children can use to make assessments and comparisons. The discoveries of natural materials selected in the playground then carried in a child-sized devise to a cozy spot for study and organization are important learning opportunities for all children.

9. Got Boxes? Let the children make the play props for themselves!