

POP-UP ADVENTURE PLAY

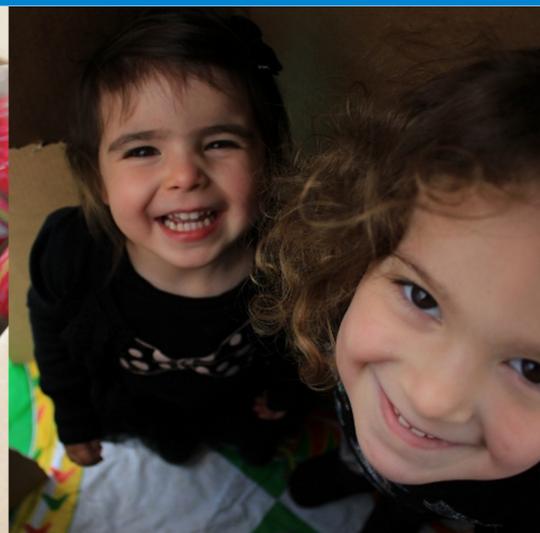


MINI POP-UP KIT

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and Pop-Up Adventure Play

Congratulations on joining our mailing list!

We're so happy to have you with us. By signing up to our mailing list you'll receive resources and updates that are only available via email. If you like this kit, invite your friends to hop on our mailing list too!



TOGETHER, WE ALL CAN SUPPORT CHILD-DIRECTED PLAY – ONE CARDBOARD BOX AT A TIME



Hello and welcome to your Mini Pop-Up Kit!

In the following pages you will find everything you need to extend the work we at Pop-Up Adventure Play are doing with children and families around the world. You can bring child-directed play with “loose parts” (everyday, open-ended materials) right into the lives of the children you live or work with every day.

At Pop-Up Adventure Play, we imagine a time when all children have access to child-directed play in communities of supportive adults. And we are working to make this vision a reality through our Pop-Up Adventure Playgrounds. At our “Pop-Ups”, hundreds and thousands of children have gathered together (with the support of our trained volunteers and collaborators) to play in public spaces. But, where children might normally be playing with a ball or swinging on swings, now they are also playing with giant cardboard refrigerator boxes, hundreds of unused plastic bottle caps, paper bags and tubes, fabric samples, old towels, paint, tape, and glue. We have helped to celebrate and showcase child-directed play through Pop-Up Adventure Playgrounds in communities from Boston, MA to San Jose, Costa Rica, from New York City to Cardiff, Wales, and from Manchester, England to Largo, Florida.

While we have worked with collaborators around the world to bring play to thousands of children and families, we know that sustainable change starts at home. It starts with parents who resist the pressure to sign their children up for numerous hours of adult-directed activities every day after school, ensuring that kids still have time to play. It starts in classrooms around the world where one or two teachers decide not to accept the idea that there is simply no time left for play at school. It starts with all of us who share the belief that play is a fundamental, essential right of every child. It starts, quite frankly, with one child who is allowed the space and the time to do anything he or she wants with a cardboard box.

Without play, children cannot practice innovative thinking skills. They cannot build self-confidence or become independent thinkers and problem solvers. At the very same time, without child-directed play, children cannot develop the interpersonal skills and empathy required to get along with other people. Most importantly, without play, children cannot fully express their capacity for joy.

Join us! Let us know if you support play and how. If you you'd like to support a Mini Pop-Up for kids you know, please keep reading. If you would like to bring a full Pop-Up Adventure Playground to your community, let us know. We can help.

Together, we all can support child-directed play - one cardboard box at a time.

Sincerely,

Anna Housley Juster and Team Pop-Up Adventure Play

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Logo illustration: Jonathon Mills

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GOT PLAY?

Supporting child-directed play in everyday life



Children are experts in their own play and there's far more going on in play than we can see from the outside. It is very important that children have opportunities to **choose what to play and make up their own rule for how to play - every day.**

Allow children to take the lead in play and help by offering them open-ended materials (or "loose parts") you probably already have on-hand. (Check out the Non-Shopping list in this Kit!). You will be supporting the play that all children need for healthy **cognitive, physical, and social development, school success, and overall well-being.**

If invited, play along! Just remember, the kids are the directors.

Get ready for play...

Healthy Risk Taking

Children can experience a lot of pressure in everyday life - to perform well on tests, behave at the grocery store, and so on. In the midst of all of this, **children absolutely must have chances to test themselves** when there is no right or wrong "answer", no one way to do something well. Healthy risk taking is **key to innovative thinking** and fosters self-confidence! If children want to try something new that has you scared, see if there are ways you can help so their play can go ahead. Give a boost to help children climb trees. Hold hands so kids can walk along a stone wall. Allow children to play with cardboard boxes and other materials that are not "precious". **A child who is invited to do anything she wants with cardboard, paper, tape, and other open-ended materials will not have a fear of doing it wrong - anything is possible.**

Play Lasts for Days

Play doesn't always fit within schedules, particularly not those set by adults! For children, **playing is an ongoing part of life.** It's hard, but try resisting the urge to clean up every project every night. What materials can you add the next day? See what emerges from a week-long block building session!

