Changing It Up

Overview

We all love routine. Children often return to their favourite things. Replacing pieces of equipment with something new can encourage children to reimagine their play and use the space differently!



Activities

Don't bring out the usual toys and equipment. Instead, introduce different materials or loose parts. Imagine stepping outside to find an open space with a mysterious pile of unfamiliar objects waiting to be explored.

Small changes like this can completely shift how children use and view the environment; disrupting familiar routines and opening up new opportunities for imagination, creativity and collaboration.

Equipment & Ideas

Create a low-level world using sheets, blankets, boxes or crates to make dens, tunnels and hidden spaces.

Offer natural materials such as logs, leaves, bark, stones, pinecones and mud for open ended play.

Use tyres, pallets or planks to inspire balancing, transporting and construction.

Introduce unusual objects such as suitcases, baskets and old telephones to create adventures to old and new worlds.

Learning Outcomes

The key is not to direct the play too quickly. Give children time to wonder, experiment and decide for themselves what the materials could become.

Limiting children to one type of material, e.g. 'only sticks' can foster imaginative play given enough time.

Progression in Learning

Encourage the children to move the materials themselves, with larger items in pairs or teams. This can support the development of greater communication skills and better coordination.