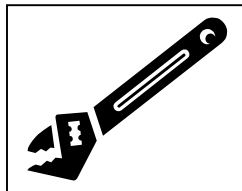
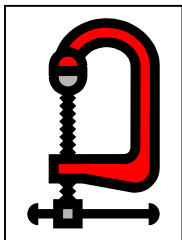
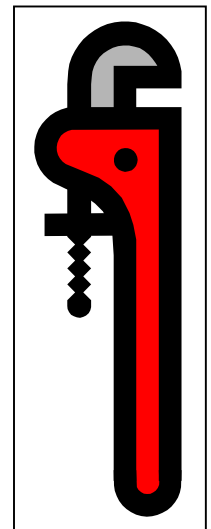
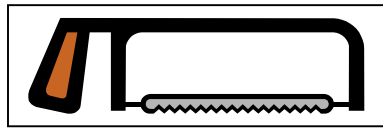
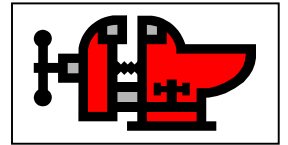
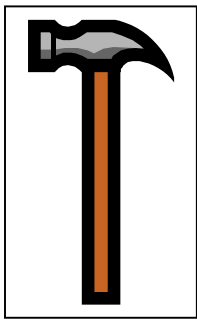


Woodworking With Children

By Cathy Abraham, MEd



Woodworking. Just the mere word strikes fear in the heart of many of the most competent of caregivers, and conjures up images of a child approaching us, crying, with a bleeding finger, or a child hitting another in the head with a hammer.



Children can be *taught* to utilize the woodworking area appropriately and learn to respect tools – just as in any other area in the classroom. For children ages 4 years and older, the benefits and the learning associated with this activity far outweigh the potential for problems, if implemented and supervised correctly...

Introducing the Woodworking Area

■ ***Start slowly!*** Implementing woodworking in your classroom does not mean starting out with a full set of Craftsman tools and powersaw. **Start simple** - a piece of sandpaper and wood; or Styrofoam, golf tees and a small rubber mallet. From there, you can introduce a piece of wood with several screws started and a screwdriver. Introduce one tool and one skill at a time.



■ Incorporate a learning unit on trees, wood, and uses for wood. Have children *explore* wood – note the grain, the smell, the textures, the weight, differences in types, etc.

■ Teach the children how to use real tools correctly. **Cover the rules for the Woodworking Area, and make it clear that if children choose not to follow the safety rules they will need to leave that area and play somewhere else. Safety is always first and foremost!** This concept can be taught, as can a healthy respect for tools.

■ Limit the number at the workbench to one or two.

■ Children (ages 4 and up) should be using real tools. (The plastic Little Tykes workbench is appropriate for children 3 and under.) There are sets of real child-size tools at places like Home Depot for around \$20. ***Some*** 3-year-old classes may be ready to introduce simple woodworking depending on the group of children and the teacher.

■ Expect and model respect for the tools and the woodworking area. Learn and teach the children the correct names of all of the tools. Trace the outline of the tools on the pegboard for children to put the tools back when they are finished with them. **Goggles should always be worn.** (Hard hats and construction aprons can also be used.)

■ Place your workbench in a highly visible area, but away from traffic paths. You may also want to locate the workbench away from the block area so that wooden blocks are not used as wood scraps.

■ If, at some point you incorporate a saw, have a vise permanently attached to the workbench to hold the wood in place when sawing.

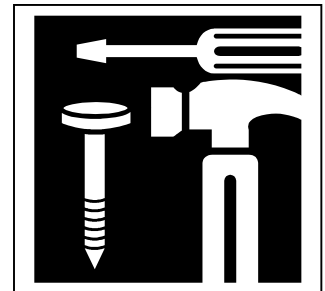
■ The best types of wood to use are soft woods – white pine, cedar, fir, and redwood. Lumber companies, cabinetmakers, karate schools, and hardware stores, if asked, often will donate scraps of wood.

