



Constructive Play

What is constructive play?

“Constructive play, also referred to as construction or manipulative play, is when a child purposefully manipulates objects and materials to build, construct, assemble (or even disassemble) them to create something new. The key is to ensure the objects and materials are open-ended, so creation possibilities are only limited by the child’s imagination. Constructive play often starts with simple stacking or sorting and overtime evolves into the creation of increasingly complex and elaborate structures as the child becomes familiar with the properties of the materials and masters their manipulation.”

-Dr Jane Ewens, 2025

What are the benefits of constructive play for children?

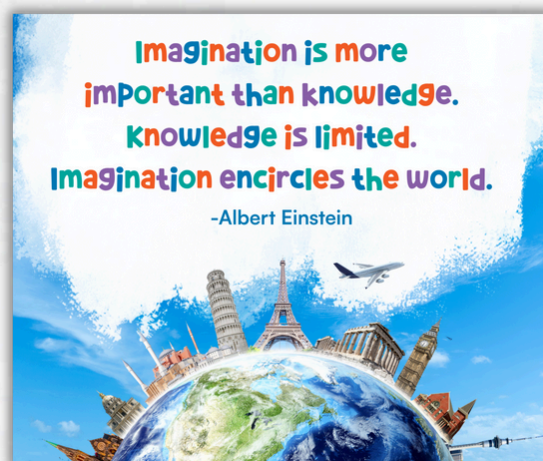
- **Imagination and creativity:** Constructive play is a fantastic tool for supporting children’s imagination and creativity.
- **Fine motor skills:** When children engage in constructive play they are also further developing their fine motor skills, including hand eye coordination, and strengthening the small muscles in their hands. These muscles are very much needed for when children are learning to write so the stronger they are, the better!
- **Gross motor skills:** Constructive play with large objects like loose parts, large blocks, tyres, crates and wood etc. can play a vital role in supporting gross motor development.



Engaging with large objects like these requires strength, coordination and balance!

- **Cognitive Skills:** Constructive play is a fantastic way to support children's cognitive development such as problem solving, reasoning, logic and spatial awareness. This type of play is an all round powerhouse in terms of children's brain development!
- **Social skills:** Constructive play, especially in an early learning setting can be a fantastic way to support children's social and emotional competence. Often they are working on projects together or alongside others which can require a fair amount of negotiation, turn taking and communication. These are important skills for children both in an early learning environment as well as in future social settings such as school and beyond!
- **Language Development:** By talking about their ideas or construction projects, children are also further developing their language and communication skills! Adults and other children support children's ever expanding vocabulary by talking through ideas during

constructive play, even with very young learners. Each interaction during constructive play provides an opportunity for children to express themselves both verbally and non verbally!



How do Kaiako at Evolve Education provide constructive play for children?

The Evolve Promise sets the scene for what you can expect from Evolve early learning centres. Part of this promise is that we offer a curriculum that fosters your child's ability to be creative, generate new and innovative ideas, and problem-solve to find solutions to challenges.



Evolve kaiako (teachers) ensure that our learning environments are thoughtfully set up each day to encourage children's imagination through constructive play!

Our kaiako recognise and understand that constructive play is more than just a shelf of wooden blocks! They weave opportunities for children to engage in fun, exciting and learning rich constructive play throughout all areas of the curriculum from the art area to the sandpit, inside and outside!

Your child's centre may also ask for donations of what would normally be considered 'junk', this is another way of providing a variety of that all important constructive play!



Collage and constructive play collection basket at Little Wonders Rolleston

What resources could you provide for your child at home for constructive play?

You do not need to spend a lot of money on equipment or toys to provide constructive play for your child, in fact, most of the items that are the best for this type of play are free!

This is not an exhaustive list, the great part about constructive play is that if you can imagine it, you can use it!

- Recycled objects: cardboard, boxes, bottles, lids, cards, etc.
- Natural resources: sticks, wood slices, stones, mud, shells all provide fantastic opportunities for imaginations to unfold!
- Building samples or offcuts: Carpet squares, untreated wood offcuts can make great constructive play materials!
- Loose Parts: Loose parts are materials that can be used in a variety of different ways as opposed to having just one set objective. These can be large such as tyres, pallets, crates or small such as corks, bobbins, bottle caps etc.

To learn more about loose part play please scan here to read one of our previous blog posts

