Construction

> *"The future builder must play at building".*
> *(Plato)* 1

The Three Billy Goat's Gruff in Action

We introduced the story with plenty of props; drapes for grass, different sized goats, masks, various trolls and improvised bridges etc… the children joined in with the 'trip-trap-trip' chanting. We were inspired to build bridges. In a big floor space, Duplo was chosen to construct various forms of bridges. The children's thinking was challenged to make the bridge stronger for the goats or wide enough for the troll to hide under. One child observed that her bridge was 'just right for the troll'. After this children had opportunities to consolidate learning in the outdoor environment organised in a free flow system. Both girls and boys chose large planks of wood, which were made into various sized bridges. A group of children took great delight in jumping out from under the bridges as the hungry, noisy troll. Children were observed not only revisiting the scary sounds of the troll and the chanting of the familiar story line but also using space and energy to be the goats escaping to the luscious green grass.

Did you know…

When children play with construction materials they are laying down the foundations of understanding for shape, spatial relationships, forces, and problem solving.

They are also developing their imaginative, linguistic and creative skills.

Role Play Ideas:

- Inventor's castle
- Repair shop
- DIY shop
- Builders' yard
- 3 Little Pigs houses
- Fashion designers'
- Recycling bay
- Fancy dress shop
- Elves and the Shoemaker (Cobblers shop)

Resource links:

Toy libraries: contact: Children's Information Service, tel: 0116 265 6545

Heritage Services, Tel:: 0116 265 6781,
e mail : museums@leics.gov.uk
(Gives information regarding local interactive exhibitions and discovery based play in Leicestershire Includes : Charnwood Museum, Donington –le-Heath, Melton Carnegie Museum, Snibston Discovery Park).

> *"What happens in the (construction) area affects other activities, and what happens elsewhere affects the (construction) area"*
>
> *(Pat Gura)* 4

Paper Work

Scrunched up newspaper and parcel tape make a relatively cheap and bulky construction material that's fairly easy to sculpt.

Building Boxes

We can't afford squishy shapes to build with so every now and then we collect a car-boot full of cardboard boxes from the local supermarket. The children really enjoy building on a large scale with them.

Clothes 'r' Us

We had a clothes shop as our role play area and needed the 'clothes' to go with it. We had a fascinating time as the children took some clothing apart to identify the shapes needed to make a garment. We then explored making new garments with wallpaper based on these shapes. Joining the shapes together and re-constructing the clothes was a real challenge for some children.

Constructed World

Using construction kits in role play can be quite stimulating and inspiring. When we had a toyshop children had to make all the toys using Lego, Stickle Bricks etc... Once we removed all the crockery from the Three Bear's house and left a note saying; "Sorry I broke all the pots as well – can you make some new ones, from Goldilocks". This was great, giving a purpose for the construction and the understanding of shape was superb.

> *"Problem solving in construction is not confined to how to make a road and such like. It is also to do with making roads in this space, with the co-operation of this group of people."*
>
> *(Pat Gura)* 4

Recycling Lost Bits

Put unwanted bits of construction kit in with modelling. It's amazing what they use it for.

Can We Fix-It?

We have a 'fix-it' box of old radios, tape players, torches and cameras etc..., that children can just take to bits. They really love seeing what's inside and become skilful in using a screwdriver.

Hideout

The council came to prune some bushes on our site so we gathered the twigs and cuttings together to build a shelter. The children worked together to join twigs and were very resourceful in finding other objects that would help to make it comfortable, such as a picnic blanket and even a flag!

Make-over

Try a 'make-over day' in the home corner. Children can use all sorts of materials: fabric, wood, cardboard, paper, tools and joining agents to give the role play area a new look whatever the theme is.

Touchy Feely

We try to remember to use fabric as much as cardboard or plastic. Different fabrics can be stuffed, scrunched, layered, cut, hung, woven, tied and plaited, threaded and even stitched using all types of joining methods to construct textured objects that behave very differently to card, paper, plastic and glue.

Weaver's Way

We have a long picket fence leading to our building. It's great for weaving all sorts of things – ribbons, scarves, twigs etc...

Construction Kits

To develop construction play we often use kit sets like Lego or Interstar etc..... with other resources such as stationery, small world play, sand and water or other kits. Putting these resources outside also makes a huge difference to how children use them. Using them with natural materials inside or out can alter what children do.

Body Buddy

The children were struggling with getting changed. So we got a load of jumble (mainly children-sized tops, trousers and cardigans etc...) and talked to the children about building a body. By stuffing clothing with newspaper, adding a balloon head and fixing it together, children made a 'guy' version of themselves. In itself this gave children plenty of problems to solve in building their buddy. This really helped their positional language and practise in fastenings etc... on a large scale. Some of them had a great time making buddies with 3 arms or 2 heads etc...