■ Use nails with large heads (roofer nails). Do not have nails that are longer than the wood, to prevent a nail sticking out of the bottom of a “creation”.

- Place construction pictures and related magazines in this area to foster ideas, creativity, and language development.
- If you foresee a problem, remove the tools from the workbench and bring them out only during the times when that area is open. You can also use string to tie the tools to the workbench (this really only serves as a reminder – the determined child will cut the string with the saw.)
- You can start the nails for children. You can also place a comb between the nail head and the child's fingers as a barrier to prevent injury.
- **Safety is paramount!!!** The Woodworking Area must be well supervised **at all times!**

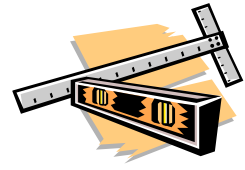
Woodworking Benefits & Skill-building:

- Eye-hand coordination
- Dexterity/fine motor
- Problem-solving
- Role-playing
- Creative thinking
- Imagination
- Independence/self esteem
- Stress reliever (pounding)
- Matching/classification
- Sorting
- Comparing/measuring
- Textures and properties
- Conceptualization
- Cooperation
- Respect for tools and materials
- Increased awareness and understanding of the world around them
- Language development



Remember – Safety First!

Other Ideas:

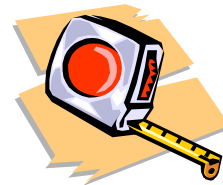


- Hammer nails into a ceiling tiles
- Let children paint their projects
- Start nails in a tree log
- Attach bolts to a piece of wood – have children match the corresponding nuts
- Add Styrofoam craft shapes to go with the next upcoming holiday
- Hammer golf tees into a styrofoam
- Nail milkcaps or bottlecaps onto wood (good for wheels)
- Hammer bubble wrap
- Make “geoboards” (adding rubberbands)
- Have children write their initial or draw a picture on a piece of wood, then hammer nails to form that shape
- Take apart a broken appliance. Cut off the cord(s) for safety.
- Take the woodworking bench outside in the summer.
- Have an area to display finished products (or “works in progress”)



For Variety, Add:

- rug scraps
- pre-cut craft wood shapes
- dowels
- metal juice can lids
- tongue depressors
- leather scraps
- fabric/yarn
- glue
- doorknobs
- markers/chalk/pencils
- blueprint paper



On-Line Resources:

www.perpetualpreschool.com

www.woodprojects.com

Articles/Resources on Woodworking:

“Happy Hammering”

by Marion Leithead; *Young Children*, March 1996

“Ideas That Work with Young Children”

Young Children, July 1986

“More About Woodworking with Young Children”

by David Sosna; *Young Children*, March 2000

“Woodworking with Young Children: You Can Do It!”

by Linda Huber; *Young Children*, November 1999

“Trees, Trees Everywhere, But Knot a Bit of Woodworking” by
Donna McKenny;

Early Childhood News, March/April 1998

“Woodworking in My Classroom? You Bet!”

by Linda Huber; *Early Childhood News*, Mar/Apr 1998



Children's Books:

Sadow, Lyn. “My Hammer”

Warner Juvenile Books, 1988

Wolde, G. “Betsy's Fixing Day”

Random House, 1978

Udry, Janice. “A Tree is Nice”

Harper Collins, 1984

Home Depot. “My Hammer”

Scholastic, 2000

Jeunesse and Delefosse

“Tools: A First Discovery Book”

Burton, Byron

“Tools”

Weinberger, Kimberly

“The Home Depot Big Book of Tools”

Morris, Ann

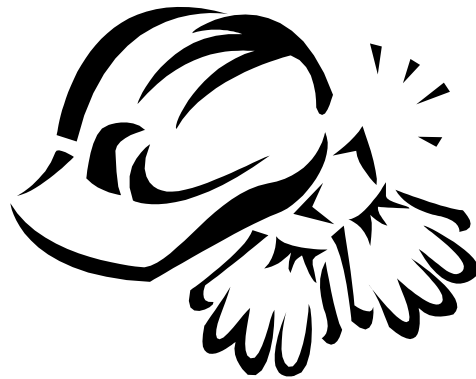
“Tools”

Miller, Margaret

“Who Uses This?”

