

SCRAPSHACK

Making playtimes more positive

“Play” is one of the few things that almost all of us have experienced in our lives, and many adults look back on their own childhood with fond memories. In the 21st Century, however, many adults have become concerned about the loss of childhood and the possibility that children have forgotten how to play. They need not be concerned.

“The truth is that, unless they are seriously undernourished or in a state of fear, children will always play when they are on their own, unsupervised, in the freedom of open space”
(Peter and Opie, 1997)

What can a **SCRAPSHACK** do for my school?

- Encourages cooperative play and reduces arguments
- Helps children’s concentration and behaviour throughout the day
- Encourages free play with little or no help or intervention from adults.
- Provides an environment where children can play by themselves or with their peers, and interact with children they might not normally play with.
- Provides an environment where otherwise isolated children can take part without pressure.
- Children are given opportunity to manage their own risks within a safe environment, helping them in areas of confidence and self-esteem
- Enables children to play imaginatively with resources that are not made specifically for play, but help them to create open ended play opportunities for themselves and develop problem solving skills
- Play opportunities are ever changing



How does **SCRAPSHACK** work?

Scrapshacks are large containers which are filled with recycled or upcycled materials and equipment suitable for outdoor creative play. “Loose Parts” are items which do not have a defined use, and therefore are more flexible in the ways they can be used, and a Scrapshack will be filled each term with plastics, large reels, huge tubes, pipes, boxes, old tyres, material, tarpaulin, and much more, all suitable for children’s outdoor play

“Loose parts create endless possibilities and invite creativity. For example, if a child picks up a rock and starts to play, most likely that rock can become anything the child wants it to be. Imagination, creativity, curiosity, desire, and need are the motivation of loose parts.”
(Simon Nicholson, 1971)

MAKING PLAY MATTER



The ultimate aim of a Scrapshack is to provide children with creative alternatives to directed games – children lead the play and need little or no intervention from adults. The Scrapshack actively encourages children to take risks in order to explore their own limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities, and is suitable for all children in the primary age range. Experience shows that often children take the learning from the classroom into imaginative play outdoors.

Every playtime the Scrapshack can be opened for non-directed, free play for all children in the playground. Usually, it is opened by a member of the playground staff, who might also need to help children take out some of the resources. As children grow used to the system, they become more autonomous, but will always need some supervision getting materials in or out.

What about the risks?

Fear of litigation is leading many settings to focus on minimising the risk of injury. Unfortunately, this is often at the expense of more fundamental objectives: it can stop children enjoying a healthy range of play opportunities, limit their enjoyment and cause potentially damaging consequences for their development. The Scrapshack aims to allow, in a safe environment, children to develop their skills in assessing risks and avoid injury; to problem solve, think, collaborate – enabling them to confront real life with transferable skills.



Evidence clearly shows that playing in a play provision is a comparatively low risk activity for children. Research shows that of the two million childhood accidents treated each year, less than 2% involved playground equipment. Participation in sports, like football, widely acknowledged as a “good” sport for a child’s development, involves a greater risk of injury than in play provision.

[see Nothing Ventured...Balancing Risk and Benefit in Outdoor Play (Tim Gill), and Managing Risk in Play Provision – implementation guide (DCSF/Play England) can be downloaded from Play England Website]

What do I need to get started with a SCRAPSHACK?

You need a shed to use as a Scrapshack, which should be placed on a level, hard surface. MKPA can recommend the size needed for your school depending on the number of students attending and then with the right resources and a little training, you are good to go!

MKPA will be able to help with the practicalities of running your Scrapshack, such as staff training, ground rules and guidelines for using the Scrapshack effectively, and of course, keeping your Scrapshack topped up with the kinds of things that motivate and inspire your children.

How much will my SCRAPSHACK cost?

Every school is very different in terms of size, space available and ages of children. Because of this, the cost of a Scrapshack can vary. A school might already have an existing shed or container that could be utilised, other schools might be small enough to need less scrap for each top up. MKPA will work with you to find the best solution. There is no ‘one size fits all’ solution and this is reflected in the price for your school, which will have scope for flexibility depending on your own budget.

MAKING PLAY HAPPEN

