

National Storytelling Week

Tuesday - Joyful Junk

Today's activity challenges you to create a transient junk story with everyday items. This activity focuses on children's understanding of shape, spatial awareness, pattern, measure and number. To begin with, adults will need to role model how to use junk items creatively.

Resources:

- Large-scale white paper or card

A variety of junk items, for example:

- Metal items like screws, nuts, bolts, hinges, doorknobs
- Wooden items like driftwood, dowels, log slices, lollipop sticks
- Material items like ribbon, string, wool
- Natural items like shells, pebbles, stones, leaves
- Other items like cardboard tubes, cotton wool, beads, jewellery, elastic bands, buttons.



Activity:

- Prepare a junk story space either on the floor or on a table. Organise junk items, recyclable resources and loose parts into bowls, containers or around the space. Use the large-scale white card or paper as a background
- Choose a selection of junk items and think about how they could be used. A good starting point is to create a character
- Introduce your character. What is their name? Where do they live? Where are they going? How are they feeling today?
- Add in further junk items to progress the story.

It might look and sound something like this:

"This is a ladybird called Lucy (place the door hinge on the large-scale white card or paper). She has three spots on each side; she is a six spotted ladybird. Today Lucy the ladybird is feeling tired. She's looking for a flower to land on and rest her wings. I can make Lucy a flower using this short lollipop stick and these little round buttons (making the flower as you go out of junk items). Lucy can now rest on the flower, but...I think I'd like it to rain in my story; what could I use? Oh yes...I can use this round cotton wool as the clouds and these small, pointy spiral screws as raindrops (sprinkling the screws on to your card or paper)."

- Wonder out loud as you go, commenting on the shape and properties of the items and why you are choosing them, for example, "It's stopped raining now. I could use this ribbon and make a curve like a rainbow, but what could I use for sunshine I wonder? I need something round"
- Use gesture to help children further visualise key concepts, for example, making a point with your hands to describe "pointy", or make a spiraling motion with your finger for "spiral"
- Provide opportunities for children to subitise, for example, buttons with four sewing holes or door hinges with three screw holes on each side
- Ask children for their ideas. What do they think should happen next? What items could be used to represent this?
- Children can add to your junk picture or have a go themselves using their own large piece of card or paper as a backdrop.





Extension Opportunity:

Ask a staff member to take photographs of the story as it progresses so children can revisit and reflect on the junk story. The photographs could be made into a book for children to share with parents and carers, or to proudly display in your setting. Inspiration can be found in the story called 'Junk DNA' by Clare Thompson.

Top tip:

Storytelling can be daunting. The key to this activity is the ability to think on your feet which takes confidence and a little practice. Staff could be paired up to carry out a storytelling session together, each taking their own part and offering encouragement to the other. It is also a good idea to start with a small group of children.