FROM YOUR CHILD...

I am learning!



When I am at the workbench, I feel very grown up! I feel trusted. I am learning how to create something I have visualized in my head. When I work with a friend I have to cooperate and explain my ideas and plans. I am working on my fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. I have to use math skills, such as shape, size, contrast, comparing, spatial relationships and problem-solving. I also get to be creative and use my imagination!

7 Developmental Stages of Children's Woodworking

Cited in Adams and Taylor, 1982

1. Acquaintance with tools and wood
2. Simple skill attempts
3. Simple construction
4. Refinement
5. Functional construction
6. Decorative combinations
7. Emergence of craft



NAEYC Classroom Observation Referenced Criteria:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| B-5f | Developmentally appropriate materials are available for school-agers. |
| B-7c | Encourage children to think, reason, question and, experiment. |
| B-7e | Enhance physical development and skills. |
| B-7f | Encourage creative expression, representation, and appreciation for the arts. |

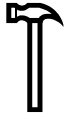


Training Ideas:



- **“Tool Time”:** Bring in several kinds of different tools. Put “post-it’s” on them, numbering them. Have staff try to write down the correct names of all of the tools. (Bring in some unusual ones too, if you can, to make it more difficult and fun.) The “winner” - with the most correct - wins a pair of goggles or some other small tool as a prize.
- Ask someone from “Home Depot”, “Builders Square”, or a local hardware store to come in and do a demonstration and give project ideas and suggestions.
- Bring in various sizes and shapes of wood, and all of the necessary tools and materials. Allow staff work with the materials and “create” their own project.





Construction Related Fingerplays



Johnny's Hammers

Tune: "Mary Had a Little Lamb"

Johnny had 1 hammer, 1 hammer, 1 hammer
(*Make hammering motion with 1 fists*)
Johnny had 1 hammer, then he had 2

Johnny had 2 hammers, 2 hammers, 2 hammers,
(*Make hammering motion with both fists*)
Johnny had 2 hammers, then he had 3.

Johnny had 3 hammers, 3 hammers, 3 hammers,
(*Make motion with both fists and one leg.*)
Johnny had 3 hammers then he had 4.

Johnny had 4 hammers, 4 hammers, 4 hammers,
(*Make motion with both fists and both legs*)
Johnny had 4 hammers then he had 5.

Johnny had 5 hammers, 5 hammers, 5 hammers
(*Make motion with both fists and both legs and head.*)
Johnny had 5 hammers, then he went to sleep!
(*lay hands like sleeping*)

Noisy Nails

I use my hammer and five nails
(*Hold up Five fingers.*)
That's too noisy, my neighbor yells
(*Yell this stanza*)
I'll hammer them now before it's night!
1...,2...,3...,4...,5
(*Pretend to hammer.*)
And to my neighbor I'll be polite!
(*Bow and wave*)

Construction Worker Song

This is the way we pound our nails,
pound our nails, pound our nails,
This is the way we pound our nails, so early in the morning.
This is the way we saw our wood,
Saw our wood, saw our wood.
This is the way we saw our wood, so early in the morning.
This is the way we use a screwdriver,
use a screwdriver, use a screwdriver,
This is the way we use a screwdriver, so early in the morning.
This is the way we drill a hole,
drill a hole, drill a hole,
This is the way we drill a hole, so early in the morning.



***Make a "Tool
Matching"
activity by
tracing tools.***

*Addition Verses: Saw The Wood, Turn the Screw, Stack the Bricks,
Paint the walls, Stir the paint...*