

# MAKE TOYS FROM REUSED MATERIALS

Children often play with things that aren't sold in the toy aisle such as food containers, bottle caps, and more. Many items that we commonly consider trash can be reused as toys. Instead of wasting items like water bottles, pop bottles, milk jugs and disposable packaging, parents and children can reuse them to create toys like shaker bottles and sensory tables!

## Outcomes

Parents and children will learn simple reuse ideas by creating toys from commonly trashed or recycled items.

## Audience

Youth (ages 1+), parents and children

## Time

30-60 minutes

## Concepts

- Reuse trash or recyclables instead of throwing them away.
- Instead of buying new, make toys by reusing common household items for children's toys.
- Children's toys are typically not recyclable.

## Supplies

- Empty pop bottles, water bottles, juice bottles, milk jugs or oatmeal containers.
- Clean, plastic caps from pop bottles, water bottles and/or milk jugs
- Items to put in empty bottles, such as recycled or shredded paper, small pieces of cardboard, wood chips, cut straw, plastic rings from bottles, etc.
- Hot glue or duct tape



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## Preparation

Ask parents to bring empty pop and/or water bottles from home along with clean caps from milk and juice jugs.

## Procedure

Supervision for younger children is necessary when exploring small objects.

### For sensory table:

- Put clean, plastic lids from containers such as water bottles, pop bottles, juice bottles or milk jugs into sensory table. Consider using other household utensils to have children grab items from the table.
- Let children sort and play with them. Children can sort items according to color, shape or size.

### For shaker bottle:

- Put reused materials (pompoms, feathers, dried beans, dried rice, etc.) into bowls.
- Have parents and children put the items into pop or water bottles.
- Have parents hot glue or duct tape the caps back on the bottles to prevent children from opening the bottle.
- Shaker bottle can be used as a musical instrument for children.

## Discussion questions

- Do your children enjoy playing with items that you would consider non-traditional play items? Do you already reuse any items as toys? Are there certain reused items that your children enjoy playing with? Is there anything holding you back from using reused items?
- How can you work to reduce your waste? Will you continue to use trash or recyclable items to create activities with your children?
- What other items could you use in the sensory table?
- What additional ideas do you have for creating toys from items that are typically trashed or recycled?
- How did your child respond to the sensory table and/or shaker bottles? Did they enjoy using it as much other toys?