Making Room

Time and space are often in short supply, but making sure there's some of both for play helps everyone to develop strong and enduring relationships. The pretend games and make-believe stories that children share with each other and with adults can run through the whole of children's lives. These narratives give kids great comfort, knowing they can continue their stories or games where they left off. When children know that their play is recognized and valued, they can feel recognized and valued too.

Planning for Mess

Kids love getting messy, but carpet and glue can be a bad combination! Try letting children play with stuff that is easy to clean up such as cotton balls, pieces of fabric, or old magazines to cut. Put out towels or old sheets to catch whatever might fall on the ground. Send kids out to play in clothes that you don't mind seeing covered in mud.

NOW... Go to the next page and PLAY!

Mini Pop-Up!

A small-scale Pop-Up Adventure Playground



A Mini Pop-Up is a smaller version of one of our **Pop-Up Adventure Playgrounds** or “**Pop-Ups**”, which take place in public spaces such as parks, libraries, and community centers. These large Pop-Ups are staffed by adults trained by Pop-Up Adventure Play.

But a Mini Pop-Up can happen anywhere. And while a Mini Pop-Up may be mini, **the play benefits are BIG!**

3 Steps to a Mini Pop-Up

- 1) Get some stuff you already have:** You know that cardboard box that’s still sitting near the door because you haven’t had time to take it out to the recycling bin? Don’t! It’s ready for a Mini Pop-Up!

Other stuff:

shoe boxes, cereal boxes, old sheets that can be cut or painted, old dish towels, Tupperware containers that haven’t had matching lids in 4 months, lids that don’t match any containers, cardboard of any kind, empty plastic bottles, clothespins, cotton balls, clean plastic bottles and paper towel tubes out of the recycling bin, extra plastic spoons, old newspapers, and even old phones or computer keyboards.

The list is endless! Look for anything that has **no sharp edges, is not made of glass** (anything that shatters) and don’t include anything that is “precious” to you. **You are giving children permission** to use and change the materials as they want to!

- 2) Provide a safe space:** Kids can only engage in child-directed play if they feel safe. This doesn’t only mean safe from physical harm, but also **safe to use the materials and get messy**. Maybe you **set aside a space on the floor** and cover this space with an old sheet or towel. Maybe you **meet some friends in a community space** in an apartment building. Maybe you **bring a bag of the materials above outside onto a porch, yard, court yard, field, or local park**.

- 3) Add a couple of things:** Add tape (Duct tape now comes in a variety of incredible patterns and colors!), string, glue or glue sticks, stickers, kid-safe scissors. These are the **materials that allow children to put stuff together or take it apart** and are very important!

That’s it! Children will do the rest, but **if they need help cutting a window or taping a submarine to the top of a skyscraper, then lend a hand!** And, if kids want to take some of the materials home, then pass them on. Play is contagious.

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The Non-Shopping List



Here is a list of the kinds of things that are great for play, but anything that's clean (and not sharp!) can work. Just remember that children should be able to cut, color, tear, glue, or otherwise change the materials. So, not your favorite blanket or storage box!

Check your recycling box for:

- * Cardboard boxes and tubes
- * Paper bags
- * Plastic bottles and other containers
- * Magazines and newspapers

Look in your cupboards and kitchen drawers:

- * Cotton balls
- * String and yarn
- * Old keys
- * Mixing bowls
- * Wooden spoons
- * Old bedsheets and towels

Check out the park or your yard! You might find:

- * Acorns
- * Twigs
- * Leaves
- * Wood chips

And treasure the weird and wonderful:

- * Bright fabric
- * Old tires
- * Old hats or socks
- * Giant bottle caps
- * Old computer keyboards or phones



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Hello again!

Before you go, please think about what play means for you.

The human need for play doesn't end in childhood. We have an innate need for play that continues throughout our whole lives and play is essential for our healthy development. Think about what your "play" is in everyday life.

Maybe your play is playing guitar, singing, riding your bicycle, reading a favorite book, rock climbing, cooking, or daydreaming on the bus. Maybe your play is playing with cardboard boxes.

What does it feel like when you do something without worrying if it is right or wrong? What does it feel like when you do something just because you have a great idea! What does it feel like to do something you love?

If you think about what play means for you and what it feels like when you have no time to play, this can help you begin to realize how important play is in the lives of children.

Many of you are probably already supporting play in different ways and we'd love to hear from you!

- * If you create a Mini Pop-Up for kids, please let us know by clicking the "I Love Play" button at www.popupadventureplay.org. Take some photos and share your story with us. With your permission we can celebrate your efforts on our website! Tell your friends and family about what you're doing and give them a copy of our play advocacy worksheet, *The Amazing Benefits of Child-Directed Play* which you can download free from our website. Invite them to join our mailing list to receive their own *Mini Pop-Up Kits*.
- * If you are interested in learning more about how we can help your community host a full Pop-Up Adventure Playground for children and families in your neighborhood or school, please contact us via our website. And spread the word!

Together, we can all support child-directed play - one cardboard box at a time.

Thanks for playing!

Anna Housley Juster and team Pop-Up Adventure Play