

# What's all the fuss about heuristic play?

It is about playing with real- life, everyday objects and providing babies with an opportunity for open -ended discovery.

For Babies and toddlers , Elinor Goldsmeid's approach to heuristic play revolves around them using their senses and exploring a treasure basket filled with real world objects .

Treasure baskets are relevant because they allow the baby the opportunity to handle and mouth objects. (sensory motor skills) so that they can find out more about them and they offer sensory experiences that allow the brain to grow and become more active.

Treasure baskets are filled with everyday items made from natural materials, such as a paint brush, metal spoon, rolling pins, fir cones, and feathers. The idea of playing with everyday items is not new, but a simple treasure basket gives babies an opportunity to explore, experiment and make choices at their own pace.

Fill the basket to the top with a range of natural and everyday items, but not plastic or shop bought toys. The aim of the collection is to fully engage the baby's five senses; touch, sight, sound, smell and taste.

## How to make a 'Treasure baskets'

To begin you will need to put together a treasure basket.

Find a low -sided basket, box or tin and fill it 20-30 real life objects.

Over a time add and rotate items to help encourage a new and different learning experiences and to keep interest high.

Examples of heuristic objects to put in your treasure basket include:

- Egg boxes, small boxes with lids, cardboard tubes, greaseproof paper

- Preserving jar rings, rubber door stops, corks, rubber balls, measuring spoons.
- Napkin rings, metal teapots, metal whisks, keys on a ring, metal cookie cutters.
- Shower puffs, pot scourers, bottle brushes, pieces of flannel or material, coloured ribbons, pasty brushes.
- Pumice, coconut shells, large pebbles, driftwood, bark, pine cones, feathers.
- Wooden bowls, wooden spoons, wooden pegs, wooden curtain rings
- Small mirror, bells, measuring spoons, tea strainers, a lemon or orange

A baby's concentration on a treasure basket can sometimes last an hour or more. The contents stimulate a baby's curiosity and allow them to discover objects through first-hand experiences. The baby will also enjoy the independent decision-making involved in choosing items.

During treasure basket play, the adults should be attentive, but should not intervene, except to ensure the safety and maintain social contact with the baby. It is recommended that adults do not participate in the Treasure Basket sessions, being careful not to interfere or guide the baby, but sensitive interaction and communication will add to the richness of the experience and close supervision is required.

